

Integrating Opinion Writing With Evaluating Argument

In this lesson sequence, students look at craft and structure: what authors do to make a piece of writing hang together. To read critically, students need to be able to read with an eye to discerning the author's purpose, and

the point of view at work. To write convincingly, writers need to know how to make a case. I feature fourth-grade lessons; however, it is easily adapted for third and fifth grade (see pages 22–24).

This sequence is best done at the beginning of the year. It sits most naturally within a reader's and writer's workshop but can be imported into any curriculum.

If you are a teacher using a basal series, this sequence can augment a study on compare and contrast, author's purpose and point of view, or character traits and literary terms. The question to ask yourself is what do *you* need? For example, does your class need a “booster shot”—a quick injection to get kids acquainted with point of view (POV)? If that's it, start at the sequence's beginning on page 4. Or, if you want to build the POV lessons into a unit of study on craft and structure, visit www.corwin.com/thecommoncorecompanion to map out a three- to four-week unit and then circle back to start.

This sequence can be replicated throughout the year using different genres and increasingly more difficult texts. While this sequence focuses on literature, and fairy tales in particular, you can adapt the unit to focus on compare/contrast and POV lessons using informational text, and in any content area. In addition, you can use the framework here to add POV lessons to other units—asking students to think about all characters' points of view—not just the main character's.

Task

After you have read a traditional fairy tale and the “fractured” version, write a compare/contrast piece. Make sure to include point of view and examples from the text.

Core Connections

Focus Reading Standard 6

Reading Standards

1, 4, and 5

Writing Standards 1, 5, 6,

9, and 10

Speaking and Listening

Standard 1

Language Standards



What Teachers Guide Across the Week

LESSONS	READING Help students compare and contrast POV using two texts	WRITING Help students write a short opinion or persuasive piece
1 Purpose/Mini-Lesson Small Group/Conferring Independent Practice Closure/Share	Establish understanding of POV. Create an anchor chart on two texts on same topic from different POV. Discuss author's intent. How do you discern POV? Students explore: What is the POV in the book I'm reading? Turn and talk.	Think aloud and add to anchor chart: What is persuasive writing? How is opinion writing used in the real world? Help students with topic choices. Brainstorm topic ideas. Share topic ideas.
2 Purpose/Mini-Lesson Small Group/Conferring Independent Practice Closure/Share	Model and co-construct compare/contrast piece. Use graphic organizers. Read fairy tales. Annotate. Fill out graphic organizers. Turn and talk.	Determine structure and essential elements (opinion, facts, conclusion). Audience. Read and discuss a shared piece. Demonstrate topic choice. Read and highlight mentor text. Choose a topic. Turn and talk on topic choice.
3 Purpose/Mini-Lesson Small Group/Conferring Independent Practice Closure/Share	POV and compare/contrast Confer with partners prior to writing. Needs-based support grouping Read two texts. Annotate. Graphic organizers. Begin to write compare/contrast Turn and talk.	Use a graphic organizer for planning. Confer with partners, adding details and clarification. Complete graphic organizer—have teacher check. Prepare draft. Exit slips
4 Purpose/Mini-Lesson Small Group/Conferring Independent Practice Closure/Share	Add transition words. Confer with partners about their piece—add transition words. Continue writing. Use checklist.	Focus on revision—add transition words. Hold revision conferences. Focus on transition words and details. Add transition words to graphic organizers; continue drafting. How did the revision conference improve your piece?
5 Purpose/Mini-Lesson Small Group/Conferring Independent Practice Closure/Share	Complete pieces. Reflect and do self-assessment. Share the pieces.	Model how to edit and finalize. Peer-edit pieces. Edit and finalize piece. Reflect on the process. Self-score with rubric. Celebrate and go public!

What Students Do Across the Week

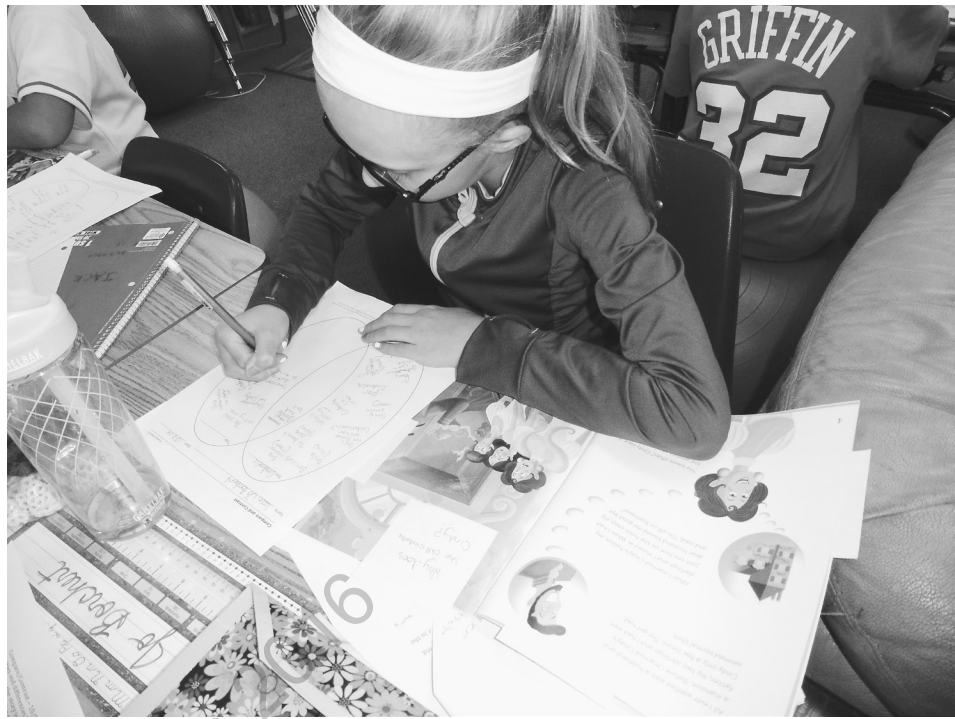
Throughout the week—and beyond—students open up the hood on the texts they are reading and writing to discover the points of view that make the texts power forward. Students in the intermediate grades are developmentally ready to understand point of view, and it's a skill that goes beyond texts to reading the world; point of view, after all, is the vantage point from which each one of us evaluates people, current events, and just about everything in the physical emotional landscape.

So just what is involved when we ask students to engage in this sequence? It begins with reading. In the first **reading lesson**, you guide students to see that spotting the point of view in texts is about looking at what authors and characters say and what they don't say and considering the ideas, beliefs, and agendas that are in and above the text.

Then, in the **companion writing lesson**, ideally done the very same day, we “flip it” and students use what they have noticed about POV as they write. In addition to **writing in response to reading** (in this case, students compare and contrast), students begin to learn how to write opinion and persuasive pieces from their own point of view.

The next day? Back to reading! You'll see that in all, you and students move back and forth between five reading/literature booster lessons on point of view and five companion writing lessons.

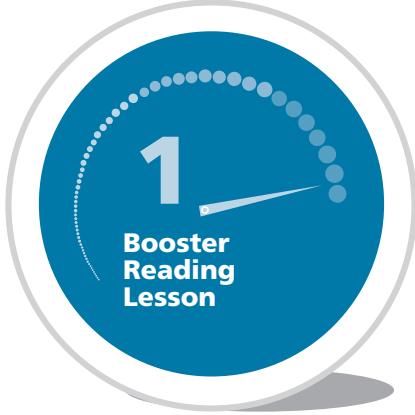
Students will be **paying attention to how words and phrases are used in the text** and also **analyzing the structure of texts**. Being able to do these reading moves is particularly essential for fourth graders, who are tested on their ability to write compare/contrast pieces with a focus on point of view. In addition, students **read closely** and pay attention to how the characters interact. (Reading Standards 4 and 5, which address Craft and Structure, are center stage). **Collaborative conversations** incorporate **Speaking and Listening Standards** and deepen comprehension and are a part of the writing process. Students put their understanding of POV into play as they **write a persuasive piece, employing the writing process**. Finally, to enhance both their writing and speaking, students will **understand how language functions in different contexts**, looking at **Formal or Informal English** and its role in revealing author's intent and the point of view of the narrator and characters.



Lizzie Jo fills out her graphic organizer comparing and contrasting two fairy tales.

Literacy Moves

- Make inferences
- Ask questions
- Determine similarities and differences
- Select details
- Analyze text



Understanding Point of View

Getting Ready

The materials:

- Text sets—traditional fairy tales and the same fairy tales depicting a different POV

Two suggestions are: *Honestly, Red Riding Hood Was Rotten! The Story of Little Red Riding Hood as Told by the Wolf* by Trisha Speed Shaskan (2012) or *What Really Happened to Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf's Story* by Toby Forward (2005)—this is the one I'm using in this lesson.

- Anthology of fairy tales such as *Michael Hague's Read-to-Me Book of Fairy Tales* (2013)
- Online resources (see mentor texts, page 38)
- Venn diagram chart
- Sticky notes for pairs of students
- Clipboards
- Text sets for small group work at a variety of reading levels
- Chart paper
- Graphic organizers for students (www.corwin.com/thecommoncorecompanion)

Core Connections

Reading Standard 6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Grade 4, Reading Standard

Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narratives.

Reading Standards

1, 4, 5, and 10

Core Practices

- Gradual Release Model
- Co-Construct
- Turn and Talk
- Graphic Organizers

Context of This Fourth-Grade Lesson

You will notice this first lesson is longer and contains more direct instruction than subsequent reading lessons. This is because it sets the foundation for the remaining lessons. You want to do the initial work *together*, but then each day do just a short 10-minute mini-lesson and then get out of the way so students can work independently as you meet with small groups or confer. Repeat this lesson using different texts and resources *throughout the year*. In addition, whenever you share a book with the class, ask: Who's telling the story? Is it first or third person? What is the point of view? (While second person is not a requirement of the fourth-grade standard, I still like to teach second person—*you*, as it often shows up in nonfiction texts.)

The Lesson

We begin with a discussion of first person and third person, and how we determine these points of view when we read. (First person is told from “I” and third person is “he” or “she.”) By fourth grade, students should have a basic understanding of this and think about it every time they read a piece of text.

I tell students that we are going to do a unit of study on fairy tales, and that noticing point of view will come into play. We will be reading traditional fairy tales and then comparing them to “fractured” fairy tales.

I read aloud the first text, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and we answer these questions in the course of doing so. (Display these questions on chart paper—this is your anchor chart):

- Is the text written in first person or third person?
- How does this affect the narration and the point of view?
- Who is telling the story and *why*?
- What point of view does the narrator take?

First, I ask: Is this first person or third person? How do we know? I record students' thinking on our anchor chart. I also ask: *Who* is telling the story (the narrator) and we discuss what a narrator is. As I continue to read, I *think aloud* as I notice specific places in the text where the *narrator* is expressing the point of view (Red Riding Hood, *good*; wolf, *villain*.) I use sticky notes to mark these spots so that we can go back to them when we finish the story.

After reading and discussing the story, students discuss the difference between first person and third person and determine who is telling the story. We talk about author's intent. We record our answers to the four questions on the anchor chart, along with our examples from the text that prove it.

(Remember, you don't have to use fairy tales; any genre could be substituted as long as you have at least two examples written from two different points of view. Folk tales are a terrific substitute and also lend themselves for multicultural content. The lesson would still be the same, it's just the text and genre would be different!)

Reading a Contrasting Book

As we move into reading our second book, we refer to the anchor chart. Remember the goal here is for students to ask and answer these questions *independently*, to own them as readers, writers, and thinkers; so keep handing these questions off to kids whenever considering POV, so it becomes part of their DNA as they read.

Now I write on a Venn diagram “Red Riding Hood—original adaptation” on the left side and “Fractured Fairy Tale—The Wolf's Story” on the right. I tell students that now we are going to add two more questions to our list—and these will help us to *compare and contrast* the new book we are about to read with the traditional version. I write:

- How are the stories similar?
- How are they different?

With students' input, I record on the left side that the first book was written in *third person* while students articulate how they know (it said “he” and “she”). I record our thinking about who is telling the story (the narrator) and what the POV is (Wolf, *evil*, and Red, *good*.) I hold up a sticky note and tell students that we need to find an example *directly from the text* that supports this assertion. Students look back at the anchor chart and select an example from the beginning of the book. I write, “She was sweet and kind and liked to believe in the good in everyone.” Are there more examples we can add? I add additional evidence.

Time Crunched?



You can stop here and continue the lesson on another day. You might even consider having students read the second book on their own, in advance of reading it together.

T: OK, let's turn to the fractured fairy tale book on the same topic. Our *purpose* now is to answer all the questions that we have on our chart. That will help us compare and contrast these two books. We're really going to think about *how different points of view can change the meaning*.

Available for download at
[www.corwin.com/
thecommoncorecompanion](http://www.corwin.com/thecommoncorecompanion)

T: I'm going to read this book twice. The first time I just want you to listen to the story and enjoy it, but with one other purpose: Think about if it's first person or third person and *who* is telling the story.

I read the entire book once through, then have students turn and talk with a partner to discuss if the book is first or third person, how they know, and who is telling the story. I listen in, paying attention for students who still may not understand and may need more instruction in a small group or in a conference. We discuss and record on the Venn diagram. I write "Wolf," and tell students it's time to listen to the story again.

T: OK, this time I want you to listen in order to figure out what the Wolf's POV is and *how* you know it. Think about where in the text—which words—help you decide that? As I read, please write down evidence or an example from the book on your sticky notes. Just like we did with yesterday's book, I'll model first so you know what I mean.

I start reading the book again and stop to model at a point where the text supports point of view and script this on a sticky note.

T: I have to stop right here at the beginning, where the Wolf says, "Would I lie to you? It was the woman who started it. I did *nothing* wrong." I'm going to jot a few of those lines on my sticky note to support what I'm thinking.

I continue reading slowly through the book, allowing students time to record their thinking. When finished, I direct them to turn and talk with partners about Wolf's POV and how they knew that. We discuss as a group and as they share out record the POV on Venn diagram. An optional activity would be to have students add their sticky notes to the Venn as they return to their seats.

Wrap Up

Discuss how the two books were the same, the obvious being they were both about Red Riding Hood. Record this in the overlap of the Venn. Continue to discuss and nudge students to discuss characters, events, or settings that were the same. Record these in the overlap.

Then have students identify if there was anything else besides POV that was different between the two books and have students help you record on the Venn diagram in the appropriate spot. You will need the Venn diagram for tomorrow's follow-up lesson.

Finally, debrief on our purpose for the lesson—thinking about *how different points of view can change the meaning*. This thinking will also help us with our writing lessons on persuasion.

As students work independently on their own reading, reinforce that they should be asking and answering these POV questions on their own.



Core Connections

Grade 4

Writing Standard 1

Write opinion pieces on topic or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

- a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance*, *in order to*, *in addition*).
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Writing Standards 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10

Core Practices

- Turn and Talk
- Reflection
- Explicit Teaching
- Responsive Teaching

Launching Opinion and Persuasive Writing

Getting Ready

The materials:

- Mentor text to launch the sequence (picture book)
- A variety of opinion and persuasive texts—print, photos, online, editorial comics, for example
- Text sets
- Mentor texts
- Chart paper
- Writer's notebooks
- Graphic organizers

Context of This Lesson

Fresh out of the reading lesson, students are focused on POV, so we transition easily into a short study on opinion writing. Since it's at the beginning of a new sequence (or unit, if you are teaching a full unit), you will do more modeling and co-constructing than is needed in subsequent lessons. We'll begin by "noticing" how persuasive writing and opinion writing are written, and what makes them different from other types. I provide text sets for students to dissect: picture books, advertisements, articles, op-ed pieces, sports commentaries, and so on.

The Lesson

T: Now we're going to switch gears and instead of reading like readers, we're going to read like *writers*. We've been talking about point of view in the texts we read and we've been discussing author's intent. Well, when we write, we're the author, so now *we* get to share *our* point of view. We actually are *also* trying to get others to see things as we do. And how do we get them to consider our take? We provide reasons for why we believe something about our topic, and we back up our reasons with facts and details. This is called writing an opinion piece. Sometimes we call this kind of writing persuasive because we're attempting to persuade our reader to think the way we do. Have you ever tried to convince someone of something?

At this point, students will be clamoring to share their examples. Either choose a few or have students turn and talk so everyone gets a chance to be heard. Don't let this become the main point of the lesson—keep it to a few minutes, tops!

T: I've brought an example of a persuasive text. Your job or *purpose* as I read it aloud is to think about what the author wants to persuade others to do or think.

Read the piece you've selected. I love to start with *I Wanna New Room* by Karen Kaufman Orloff (2010), or *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt (2013); however, any persuasive or opinion text that is highly engaging and you know your students will enjoy is perfect.

After reading the text aloud, have students turn and talk with their partners, exploring these questions: What is the character trying to do? How does he or she do this? How does he or she support it—what reasoning is given?

Share student thinking as a whole group and begin to discuss how opinion writing is different from narrative and informative or explanatory texts. Record on chart paper. However, while opinion writing is its own standard, opinion and persuasion are often found in narratives and informative and explanatory texts.

Also, start an anchor chart of “Types of Opinion or Persuasive Writing.” Begin with the type you just read to the students and then model or brainstorm a few more. Have students work independently, continuing to brainstorm examples of opinion writing that they see in the real world, recording their thinking in their writer’s notebooks.

After 5 minutes, share ideas from their lists, either whole class, small group, or with partners. Challenge students to add to this list *and* to look for examples in their world and bring these in as mentor texts. The important thing to remember, though, is to have the kids do the work—let them search and notice! Students will be contributing to a class set of opinion writing samples that will turn into mentor texts.

Wrap Up

T: Now it’s your turn to think about your point of view, your opinions, and what you care about deeply. I want you to start a list of possible opinion and persuasive topics in your writer’s notebook. This doesn’t mean that you have to write about them; it’s just a way to get you thinking about possible topics. And we’ll keep adding to these as we continue to learn about opinion writing.

With those directions, students work independently on their list of topics. Inviting students in on the search for examples of a type of writing is a staple in my class. It creates student ownership and they find examples I could never imagine (Ray, 2006).



Venn diagrams representing both the reading and writing. One is for the two fairy tales. The second compares and contrasts two books on POV.



Snapshot of a Turn-and-Talk Peer Conference on POV

Core Connections

Grade 4

Speaking and Listening Standard 1 (b, c, and d)

Students engage in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. They follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others, and review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Core Practices

- Turn and Talk
- Student Ownership

A productive, successful conversation. The boys are following the class expectation of restating what they've heard before continuing the conversation. Doing so prevents students from just throwing out lots of thoughts without analysis. This type of back and forth takes time and practice.

Deep discourse about texts and ideas deepens students' understanding—but it takes plenty of explicit "training" to do it well. Research on the importance of student talk and how to scaffold it is in abundance (Allen, 2009; Allington, 2006; Blauman, 2011; Daniels, 2002; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2013; Gallagher, 2015; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Hattie, 2012). Before students can participate in any shared discussions—teacher-led whole group, partner work, or small group—you need to model and teach about listening and speaking skills. Creating class norm charts or expectation charts for speaking and listening in a variety of situations is essential. Providing students with models or prompts of questions they can ask to push thinking scaffolds them. Partner sharing

(or turn and talk) allows all students to have their voices heard and keeps lessons lively and interactive.

The following turn-and-talk example occurred after reading the second book, *The Wolf's Story* in the reading lesson. Students were to discuss the POV and how they figured it out. Eavesdrop in on one of the conversations to see how the speaking and listening standards are embedded into reading. Prior to this lesson, turn and talk was explicitly taught and students had ample time to practice over a few days. We created anchor charts of what makes good listening and speaking skills, along with prompts and sentence starters to get conversations going and moving to deeper levels.

T: Now that we've finished *The Wolf's Story* I'd like you to turn and talk with your partner about your answer to "Who is telling the story and what is their point of view?" Remember to also share the specifics from the text that support your answer and thinking. Also, remember to follow our agreed-upon norms for sharing thinking with a partner.

These norms are

- One student shares her thinking and *why*
- Partner rephrases what he heard and adds to it—either agreeing or disagreeing and *why*
- First student can either expand on the thinking and explanation or ask the partner to share his thoughts
- This pattern is repeated; however, students should continue to discuss a point if it leads to deeper understanding

As students discuss, the teacher eavesdrops, nudging students when necessary or asking if they'd like to share their thinking with the whole group after partner time is finished.

Jose: It's pretty obvious that the Wolf is telling the story and he thinks it's not his fault, right?

Carson: I agree—remember when the Wolf said, “Would I lie to you?” And that the old woman started it? He’s like totally trying to change the story and blame her.

Jose: Yeah. I like the part about toffee. I get that it’s a candy, but what is it?

Carson: I’ve never had it either, but it’s got to be sticky, right? Cuz it made Grandma’s teeth stick together and it was actually pretty important to the story. Remember at the end when the Wolf thought Red was going to put toffee in his mouth and he jumped out of bed and she thought he was going to eat her and that he’d eaten the Grandma? That really showed his point of view, that he didn’t do anything wrong, but she thought he did.

Jose: And she started screaming and the woodsman came in. Maybe we could ask Ms. B what toffee is?

Carson: This book was funny. It was like the Wolf talked like us—and like he talked right to us. He used “you” to talk to us and made it funny. Like the part where he was trying to help Grandma get her dress and she fell and knocked herself out and he said something like “Not everybody trusts a wolf and he thought they might blame him for doing something bad to Grandma and he said ME?” that was funny and showed that he thought he was innocent.

Jose: Yeah, but was he? Or was he like making excuses and trying to persuade us that it’s not his fault?

Carson: Maybe. You could be right. Now I want to read the book again. But I still say his point of view was that it was not his fault and that he didn’t hurt anybody.

Notice how Jose and Carson are really listening to each other. When they get to “toffee” they use context clues to get the gist. Both boys have the word written on one of their sticky notes. Readers need to pay attention to vocabulary—and words they don’t know. The boys wave me over (even though I’ve been listening) and ask what toffee is. I explain and ask them how that helps them understand the text better. They tell me and then I ask if they will share with the whole group how even though they not only deduced its meaning, but its importance to the plot.

Now the boys have turned their attention to the language and style of the text. This book is written in an informal way with a lot of humor, which makes it a good text for teaching POV. Also notice how the boys are questioning the Wolf, but not the point of view. While the focus of this lesson was Reading Standard 6, the boys are working on numerous reading standards simultaneously!

The class has had time to discuss and I’ve had time to listen in on various conversations, assessing their understanding of POV. If it had been apparent that the majority of the class did not understand, then I would reteach the concept the next day. Informal assessments always guide my instruction—it’s about student needs and understanding! We come back together as a group and I have different partners share their thinking. I have Jose and Carson share their discussion about toffee and other students say they ran into the same problem. This is a great teachable moment of how we can use each other to understand new vocabulary—and use context clues.

Time Crunched?



Haven’t had practice setting up turn-and-talk expectations? Take one day and set up charts and introduce prompts to students and make sure to post these so students can easily reference them. Have students practice, turning and talking for a specific purpose. “Fishbowl” around students who are talking effectively. Or show video clips to students to demonstrate what effective turn and talk looks and sounds like. Remember, this takes time—and more than one day. Model and practice!