

How to Get Started Using

Benchmark Writer's Universe

Writer's Universe offers unlimited independent process writing practice for today's writer, in a collaborative, safe digital environment.

Available in English and Spanish!



Student Experience

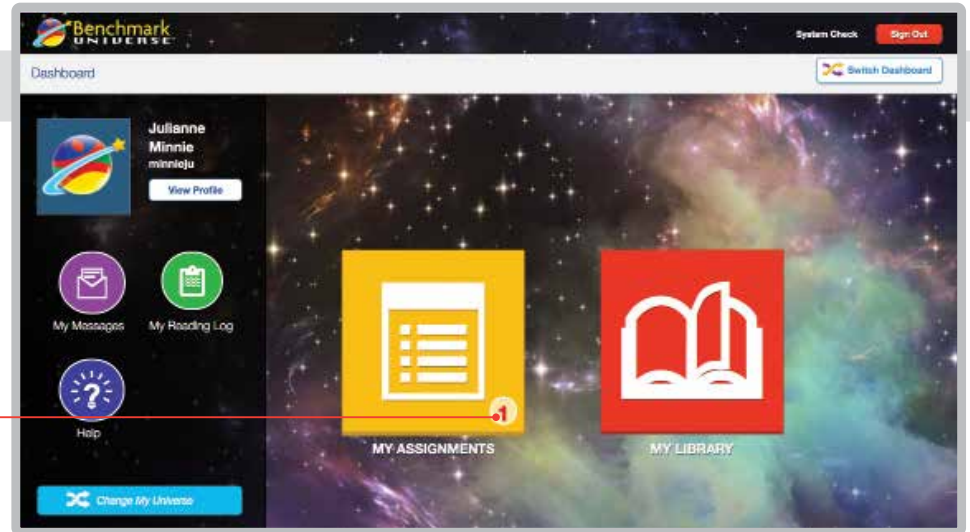
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I. Find Your Assignments

To find your Writer's Universe assignments, click on **My Assignments** from the Benchmark Universe dashboard. A list of your current assignments will open.

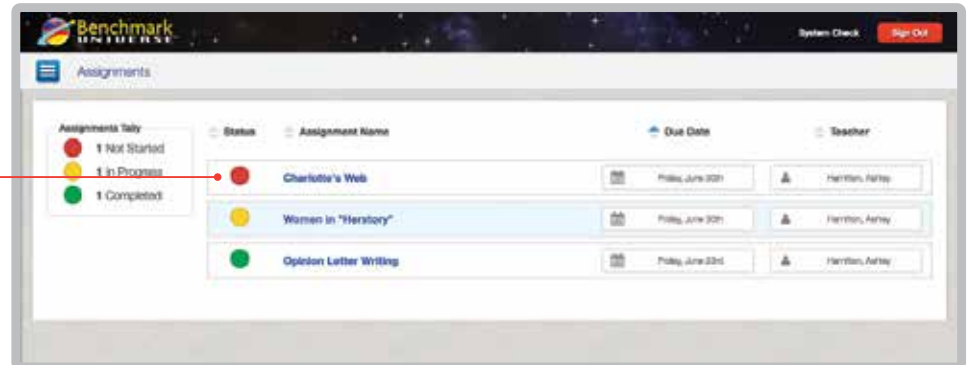
To open an assignment, click on the assignment name.

My Assignments



Benchmark Universe Dashboard

Choose Your Assignment



Assignments

2. Launch a Project

To launch a Writer's Universe project, click on your assignment and then click on the book icon in the dialog window that opens. Your genre project homepage will open in a new tab.

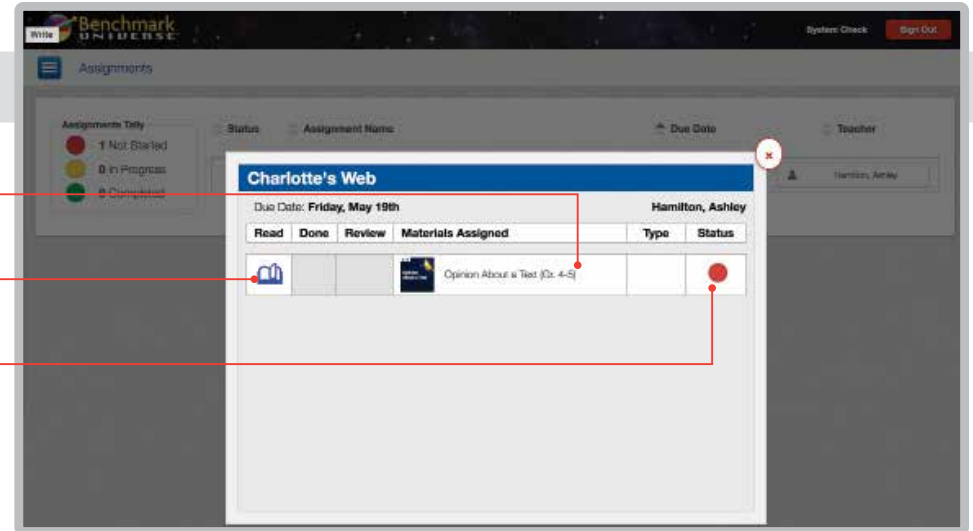
Writer's Universe will guide you through the steps in the writing process, from brainstorming through drafting and all the way to publishing your final project!

- **About the Genre:** Learn about the features of the genre you will be writing.
- **Pre-Write:** Brainstorm your ideas, choose your topic, and plan your writing.
- **Draft:** Write your first draft.
- **Revise/Edit:** Revise your draft with helpful tips.
- **Publish:** Publish your completed genre project.
- **Reflect:** Reflect on your experience and refine your writing skills.

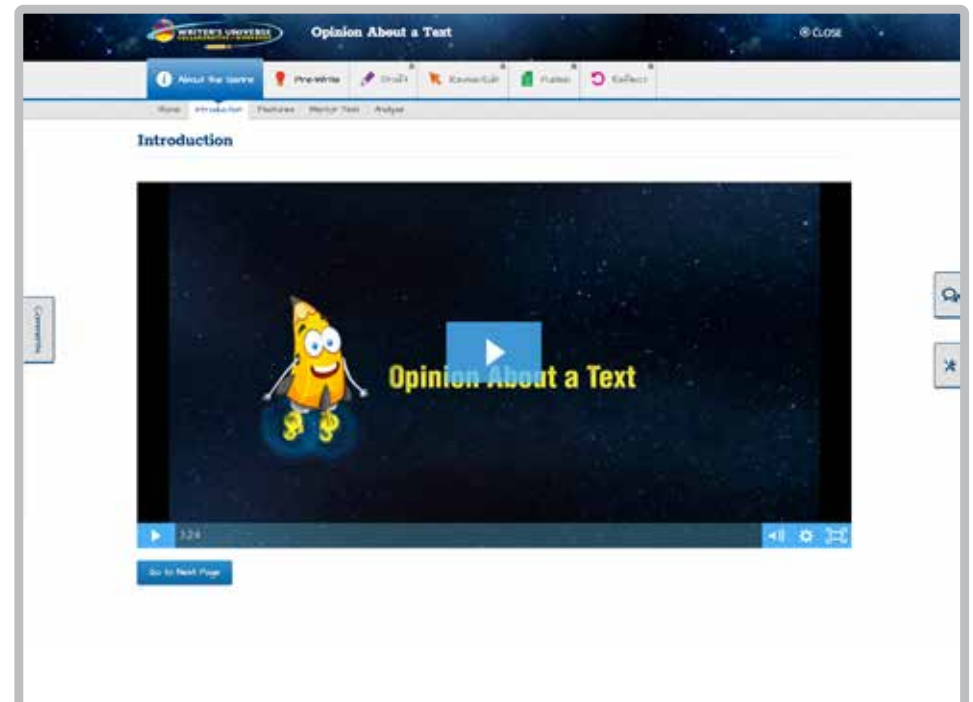
Your Writer's Universe Project

Open Your Project

Assignment Status



Assignments



Writer's Universe Home

3. Learn About the Genre

You'll begin your genre project by viewing a short video that introduces Writer's Universe.

1. **Watch the Videos:** Once you've viewed the introduction video, click **Go to Next Page** to watch a video about the genre.
2. **View Genre Features:** Once you've viewed the genre video, click **Go to Next Page** again to see a summary of the genre features. You can come back to this section throughout the project.
3. **Read the Mentor Text:** After you've read the genre's features, click **Go to Next Page** to read a Mentor Text. Click the magnifying glasses to highlight each genre feature within the text.
4. **Complete the Genre Activity:** When you've read the Mentor Text, click **Go to Next Page** to practice your understanding of the genre's features with a short activity. Drag and drop text from the Mentor Text on the left into the boxes on the right. When you've completed the activity, click **Check Answers**.

As you work, some steps may be locked for your teacher to review. You can choose to leave the project at this point or refresh the page to see if your teacher has had a chance to review and unlock the next step for you!

Your teacher can monitor and comment on your writing throughout the project, and lock or unlock each step along the way.



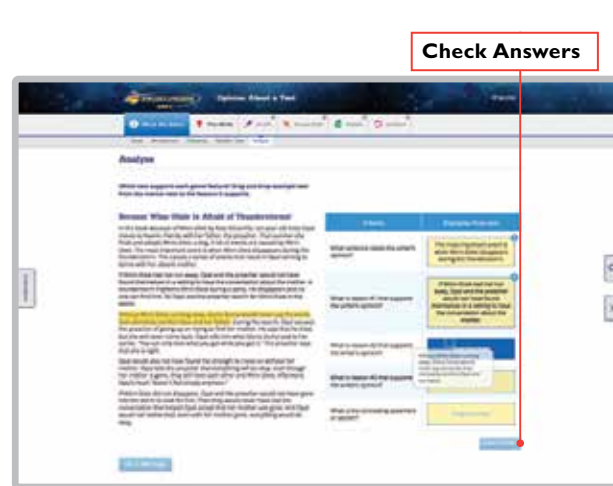
1. Watch the Videos



2. View Genre Features



3. Read the Mentor Text



4. Complete the Genre Activity

4. Pre-Write, Locate Writing Tips and Rubric

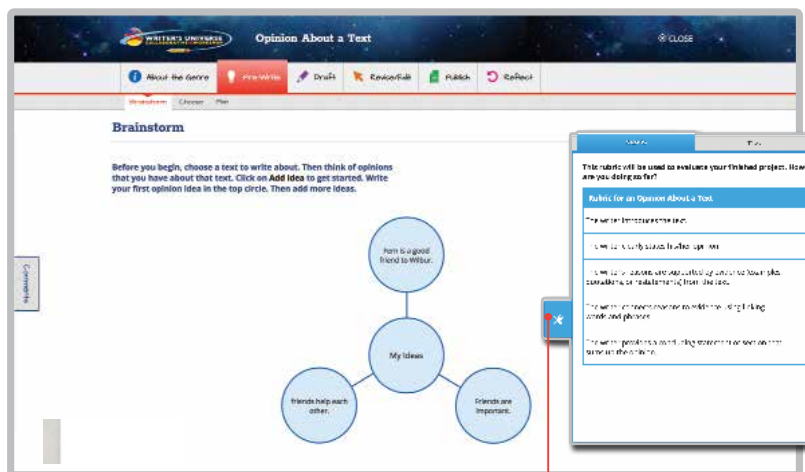
It's time to begin the pre-write stage! You'll start by brainstorming your ideas.

- 1. Brainstorm Ideas:** Use the interactive web to add your ideas. Click **Add Idea** to add as many ideas as you'd like! Once you've created a few ideas, click **Go to Next Page**.
- 2. Chose Your Focus:** Use the checklist to evaluate your ideas and click the star to choose one! Once you've chosen your idea, click **Go to Next Page**.
- 3. Plan Your Writing:** On this page, fill in the chart to plan your writing. Click **Go to Next Page** once you've completed the chart.

At any time, click on the **Tools** icon on the right to view the rubric and writing tips. The box will slide out.

The **Rubric** tab shows you exactly what content your teacher wants to see in your writing.

The **Tips** tab provides you with a checklist for each step of the writing process—you can check off each tip as you go, which will help you create your strongest draft.



1. Brainstorm Ideas

Click on the **Tools** tab to find the **Rubric** and **Writing Tips!**



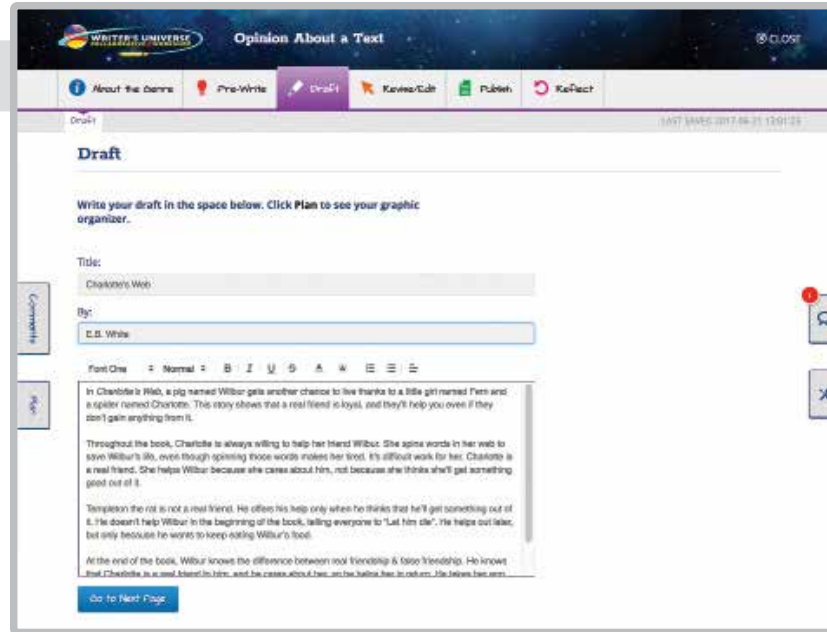
3. Plan Your Writing



2. Choose Your Focus

5. Draft/Revise/Edit

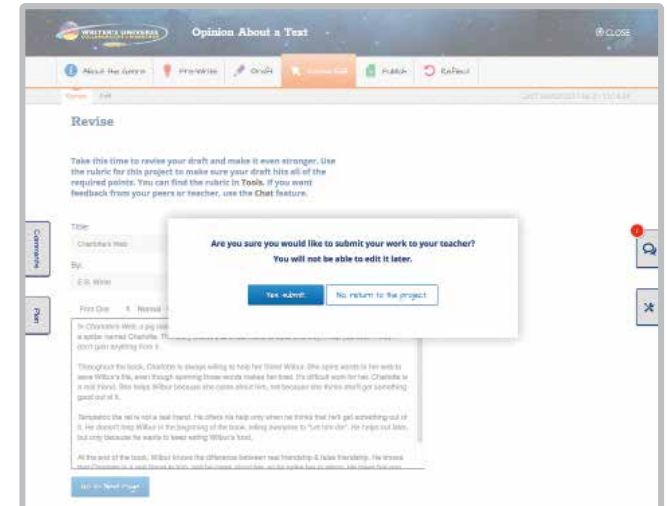
- 1. Start Your Draft:** Once you've completed pre-writing and are ready to begin writing, click **Go to Next Page** to start your draft.
- 2. Review Your Plan:** Click on the **Plan** tab anytime to review the previous step. Use this as a guide as you write your draft.
- 3. Submit Your Draft:** When your draft is ready for review, click **Go to Next Page** and it will be submitted to your teacher for review.



1. Start Your Draft



2. Review Your Plan



3. Submit Your Draft

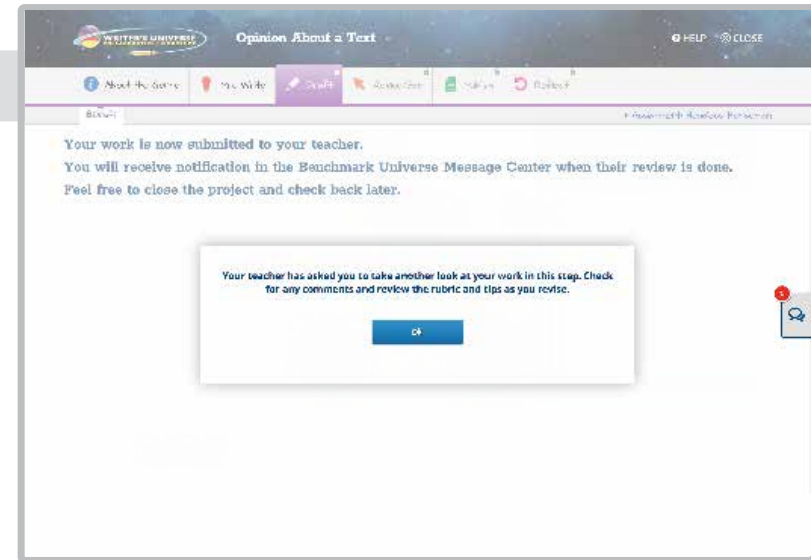
6. Take Another Look at Your Project

At any stage during the writing process, your teacher may request that you take another look at the project to make sure it is meeting the rubric requirements.

You'll receive a message from your teacher requesting that you review and edit that step before the project is unlocked and you can continue.

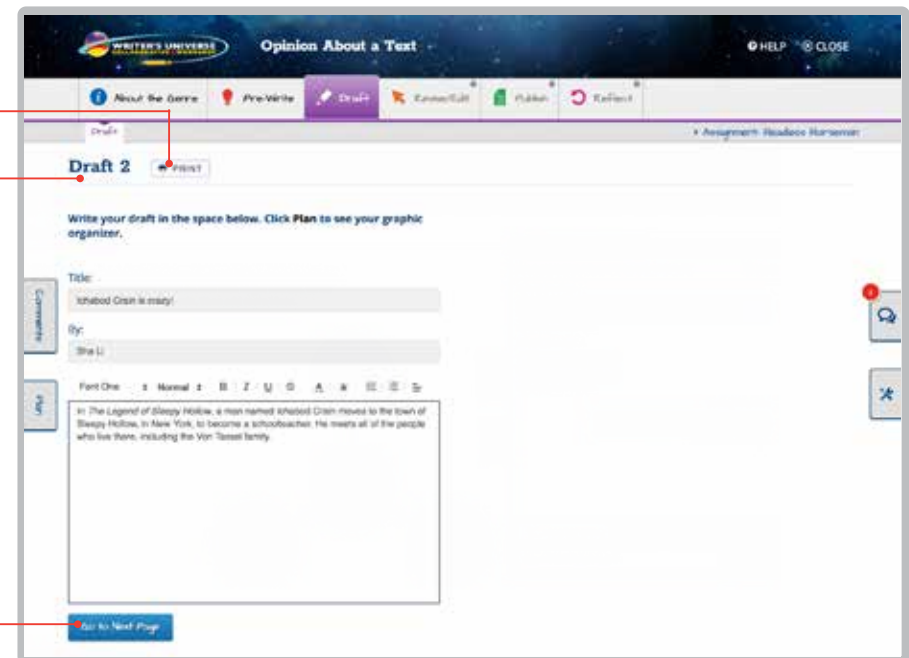
To take another look, open your Writer's Universe project and pick up the project where you left off. The draft number will appear in the top left corner of your project. Remember to check for comments from your teacher in the Comments box!

Once you've made your updates, you can submit the project to your teacher for review. You can also print your draft using the **Print** button.



Print Your Draft

Draft #2



Submit Your Project

7. Chat with Your Teacher

To chat with your teacher, select the **Chat** icon, located above Tools. Choose the **Teacher Conference** tab.

You can start a conference with your teacher by selecting **Start New**. Once you've found your teacher, select **Start New Room**.

If you've already begun a chat, your messages will display when you open the Chat box. Click the arrow to view the full chat.

Use the chat to ask your teacher for help. You can click **Share My Writing** to send your teacher a link to your writing.

Teacher Conference

The screenshot shows the 'Opinion About a Text' interface. The main area is titled 'Brainstorm' and contains a mind map with three nodes: 'Farm is a good friend to Wilbur.', 'My ideas', and 'Friends are important.' Below the mind map is a 'Start New Room' button. On the right, a 'Teacher Conference' chat window is open, showing a search bar and a list of users including Ashley Hamilton and Kaitlyn Jennings. A 'Start New Conference' button is visible in the chat window's header.

Start New Conference

View Full Chat

Active Chats

This screenshot is similar to the previous one but shows an active chat session. The 'Teacher Conference' chat window now displays a message from Kaitlyn Jennings: 'Can you help me figure out which opinion has the most evidence?' and a response from Ashley Hamilton: 'I think you should round chapter 5 for ideas.' A 'Share My Writing' button is visible at the bottom of the chat window.

Share Your Writing

Teacher Chat

8. Chat with Your Peers

Your teacher can set up a peer conference with your classmates. A notification will appear in the Chat tab when a peer chat is set up.

Click on the **Peer Conference** tab. All of your peer chats will be listed.

Click the arrow to open the chat. Click **Share My Writing** to send your teacher a link to your writing, or to share your writing with the peers in your chat. Your peers can share writing with you, too! When they do, you can click on the link that is sent in the chat.

To exit the peer conference, click on the red close button. To close the chat area, click on the chat tab.

The screenshot shows the 'Opinion About a Text' interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'About the Item', 'Pre-write', 'Draft', 'Review/Get', 'Publish', and 'Reflect'. Below these is a 'Brainstorm' section with instructions: 'Before you begin, choose a text to write about. Then think of opinions that you have about that text. Click on Add Idea to get started. Write your first opinion idea in the top circle. Then add more ideas.' The brainstorming area contains three circles: 'Item is a good friend to Wilbur.', 'My Ideas' (with an 'Add Idea' button), and 'Friends are important.' Below these are two more circles: 'Friends help each other.' and 'Friends are important.' A 'Go to Next Page' button is at the bottom left. On the right, a 'Peer Conference' chat window is open, showing a list of participants: 'You are conferencing with: Gao Chen, Ashley Hamilton, Kevlar Bushley'. The chat area contains messages from 'Kevlar Bushley': 'Please share your rough drafts' and 'Share your writing with peers'. A 'Share My Writing' button is visible in the chat window. A 'Close' button is in the top right of the chat window. A 'Peer Conference' tab is also visible at the top of the chat window.

Peer Conference

Peer Conference

Close the Chat

View your peer's writing

Share your writing with peers

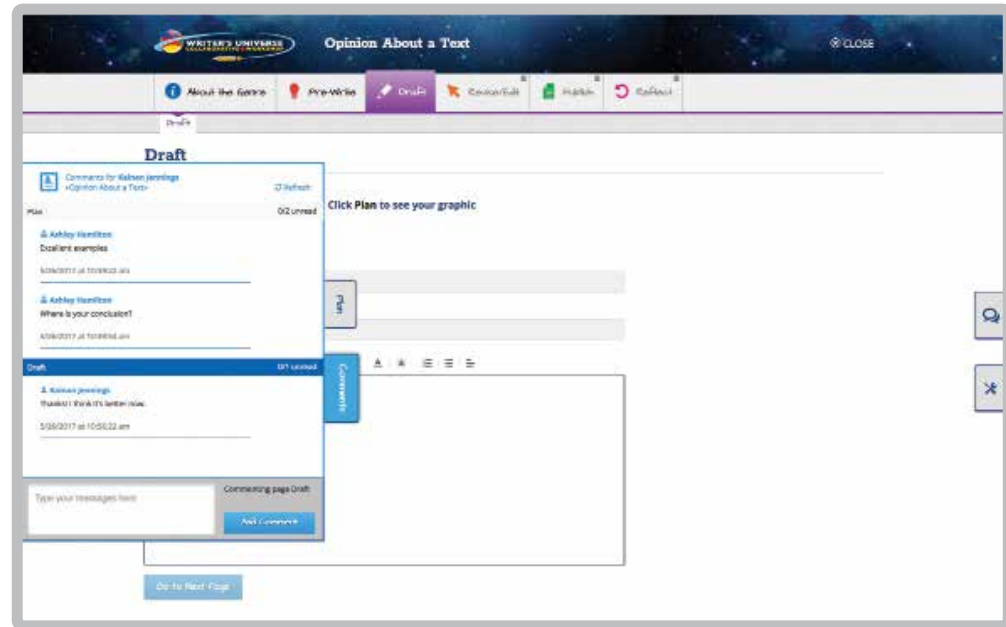
9. Review Comments

Your teacher or peers may leave comments on your writing during the draft, revise, and edit stages. Comments help you improve your writing. Think about how you can use comments from your teacher and peers to improve your writing between each stage of the writing process.

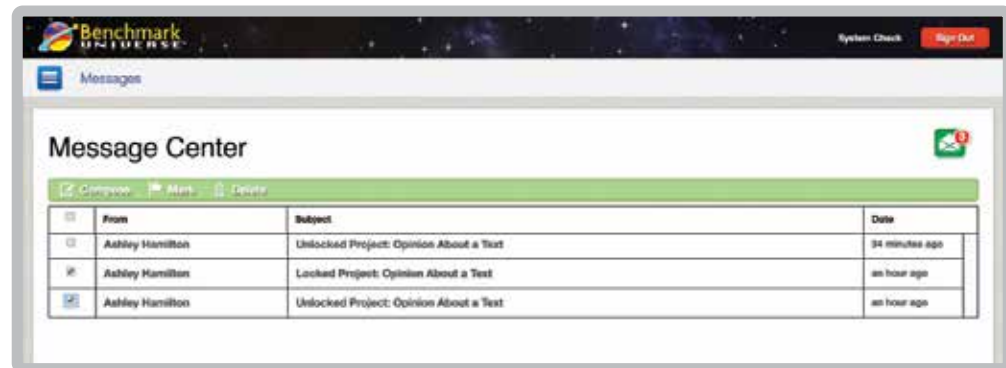
Click the **Comments** tab on the left side of an open project to view comments. You can respond to comments or leave a new comment here as well.

Even if you do not have your writing project open, you will still be able to see if someone has commented on your writing. You'll receive a new message in your Benchmark Universe Message Center when someone has commented on your project.

Click on the hyperlink inside the message to be transported back into your Writer's Universe project to read the comment!



Project Comments



Message Center



10. Publish Your Genre Project

After you've revised and edited your writing, it's time to publish! The Publish page allows you to self-evaluate and publish your writing.

The Self-Assessment page provides you with the rubric for the project. Use the drop-down menus to assign a score to each rubric point. Then leave comments in the box below.

Click **Go to Next Page** to submit your writing to your teacher.

The Publish page allows you to convert your project into a PDF for easy printing or sharing. You can also upload it to your class portfolio or Google Drive.

Self-Assessment

Assess your Opinion About a Text using the rubric. Select a score for each statement: 4 is the highest score, 1 is the lowest. Then write comments about your writing.

Rubric	Score
The piece introduces the text clearly.	4
The piece begins with a strong lead that clearly states an opinion.	4
Reasons for the opinion are well organized and clear.	3
Facts and details support each reason behind the opinion.	4
Specific words, phrases, and clauses connect the opinion and reasons.	4
The concluding statement or section supports the opinion.	4

Comments
I think I have good examples for my opinion.

Title: Charlotte's Web
By: EB White

In Charlotte's Web, a pig named Wilbur gets another chance to live thanks to a little girl named Fern and a spider named Charlotte. This story shows that a real friend is loyal, and they'll help you even if they don't gain anything from it.

Throughout the book, Charlotte is always willing to help her friend Wilbur. She spins words in her web to save Wilbur's life, even though spinning those words makes her tired. It's difficult work for her. Charlotte is a real friend. She helps Wilbur because she cares about him, not because she thinks she'll get something good out of it.

Templeton the rat is not a real friend. He offers his help only when he thinks that he'll get something out of it. He doesn't help Wilbur in the beginning of the book, talking everyone to "Let him die". He helps out later, but only because he wants to keep eating Wilbur's food.

At the end of the book, Wilbur knows the difference between real friendship & false friendship. He knows that Charlotte is a real friend to him, and he cares about her, so he helps her in return. He takes her 498 out back to the barn, where his brother has died for her. He says, "He

Evaluate Your Work

Publish your writing

Click here to convert your work into a PDF document.

Publish your writing

Click here to convert your work into a PDF document.

Title: Charlotte's Web
By: Kai D

In Charlotte's Web, a pig named Wilbur gets another chance to live thanks to a little girl named Fern and a spider named Charlotte. This story shows that a real friend is loyal, and they'll help you even if they don't gain anything from it.

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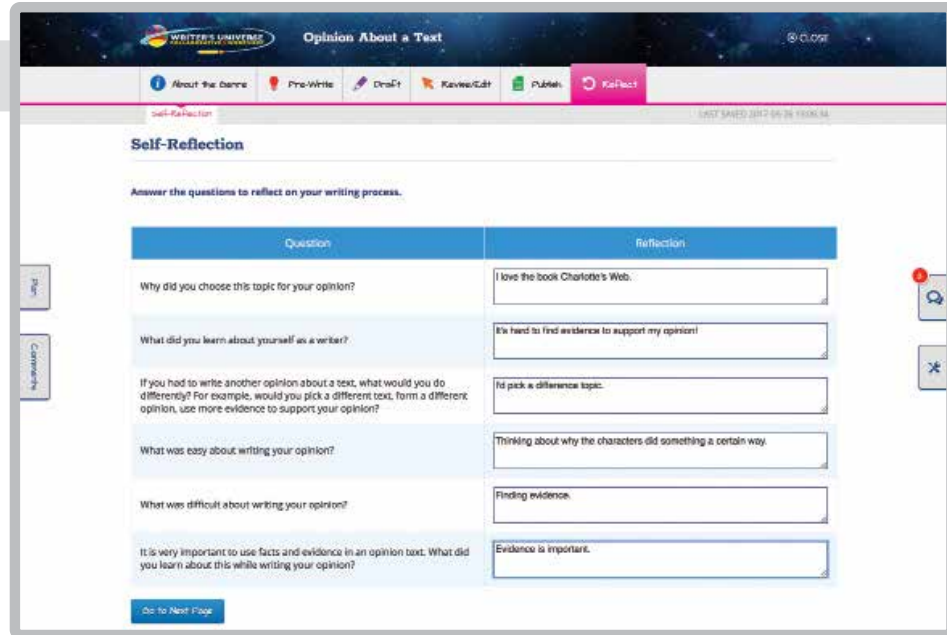
Publish Your Writing

II. Reflect and Evaluate

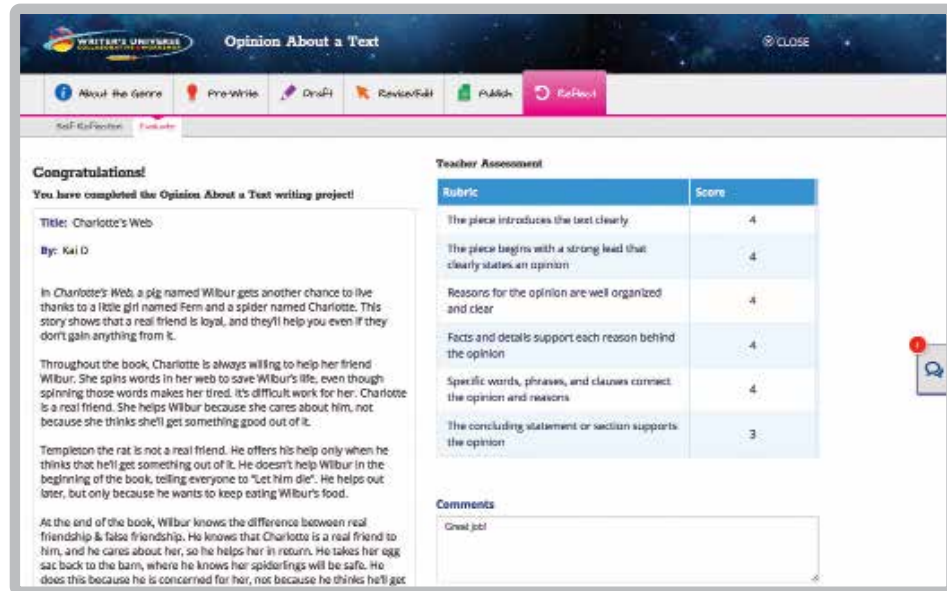
The last step in Writer’s Universe is to self-reflect on the writing process so that you can improve your writing skills! Respond to the questions on the **Reflect** tab. Click on **Go to Next Page** to submit your answers.

You will receive a notification when your teacher has reviewed your final project.

Congratulations! You have completed your Writer’s Universe project.



Reflect on Your Writing



Completed Writer’s Universe Project



Peer Online Collaboration



School-Home Connection



Independent Writing



Monitor Progress