



## 3RD GRADE: NURTURING CRITICAL THINKERS THROUGH OPINION ESSAYS

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In the realm of education, fostering critical thinking and nurturing the growth of young minds are paramount. At WVCS, third graders have recently embarked on an enriching journey of self-expression and intellectual exploration through the completion of opinion essays.

Serving as the culmination project of our opinion essay unit of study, this endeavor has not only honed their writing skills but has also empowered them to articulate and defend their own viewpoints.

Drawing inspiration from Proverbs 27:17, which states, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another," our young scholars have embraced the ethos of collaborative learning and intellectual exchange. They have discovered that through constructive dialogue and engagement with diverse perspectives, their own ideas are sharpened and strengthened.

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Throughout this unit, emphasis was placed on critical thinking as the cornerstone of effective communication. This journey has been transformative for our budding writers, as they have blossomed into confident and articulate communicators. From crafting thesis statements to organizing their thoughts cohesively, each step of the writing process has been a testament to their growth. By expressing their own opinions on topics ranging from favorite books to school policies, they have discovered the power of their voices and the impact of their words. Tyler explained how she chose her topic, saying, “I chose the topic of the importance of not littering in the ocean because animals could eat it and die. Sometimes people litter and it can make animals very sick.” Kurtis told us, “I picked the topic “Roblox isn’t a very good Game,” because I noticed that kids get a little meaner after playing Roblox for a while.”

The completion of opinion essays by our third graders is not merely a culmination project but a testament to their journey as writers, thinkers, and individuals. It is a celebration of their burgeoning ability to engage critically with the world around them and to express themselves authentically. What a joy it has been to watch their thinking and communication skills grow this year. Kurtis shared, “Writing is important because if you don't have writing, you couldn't learn information.” And Tyler said, “Writing is important because someday you could be a professional writer of a book or poems.”

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