

# Jump In

Middle School  
Composition

2nd  
Edition

Sample



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Companion volume: *Jump In Teacher’s Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

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Note: The above table of contents is for the whole course. This sample consists of Skills 1-4 and the assignment for the chapter “Opinions—You’ve Got Them.”

What have we added to *Jump In, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*?

- Additional lessons on how to write paragraphs and paragraph types, including topic sentences
- A chapter on reports that comes later in the year when students are more sure of themselves
- Two solid methods of compare-and-contrast writing
- Assignment options for new and experienced writers
- Detailed suggested writing schedules
- Specific checklists that teach proofreading for each essay assignment
- A font that will aid dyslexic and other students
- Detailed and specific grading grids in the teacher's guide for each essay assignment to make grading much easier
- An index
- 117 daily lessons, labeled as Skills

Note: The images in the paperback version of *Jump In* are in grayscale, as in this sample. The images in the digital version are in color.



## Opinions—You’ve Got Them

### *Skill 1: What do you think?*

You express your opinions often. You probably have voiced an opinion on cleaning your room, what book or movie you think your friend would love, which Bible verse is your favorite, or what you want to eat for your next snack. All of those are opinions—and you have them.

An opinion often comes from something you can’t stand or something you love. In other words, you feel strongly about it, one way or another.

**Now it’s your turn.** Brainstorm by filling in at least five sets of blanks on the next page. Choose topics about which you feel strongly.

My Favorite

My Least Favorite

Color \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ice cream flavor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sports team \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Song \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Book \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Car \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School subject \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Animal \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Outfit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Store \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meal \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vacation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Game \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Complete these sentences:

My favorite song is \_\_\_\_\_.

The worst habit in the world is \_\_\_\_\_.

Congratulations. You have just written your opinion.

## Skill 2: Reasons

You might not have to tell anyone why diving into the shallow end of the pool is a dumb idea, but when you write about it, you'll need strong reasons. And when you write about an opinion you hold, you'll want solid reasons as well. That way, people can understand your position better.

Read the two conversations below. In them, Liam and Olivia are giving their reasons for their opinions. See if you can catch the reasons:

Juan: What about that game last night?

Liam: It stank! They kept missing the rebounds, they couldn't keep a decent zone defense, and Jones was benched in the first quarter with an injury. What a mess!

Mia: So, how is it? How do I look in it?

Olivia: That is *so you!* You look great in that color, and it's the perfect size. Hurry up! I want to try it on, too.

**Now it's your turn.** Think about a time when you told someone your opinion. Write your opinion and your reasons for your opinion in the space below. Then go to the next page.

OPINION:

REASONS:

1.

2.

3.

In the examples on the previous page, each person gives three reasons for the opinion. Liam mentions the bad rebounding, the lousy zone defense, and an injured player. Olivia says the article of clothing is a good color, the right size, and desirable as a fashion (she wants to try it on, too). Find the reasons given in the conversation below:

CARLOS: I'm going to play baseball with one of the teams in town this summer. What about you?

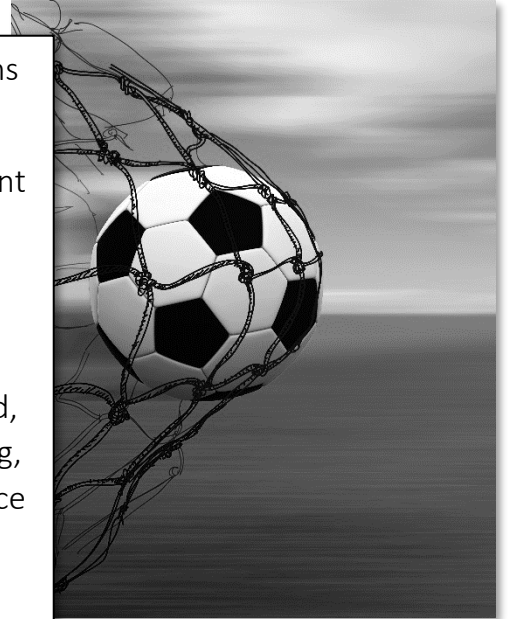
JOHN: Not me. I'm going to concentrate on soccer. I want to play on a professional team someday.

CARLOS: Professional? Oh, right—you broke the league record for goals in a season, didn't you?

JOHN: Yeah. You know, when I'm running down the field, it's almost like I'm flying. When I wake up in the morning, I can't wait to put on my cleats and hit the field. I practice at least four hours a day. It's like I was born to play soccer.

CARLOS: So, what do your parents think about it?

JOHN: Oh, they're all for it. Coach Hamm came to our house last week and talked to them. We figured out a practice schedule. They're all pulling for me.



**Now it's your turn.** John clearly believes he will make a professional soccer team someday. That is his opinion of his abilities. What are the three reasons that came up in this conversation?

1.

2.

3.

## Skill 3: Point order

In any well-written opinion essay, have at least three solid reasons to support your opinion. In addition, you will arrange your reasons in an order that makes sense. There are many ways to do this that will hold the reader's interest. You will learn two in today's skill. Read the examples below:

John thinks he can get on a professional team. Why?



#### Inverted pyramid order

1. **Most important:** He proved his talent by breaking a league record.
2. **Next important:** He loves to play the sport.
3. **Least important:** His coach and parents see his talent and are supporting him.

John thinks he can get on a professional team. Why?



#### Climactic order

1. **Next important:** He loves to play the sport.
2. **Least important:** His coach and parents see his talent and are supporting him.
3. **But most important:** He proved his talent by breaking a league record.

With the **inverted pyramid order**, you'll begin with your most important reason and end with the least important. With the **climactic order**, you move your most important reason to the bottom of the list, ending with a bang.

Who decides which reason is most important? You will. When you think about the topic, your reasons, and what your readers need to know, you will figure out which is most important and which is least.

Avoid beginning with your least important reason. You will lose your readers right away because it will feel weak to them.

**Now it's your turn.** You listed a few opinions in Skill 1. Choose one of those now or choose a new one and write it below. Then brainstorm five reasons why you like or don't like that particular thing. Don't pay attention to the most important or least important right now. Just write down your reasons on the next page as they come to you. Remember: write now, fix later.

Opinion:

Reasons:

\_\_\_1.

\_\_\_2.

\_\_\_3.

\_\_\_4.

\_\_\_5.

Look back over your list and cross off the two weakest reasons or the reasons you think you might not be able to write much about.

In the blanks next to the remaining three reasons, write MI for your most important reason, NI for your next important reason, and LI for your least important reason.

Select the order in which you want to use your reasons by underlining one of these sets:

**Inverted pyramid:** most important, next important, least important

**Climactic:** next important, least important, most important

In the blanks below, rearrange your three reasons in the new order you selected.

1.

2.

3.

Now you have a good skeleton to use for the body of your opinion paper. In Skill 4, you will put some flesh on those bones.

## Skill 4: The body

Each reason lives in its own paragraph. Because you're using three reasons, the middle part—the body—of your opinion paper will have at least three paragraphs. The **body** is every paragraph in your paper except the introduction and conclusion.

Each reason also has to have a few supporting statements to make it strong, like pilings under a bridge. The supporting statements are usually facts or examples. Read the following paper “My New Pet” to see how this works. Note the order of the reasons.



Introduction

Body

Reason one  
(most important)

Reason two  
(next important)

Reason three  
(least important)

Conclusion

### My New Pet

When my mom said I could have a pet, I went to the pet store to look at all the animals. But what did I want? I listened to the canaries and parakeets singing. I watched fuzzy puppies playing with a ball. But when I came to the kitten cage, I knew what I wanted.

Cats are clean. They constantly lick themselves to remove burrs, dirt, and unpleasant smells. Kittens can be trained to use a kitty litter box, making it easy to clean up after them.

Cats are smart. They cover up their messes. And if you happen to miss a day feeding your cats, it is only a small problem to them. They know how to find mice, moles, small rabbits, and even moths for their meals.

Cats are polite. They quietly walk through the house, minding their own business. As pets, they are not fussy, and they have manners.

I chose a white and butterscotch kitten, and I named her Sundae. She's the cutest thing! She's a fluffy ball of fur. I loved having a kitten so much that I went back the next day and bought Chocolate, her sister. Now I have two pets, and I love them both!

Why does this student like cats? Her three reasons are that they clean, smart, and polite. Notice that all of her reasons turned into topic sentences (what the rest of the paragraph is about).

**Now it's your turn.** All the reasons for buying a cat have at least two supporting statements. List the two ideas or facts the writer used to prove that cats are clean.

1.

2.

In Skill 3, you chose three reasons for your own opinion. Select one of those reasons now and write a paragraph with supporting statements. Use the space below or another piece of paper.

Reason (which becomes your topic sentence):

Supporting statements for reason (the rest of the paragraph):

## Skill 10: The assignment

CHOOSE ONE:

- Complete and polish the opinion you have been working on. Word count: at least 150 words. Experienced writers: at least 200 words.
- Do you love to write? Can't stand it? Write your opinion of writing. Use at least 150 words. Experienced writers: at least 200 words.
- The writer of "My New Pet" really likes cats. Do you disagree with the writer? Write your opinion of your favorite animal or pet. Or write why you detest cats. Use at least 150 words. Experienced writers: at least 200 words.
- Look at the favorite/least-favorite lists you filled out in Skill 1. Choose one of those topics and write your opinion about it in at least 150 words. Experienced writers: at least 200 words.
- Your choice. Choose something that you love or can't stand (something you feel strongly about) and write why you hold that opinion. Use at least 150 words. Experienced writers: at least 200 words.



### *A suggested writing schedule:*

Check off each day's task as you complete it:

- Day 1: Brainstorm opinions you hold. Choose one of them and brainstorm possible reasons for it. Decide on your three strongest ones and an order in which to put them.
- Days 2-3: Write the body (the three paragraphs that include your three reasons).
- Day 4: Write the introduction and conclusion.
- Day 5: Combine the intro, body, and conclusion. Proofread and revise with the checklist on the next page. Make a neat copy, double-spaced, either by hand or on a computer. Hand it in.

**News Flash:** For every one hundred words you are assigned, it's going to take at least one hour of thinking and writing. So for a one-hundred-fifty-word essay, you'll need **at least** one-and-a-half hours. Leave yourself plenty of time to do each daily task.

## Skill 11: Use this checklist

Every time you write a paper, you will also proofread and revise it. You can look for grammar or spelling mistakes, words you left out, and so on, but for now, you are looking only for the items on the list below.

**Now it's your turn.** Follow the instructions below. Check off the boxes when you have completed your tasks.

### Print and Read

- If you wrote your paper on the computer, print it off and read it aloud. If you wrote it by hand, read it out loud. Look for obvious mistakes and then correct them.

### Ask Your Essay

Ask your essay the following questions. If the answer to any of the questions is “no,” adjust your essay until you get a “yes.”

- Does my essay have an interesting title?
- Does my opening sentence or paragraph grab the reader's attention by making an interesting point, stating a fact, using a quotation, telling a story, or asking a thought-provoking question?
- Is my opinion in the introduction clear?
- Does my essay get to the point quickly?
- Does it stick to the point (not go off the topic)?
- Do I have three points or reasons explaining why I hold this opinion?
- Are my points strong and solid?
- Does the progression from one point to the next make sense?
- Is each point in its own paragraph?
- Is there a topic sentence for each point?
- Does each paragraph support its topic sentence well?
- Is my opinion essay easy to read and easy to understand?
- Does my conclusion give the reader something interesting to think about?
- Did I proofread my opinion paper for mistakes and revisions?

This is the end of the sample of Chapter 2.