

### Writing an Editorial

#### Characteristics of an editorial:

- An article that presents the newspaper's opinion on an issue
- Usually unsigned
- Intended to influence public opinion and promote critical thinking
- Sometimes intended to cause people to take action on an issue
- Includes both arguments and researched facts (research rarely cited)

#### Editorials have:

- Introduction, body, and conclusion
- A title that is the lead and a "gist" sentence at the beginning that names the problem or issue
- An objective explanation of the issue (background information)
- A connection to current events in the news or to historical figures
- Opinions from the opposing viewpoint (counterargument)
- The writer's opinions/claims expressed in a well-reasoned argument
- Alternative solutions to the problem or issue
- A solid and concise conclusion that powerfully summarizes the writer's opinion (End with a bang!)

#### Writing Prompt

What does it mean to be a "upstander?" Based on what you have learned from the texts you have read and viewed recently, write an editorial for the school newspaper in which you explain to your fellow students what an upstander is and how our school would benefit from having more upstanders on campus. Include both facts and well-supported opinions in your editorial, as well as examples of people who are or have been upstanders. Your editorial should be no more than 500 words in length.

#### Process:

- Gather all of your notes and writer's notebook entries on this topic. Highlight the information that you will want to use in the editorial.
- State your opinion briefly.
- Explain the facts about bullying and define the terms "upstander" and "bystander."
- Explain why some people may find it difficult to be upstanders. Find at least one example of a person who found it difficult to be an upstander.
- Explain why you think it is important to be an upstander in spite of the difficulties.
- Develop your argument by using the information you have gathered.
- Describe at least one example of an upstander who made a difference in the world.
- Explain why students at JMS should think about becoming upstanders. Use facts and statistics gathered in your research to support your argument.
- End with a dynamic conclusion that includes a call to action

# Grade 7 Editorial ELA Chart

## Grade 7

## EDITORIAL

ELA	Score 5 EXCEEDS	Score 4 MEETS	Score 3 APPROACHING	Score 2 DOES NOT MEET	Score 1 FAR BELOW
<b>Ideas and Development</b>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argues a clear position</li> <li>Authoritatively employs facts and statistics to develop the argument</li> <li>Convincingly addresses the readers' concerns</li> </ul>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argues a general position</li> <li>Adequately employs facts and statistics to develop the argument</li> <li>Generally addresses the readers' concerns</li> </ul>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weakly presents a position</li> <li>Employs few facts or statistics or fails to develop the argument</li> <li>May not address the readers' concerns</li> </ul>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not attempt to argue a position</li> <li>Does not include facts or statistics, or includes facts and statistics that are irrelevant</li> <li>Fails to address the readers' concerns</li> </ul>	Illegible, no response, inaccurate response, or responds in a language other than English
<b>Organization and Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrates a clear, logical organization of ideas</li> <li>Maintains a consistent focus</li> <li>Clearly addresses all parts of the writing prompt</li> <li>Is concise and compelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrates a mostly logical organization of ideas</li> <li>Maintains a mostly consistent focus</li> <li>Adequately addresses the writing prompt</li> <li>Reads well but is somewhat repetitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrates some organization of ideas</li> <li>Has an inconsistent focus</li> <li>Weakly attempts to address the writing prompt</li> <li>Is repetitive and unnecessarily wordy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no organization is apparent</li> <li>Lacks any type of focus</li> <li>Does not address the writing prompt</li> <li>Is lengthy and rambling</li> </ul>	
<b>Word Choice, Sentences, and Paragraphs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exhibits use of precise, sophisticated, and effective vocabulary</li> <li>Provides a wide and effective variety of sentence types</li> <li>Includes highly effective use of transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates effective use of multiple paragraph construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exhibits use of some precise, effective vocabulary</li> <li>Provides some variety of sentence types</li> <li>Includes generally effective use of transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates adequate use of multiple paragraph construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exhibits use of mostly simplistic (basic and elementary) vocabulary</li> <li>Provides a limited variety of sentence types</li> <li>May include ineffective or awkward transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates weak use of multiple paragraph construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exhibits consistent use of simplistic (basic and elementary) vocabulary and/or needless repetition</li> <li>Uses mostly short, simple sentences, and/or makes frequent errors in sentence construction</li> <li>Does not include transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates little or no use of multiple paragraph construction</li> </ul>	
<b>Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language</li> <li>Errors do not impede the understanding of the writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language</li> <li>Errors do not impede the understanding of the writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains numerous errors in the conventions of the English language</li> <li>Errors impede the understanding of the writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains many serious errors in the conventions of the English language</li> <li>Errors impede the understanding of the writing</li> </ul>	

## Editorial Draft A

### Raising the bar one step higher

**Bullying is a very big problem that occurs all the time without teachers and faculty knowing and this brings up the idea of having more watchful eyes—the Upstanders.**

At Jefferson Middle School, bullying is not a stranger to its students. There have been countless cases that occur on campus, but only very faculty members have been able to catch bullying in the act. Bullying is a form of humiliation where one or more person hurts another's feelings in order to make himself or herself feel empowered. Because the faculty is not always available to catch the acts of bullying, it's time to make these "unstoppable" cases of bullying stoppable.

A serious case of bullying on our campus occurred when a 12-year old boy was shoved down a flight of bleachers during P.E. No one stopped the bullies and that boy ended up in the hospital.

Some people dismiss this as "Oh, it's just a simple matter." or even "They're just boys, it's normal for them to be aggressive." but little do they know that acts like this can create another bully or even drive someone to suicide. We need people to stand up and protect the people that are being bullied. Adults cannot do this alone because, they have just too many students to supervise. We need students to take initiative become the Upstanders to those people who are being bullied.

What is an Upstander?

Think of them as superheroes, for that is what they are.

Michael Phelps, the well-known Olympic swimmer, was also bullied as a kid. When he was younger, Michael had a lisp (an accent on certain letters) and many of his classmates teased him because of it. Swimming helped him overcome bullying and his determination helped prove to his bullies that their hurtful words meant nothing to him. Michael is one of the lucky ones, for many people are unable to stand up for themselves and bullying destroys their lives.

Being an Upstander is not easy. By standing up for those who are bullied, they also risk being bullied themselves. It is also tempting for the Upstander to bully the bully in payback for what they have done. According to several anti-bullying websites, kids that are bullies by the age of 8 are 4 times as likely to have a criminal record by the age of 30. Being an Upstander will not only reduce the number of bullying cases, but also lower the number of potential criminals.

A survey taken shows that only 35.5% of students believe that schools could stop bullying. Jefferson Middle School needs more Upstanders to stand up for their fellow classmates. In order to prevent bullying from happening anymore, both students and adults need to work together. It is time for all of us to stand up to bullying and show that schools can stop bullying.

## Editorial Draft B

### **Bystander or Upstander? Your choice.**

Bullying has been a problem for quite some time and some people think they have found the solution to this quandary—upstanders.

Bullying: exerting power, whether to control or harm, over those who have difficulty defending themselves. 1 in 4 kids are bullied every month in the U.S. Though bullying may seem like a minor crisis compared with our nation's economy, bullying is the reason why 160,000 kids miss school daily for fear of being victimized.

Studies have shown that 56% of students have seen bullying at their school. Most of these adolescents were bystanders; people were present, but not involved. Many of these people witnessed the bullying, but didn't stop it.

Everyone has a voice, but not everyone knows how to use it. 81% of bullying acts aren't reported to adults. The victim may feel scared to tell adults about the bully. Bystanders don't interfere; either for fear the bully might single them out as their next target, or because they don't want to get branded with the title "tattletale".

Many things can get in the way of becoming an upstander, but there aren't obstacles we can't overcome. T.V. newscaster Jennifer Livingston was a victim of bullying, along with many other people. She was called names and was made fun of. Yet, she did something most victims wouldn't do. She stood up for herself. Jennifer Livingston was a person who recognized that there was something wrong and made it right, the definition of what we need to be. An upstander.

Sometimes, others need to speak up for them. Bullies usually pick victims who seem powerless and timid; too intimidated to say something. Upstanders can encourage people to take a stand by setting an example. Upstanders can tell the victim to inform an adult or tell the bully to stand.

Upstanders can make all the difference in life. Take Martin Luther King Jr. for instance. He realized that something needed to be change about the segregation of blacks and whites. Instead of doing nothing, Martin took matters into his own hands. Along the way, he got arrested a few times, but that didn't stop him. He tried again and again for what he believed in. And all of his hard work paid off. Because Martin Luther King Jr. was an upstander, today, everyone is treated equally.

Bullying is a predicament we can't just evade. The amount of bullying increases each and everyday. The first step to stopping bullying: becoming upstanders. The second step: using your voice to help others in need. When someone is bullied, step in yourself or tell an adult. Remember, we all make a choice in life. We either decide to be an ignorant bystander or an upstander who wants to make a difference.

## Assessment and Annotation to Guide Revision Conferences

Both writers paid close attention to the prompt/process requirements for writing an Upstanders, Not Bystanders editorial and also to the genre features of and criteria for editorials.

To prepare for the revision conferences, I read their drafts, comparing them to our criteria chart of the genre features of editorials and to the Editorial rubric I would use to assess their final drafts. I decided to focus the questions I would ask them to think about for their revision on these genre features:

- A title that is the lead and a “gist” sentence at the beginning that names the problem or issue
- An objective explanation of the issue (background information)

I also chose to focus on these process requirements:

- Describe at least one example of an upstander who made a difference in the world.
- Explain why students at JMS should think about becoming upstanders. Use facts and statistics gathered in your research to support your argument.

When I looked to the Editorial rubric, I identified these areas that seemed to sum up what should be revised and strengthened in the students' next draft:

- Under Ideas and Development: Employing facts and statistics to develop the argument.
- Under Organization and Focus: Maintaining a consistent focus.

## Questions for the Writer of Draft A

1. Strong position: All of us need to work together to stand up to bullying and that means teachers and students need to have more watchful eyes. Do your facts and statistics help you support and argue that position? Are there facts and statistics that should be deleted? Are there other facts and statistics in your writer's notebook that support your position?
2. Since the audience for the editorial will be your fellow students at JMS, the opening reminder to the bullying incident on campus grabs our attention. Was the problem that day not enough watchful eyes or was it the lack of action?
3. I'm not sure your Michael Phelps example helps you support your position. Why did you choose that example? Is there something in your notes or your thinking that can connect the example to your position?
4. Are there some specific ways that teachers and students can work together to stand up to bullying? Or have watchful eyes together?

## Questions for the Writer of Draft B

1. Strong title and gist sentence, and your facts and statistics in the beginning paragraphs help us see the need for upstanders at school. All leads to “ everyone has voice but not everyone knows how to use it.”
2. I'm not sure your upstander examples help you support your position, however. What else do we need to know about Jennifer Livingston to understand how she is an upstander? What was the bullying she stood up to? What did she do?
3. Don't assume everyone knows Martin Luther King, Jr. as an upstander? What else can you include that helps us see him in the way you do? Did both of your upstanders use their voice to stand up? Is that important? Do you need both examples of that?
4. How can you make sure your editorial speaks to students at JMS and calls them to action?