

Lead-In Materials Overview

This guide provides you with the information you need to teach students the essential information they need in order to perform on the reading comprehension task that will be administered on Session 2, and the writing task that will be administered on Session 4, and Session 5. This lesson is necessary to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to perform their best on the tasks. Please read this carefully and follow the instructions with fidelity.

Overall Assessment Structure	
Session 1: Introduction – Required Lead-In activities	Students read and discuss a short story, “Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto in which the author describes the questions which adolescents have about claiming their identities as learners and the role that self, others, and adults play in this process. Students discuss the questions that middle school students face about whether they will identify as a learner – and how they make those decisions.
Session 2: Assessment of Reading comprehension (see task administration guide)	Students read and analyze a short summary of research on middle schools that identifies how students get “off track.” Students write a short summary of the research and draw inferences about the implications for schools.
Session 3: Building Understanding of the Topic – Required Lead-In activities	Students read and analyze a profile of Granger Middle School, a school designed to support students in becoming learners. They identify and analyze the strategies used at Granger and consider whether the schools strike the right balance between: 1) teaching students to make wise choices and 2) making those choices for them.
Sessions 4 and 5: Assessment: Argument- based Essay Writing	Students analyze the writing prompt, review their notes, use an optional outlining tool to organize their thoughts and begin writing. Students finish writing and proofread their responses.

Teacher Manual: Guidance for **Session 1** Lead-In Materials

Session 1	Lead-In Materials Guidance Booklet
Purpose	The purpose of this first session is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a level playing field with respect to understanding the concept of argument• Provide students with “the big picture” of the task activities• Begin sharing the ingredients of an effective argument through a close examination of the claims and evidence different authors offer
Materials	Provided texts (student lead-in packet: Session 1) Provided graphic organizer (student lead-in packet: Session 1) Smart Board or Chart Paper
Total Time	45 minutes

(15 min.) **Activity 1:** Introduce Students to Academic Argument

- 1) *5 minutes:* Students may need help building an understanding of the concept of an argument as it is used here: a position on an important issue, backed up by evidence and reasoning. Some students may need help making the distinction between this meaning of argument and the everyday term for a noisy disagreement with two sides stubbornly holding on to their original positions.

To build up this understanding ask students work to work in pairs to discuss the following:

There are two kinds of argument:

- A noisy disagreement with two (or more) sides stubbornly holding on to their original positions.
- A exchange on an important issue, where each speaker/writer uses evidence and reasoning to convince the other to consider a different point of view, choice, or action.

What happens in these two different kinds of exchanges?

- What strategies do people use in the first case?
- What strategies do people use in the second case?

If you can get your way in the first kind of argument, why does the second kind of argument matter (e.g., in court cases, in making significant choices for government, etc.)?

Use a smart board or chart paper and note students’ ideas and the key differences between these two definitions of the term.

- 2) *5 minutes*: Help students develop an understanding of some key terms often used in writing arguments. For example:

Argument-based essay: In this kind of essay, writers not only give information but they also present an argument with the PROS (supporting claims and evidence) and CONS (opposing claims and evidence) for an issue. Writers need to take a clear stand and use clear language and well-chosen evidence that will convince people who are uncertain or who have a different point of view on the issue.

- 3) *5 minutes*: Review Key Vocabulary for Argument Writing:
Vocabulary for Argument Writing

+	-
Supporters	Opponents
Those in favor of ...	Those opposed to ...
Defenders of ...	Critics of ...
Advocates	Objectors
Pro-... (e.g. <i>Pro-abortionists</i>)	Anti-... (e.g. <i>Anti-abortionists</i>)
Claim	Counterclaim
Evidence	Counter-evidence
Teachers may want to add additional terms taken from the argument rubric or checklist. It can be useful for students to develop definitions in their own words and to keep these “student-friendly” definitions posted in the classroom	

(30 minutes) **Activity 2:** Review text by Gary Soto and have students answer provided questions to guide their thinking. Full texts and graphic organizer to jot down answers are below. Students have their own copy in their *student materials packet*.

Text: Gary Soto’s “Seventh Grade”

1) *20 minutes:*

- a. Distribute the lead-in booklet to students.
- b. Ask students to read the introduction and the short story, “Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto. While this is a literary text, they are reading to build an understanding of the issues that are discussed in the accompanying informational texts.
- c. As they read, ask them to analyze the story, using the directions and the note-taking space provided.
- d. During the discussion below, guide students to think about the ways Gary’s learning was supported or not supported by both his peers and teachers. Highlight the ways in which the teacher responded to Tony’s insecurities and responses in class to help them get to the thoughts below.

2) *10 minutes:* Facilitate a discussion with students regarding the notes they have written.

a. *Consider discussing these questions:*

1. What questions was Tony asking himself about being a learner?
2. How did his peers (Teresa and Victor) affect the choices Tony made?
3. How did his teacher, Mr. Bueller, affect the choices Tony made? (
4. What does this story imply about how schools should strike the balance between letting students make their own choices and protecting them from making poor decisions?

b. *Consider having students discuss their own views about their learning in small groups*

1. How does Tony’s experience relate to your own experience?
2. What would be your ideal classroom/school environment?

3) Collect texts at the conclusion of class, to be distributed to students at the beginning of class on Session 2.

4) * STOP. SWITCH TO TASK ADMINISTRATION GUIDANCE MATERIALS FOR SESSION 2 INSTRUCTION. RETURN TO THIS PACKET FOR SESSION 3. *****

Session 2 is in the Task Administration Guide

Session 2	Task Administration Guidance Booklet
Purpose	The purpose of Session 2 is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess student’s reading comprehension of informational text• Provide students with additional support for the writing activity during Sessions 4 and 5
Materials	Task Administration Guidance Booklet Task Administration Student Response Booklet
Total Time	45 minutes

Teacher Manual: Guidance for **Session 3** Lead-In Materials

Now that students have completed the reading assessment, the goal of Session 3 is to prepare them for the writing assessment.

Session 3	Lead-In Guidance Booklet
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read and analyze a text which will serve as the basis for their response to the writing prompt during Sessions 4 and 5.
Materials	Student Lead-In Booklet
Total Time	45 minutes

(15 min) **Activity 1: Background and Orientation to the topic:**

- Start by asking students to summarize briefly what they wrote on Day 2.
- Explain to your students that because of the importance of what happens in the middle grades, there is a national debate about how to design the middle grade years so that all students can be successful learners who go on to high school. You might present the following topics:
 - Some educators argue that middle schools must focus first and foremost on academic learning in core subjects like math and literacy. To ensure that this happens, for example, they argue that all 8th graders should take Algebra, read critically, and write an independent research paper, even if it means extra classes on Saturdays and in the summers. They argue that it is up adults to ensure that young people get what they need to succeed, even if it means strict rules and consequences.
 - For example, the following quote represents where New York City stands on the ideals and focus it has for the public education provided in the City.

Shael Suransky, CAO NYC Public Schools from the letter to all teachers (available in the common core library) in regard to the need for academic rigor:

“To successfully prepare all students—including students with disabilities and English language learners—for life after high school, teachers need to create cognitively demanding learning experiences in their classrooms every day.”

- Other educators believe that the most important lessons of the middle grades occur when young people learn to take responsibility for their own learning. While they believe in high standards for all students, these educators often argue that students can learn mathematics and literacy in a variety of courses such as arts, chess, and technology. They believe that adults are there to guide young people’s development as independent thinkers.
- As a result, all over the United States, school districts are trying to figure out the right balance between
 - What adults should decide in order to help young people learn and
 - Where young people can, and should, be making some choices of their own.

Note: You may want to illustrate this debate with specific examples from your own school.

(30 min) **Activity 2: Reading and Note-taking**

- Ask students to read the profile of Granger Middle School in California – a school that is trying to find the right balance. (Below and in Student Materials Booklet)
- Ask students to take notes in their graphic organizer (below) as they read about what Granger Middle School has decided to do. Draw their attention to the note-taking column and point out that they are being asked to think about several things as they read:
 - The rules the school has adopted to ensure that everyone learns academic content
 - Where there are opportunities for young people to make their own choices about learning
 - Whether the school has a good balance between these two types of learning

Texts and Graphic Organizer made available to students Session 1 (also printed separately in student materials):

- Ask students to read the introduction and the short story, “Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto. While this is a literary text, they are reading to build an understanding of the issues that are discussed in the accompanying informational texts.
- As they read, ask them to analyze the story, using the directions and the note-taking space provided.

Text: “Seventh Grade” by Gary Soto

On the first day of school, Victor stood in line half an hour before he came to a wobbly card table. He was handed a packet of papers and a computer card on which he listed his one elective, French. He already spoke Spanish and English, but he thought some day he might travel to France, where it was cool; not like Fresno, where summer days reached 110 degrees in the shade. There were rivers in France, and huge churches, and fair-skinned people everywhere, the way there were brown people all around Victor.

Besides, Teresa, a girl he had liked since they were in catechism classes at Saint Theresa’s, was taking French, too. With any luck they would be in the same class. Teresa is going to be my girl this year, he promised himself as he left the gym full of students in their new fall clothes. She was cute. And good in math, too, Victor thought as he walked down the hall to his homeroom. He ran into his friend, Michael Torres, by the water fountain that never turned off.

They shook hands, *raza-style*¹, and jerked their heads at one another in a *saludo de vato*² “How come you’re making a face?” asked Victor.

“I ain’t making a face, *ese*³. This is my face.” Michael said his face had changed during the summer. He had read a GQ magazine that his older brother had borrowed from the Book Mobile and noticed that the male models all had the same look on their faces. They would stand, one arm around a beautiful woman, and scowl. They would sit at the pool, their rippled stomachs dark with shadow, and scowl. They would sit at dinner tables, cool drinks in their hands, and scowl.

“I think it works,” Michael said. He scowled and let his upper lip quiver. His teeth showed along with the ferocity of his soul. “Belinda Reyes walked by a while ago and looked at me,” he said.

Victor didn’t say anything, though he thought his friend looked pretty strange. They talked about recent movies, baseball, their parents, and the horrors of picking grapes in order to buy their fall clothes. Picking grapes was like living in Siberia⁴ except hot and more boring.

¹ Raza- style: the way things are done in Mexican neighborhoods

² Saludo de vato: Spanish gestures of greeting between friends

³ Ese – Spanish for man

⁴ A cold, northern region of Russia

“What classes are you taking?” Michael said, scowling.

“French. How ‘bout you?”

“Spanish. I ain’t so good at it, even if I’m Mexican.”

“I’m not either, but I’m better at it than math, that’s for sure.”

A tinny, three-beat bell propelled students to their homerooms. The two friends socked each other in the arm and went their ways, Victor thinking, man, that’s weird. Michael thinks making a face makes him handsome.

On the way to his homeroom, Victor tried a scowl. He felt foolish, until out of the corner of his eye he saw a girl looking at him. Umm, he thought, maybe it does work. He scowled with greater conviction.

In the homeroom, roll was taken, emergency cards were passed out, and they were given a bulletin to take home to their parents. The principal, Mr. Belton, spoke over the crackling loudspeaker, welcoming the students to a new year, new experiences, and new friendships. The students squirmed in their chairs and ignored him, they were anxious to go to first period. Victor sat calmly, thinking of Teresa, who sat two rows away, reading a paperback novel. This would be his lucky year. She was in his homeroom, and would probably be in his English and math classes. And, of course, French.

The bell rang for first period, and the students herded noisily through the door. Only Teresa lingered, talking with the homeroom teacher.

“So you think I should talk to Mrs. Gaines?” she asked the teacher. “She would know about ballet?”

“She would be a good bet,” the teacher said. Then added, “Or the gym teacher, Mrs. Garza.”

Victor lingered, keeping his head down and staring at his desk. He wanted to leave when she did so he could bump into her and say something clever.

He watched her on the sly. As she turned to leave, he stood up and hurried to the door, where he managed to catch her eye. She smiled and said, “Hi, Victor.”

He smiled back and said, “Yeah, that’s me.” His brown face blushed. Why hadn’t he said, “Hi, Teresa,” or “How was your summer?” or something nice.

As Teresa walked down the hall, Victor walked the other way, looking back, admiring how gracefully she walked, one foot in front of the other. So much for being in the same class, he thought. As he trudged to English, he practiced scowling.

In English they reviewed the parts of speech. Mr. Lucas, a portly man, waddled down the aisle, asking, “What is a noun?”

“A person, place, or thing,” said the class in unison.

“Yes, now somebody give me an example of a person--you, Victor Rodriguez.”

“Teresa,” Victor said automatically. Some of the girls giggled. They knew he had a crush on Teresa. He felt himself blushing again.

“Correct,” Mr. Lucas said. “Now provide me with a place.”

Mr. Lucas called on a freckled kid who answered, “Teresa’s house with a kitchen full of big brothers.”

After English, Victor had math, his weakest subject. He sat in the back by the window, hoping that he would not be called on. Victor understood most of the problems, but some of the stuff looked like the teacher made it up as she went along. It was confusing, like the inside of a watch.

After math he had a fifteen-minute break, then social studies, and finally lunch. He bought a tuna casserole with buttered rolls, some fruit cocktail, and milk. He sat with Michael, who practiced scowling between bites.

Girls walked by and looked at him, “See what I mean, Vic?” Michael scowled. “They love it.”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

They ate slowly, Victor scanning the horizon for a glimpse of Teresa. He didn’t see her. She must have brought lunch, he thought, and is eating outside. Victor scraped his plate and left Michael, who was busy scowling at a girl two tables away.

The small, triangle-shaped campus bustled with students talking about their new classes. Everyone was in a sunny mood. Victor hurried to the bag lunch area, where he sat down and opened his math book. He moved his lips as if he were reading, but his mind was somewhere else. He raised his eyes slowly and looked around. No Teresa.

He lowered his eyes, pretending to study, then looked slowly to the left. No Teresa. He turned a page in the book and stared at some math problems that scared him because he knew he would have to do them eventually. He looked at the right. Still no sign of her. He stretched out lazily in an attempt to disguise his snooping.

Then he saw her. She was sitting with a girlfriend under a plum tree. Victor moved to a table near her and daydreamed about taking her to a movie. When the bell sounded, Teresa looked up, and their eyes met. She smiled sweetly and gathered her books. Her next class was French, same as Victor’s.

They were among the last students to arrive in class, so all the good desks in the back had already been taken. Victor was forced to sit near the front, a few desks away from Teresa, while Mr. Bueller wrote French words on the chalkboard. The bell rang, and Mr. Bueller wiped his hands, turned to the class, and said, “Bonjour.”⁵

“Bonjour,” braved a few students.

“Bonjour,” Victor whispered. He wondered if Teresa heard him.

Mr. Bueller said that if the students studied hard, at the end of the year they could go to France and be understood by the populace.

One kid raised his hand and asked, “What’s ‘populace’?”

“The people, the people of France.”

Mr. Bueller asked if anyone knew French. Victor raised his hand, wanting to impress Teresa. The teacher beamed and said, “Très bien. Parlez-vous français?”⁶

Victor didn’t know what to say. The teacher wet his lips and asked something else in French. The room grew silent. Victor felt all eyes staring at him. He tried to bluff his way out by making noises that sounded French.

“La me vave me con le grandma,” he said uncertainly.

Mr. Bueller, wrinkling his face in curiosity, asked him to speak up.

Great rosebushes of red bloomed on Victor’s cheeks. A river of nervous sweat ran down his palms. He felt awful. Teresa sat a few desks away, no doubt thinking he was a fool. Without looking at Mr. Bueller, Victor mumbled, ‘Frenchie oh wewe gee in September.’”

Mr. Bueller asked Victor to repeat what he said.

“Frenchie oh wewe gee in September,” Victor repeated.

Mr. Bueller understood that the boy didn’t know French and turned away. He walked to the blackboard and pointed to the words on the board with his steel-edged ruler.

“Le bateau,”⁷ he sang.

“Le bateau,” the students repeated.

⁵ French for hello or good day.

⁶ French for “Very good. Do you speak French?”

⁷ French for “the boat.”

“Le bateau est sur l’eau,”⁸ he sang.

“Le bateau est sur l’eau.”

Victor was too weak from failure to join the class. He stared at the board and wished he had taken Spanish, not French. Better yet, he wished he could start his life over. He had never been so embarrassed. He bit his thumb until he tore off a sliver of skin.

The bell sounded for fifth period, and Victor shot out of the room, avoiding the stares of the other kids, but had to return for his math book. He looked sheepishly at the teacher, who was erasing the board, then widened his eyes in terror at Teresa who stood in front of him. “I didn’t know you knew French,” she said. “That was good.”

Mr. Bueller looked at Victor, and Victor looked back. Oh please, don’t say anything, Victor pleaded with his eyes. I’ll wash your car, mow your lawn, walk your dog--anything! I’ll be your best student, and I’ll clean your erasers after school.

Mr. Bueller shuffled through the papers on his desk. He smiled and hummed as he sat down to work. He remembered his college years when he dated a girlfriend in borrowed cars. She thought he was rich because each time he picked her up he had a different car. It was fun until he had spent all his money on her and had to write home to his parents because he was broke.

Victor couldn’t stand to look at Teresa. He was sweaty with shame. “Yeah, well, I picked up a few things from movies and books and stuff like that.” They left the class together. Teresa asked him if he would help her with her French.

“Sure, anytime,” Victor said.

“I won’t be bothering you, will I?”

“Oh no, I like being bothered.”

“Bonjour.” Teresa said, leaving him outside her next class. She smiled and pushed wisps of hair from her face.

“Yeah, right, bonjour,” Victor said. He turned and headed to his class. The rosebuds of shame on his face became bouquets of love. Teresa is a great girl, he thought. And Mr. Bueller is a good guy.

He raced to metal shop. After metal shop there was biology, and after biology a long sprint to the public library, where he checked out three French textbooks.

He was going to like seventh grade.

⁸ French for “The boat is on the water.”

Your Analysis:

Use this space to take notes on these questions:

Underline your evidence in the text of the story.

- What choices about school is Victor thinking about making?

- What are his peers doing to affect his choices?

- What are his teachers or school doing to affect the choices he makes?

Text: A Profile of Granger Middle School, excerpted from “Gaining Ground” a study of high-performing middle schools in California

Granger Middle School is designed to ensure that all students succeed as learners. This profile outlines what the principal, Liz Peralta, and her teachers have done to make this possible.

Intervening early

Teachers at Granger are proactive. If they see that a student does not understand a concept and is falling behind, they intervene immediately often before the student fails a major test in the subject. Sometimes they will build the concept into a subsequent warm-up problem or lesson...Granger also relies on common assessments based on subject and grade. For example, math and science departments give short, formative quizzes every week. If students don't do well, teachers re-teach the concepts. The school also has a “blended support class” where teachers can send students who typically do well but who, on occasion, may need to be re-taught a particular concept. “If they can catch this kid today, this kid is going to be fine tomorrow,” Peralta says. These support classes are also populated by students who are close to proficient in an effort to get them to the next level.

But sometimes students need more support, particularly if they have failed a quiz. These students go to required after-school tutoring, which includes an opportunity to retake the test. At first, Peralta says, parents were skeptical about having to change their pick-up schedules for their children. But the prior principal took the time to explain the educational research behind the school's approach and the school's goals for their children. “It's not because your kids are being punished,” she told the parents. “It's because sometimes they just need more time. And more time means after school or during vacation.”

Parents began seeing the results in their children's progress. “The parents now tell their kids that it's important to be in school, to behave in class, and to get the help you need—and that the school offers you that help,” Peralta says.

Offering emotional support as well

But having a top-notch academic intervention program was not enough for Peralta. In her effort to go deeper, she began to think of ways to support students on an emotional level. She challenged the coordinator of the after-school program to enhance the recreational components to further connect students to the school. The coordinator accepted the challenge, and participation in the after-school program has increased by another 100 students to include 40% to 50% of Granger's students.

The school and a neighboring college are also planning to jointly apply for a grant to create an “ambassador program” to ensure that students' peer relationships are healthy. The school currently has an anti-bullying, including cyber-bullying, program; but the ambassador program would go further, training students to resolve conflicts without adult intervention.

The school already uses peer relationships to help new 7th graders learn the ropes. Ninth graders are chosen to be Link Crew leaders. The Link Crew helps the new students transition, with each 9th grader linked to a group of 7th graders. Before the school year begins, the leaders give the students a tour of the school and explain to them what will happen on their first day. Then they tell them, “If you are still not sure what to do, I’m going to be hanging out in the quad; so just come over and say ‘hi’ to me and I’ll help you.”

Transitioning in and out

The Link Crew is just one example of Granger’s proactive approach to transitions. For incoming 7th graders, the feeder elementary schools provide data and teacher recommendations. Based on that input, Granger offers a short-term academy to students who are likely to need help in math or English. At the academy, students are given a preview of the first six weeks of the curriculum. “If you’re going to be successful in the first six weeks of class, then you’re going to be persistent in the next six weeks of class,” Peralta says.

The school is considering a similar bridge course for social studies because some students do not get that course in 6th grade while others do, depending on their elementary school. At the other end of the spectrum, Peralta became concerned about how well her 9th graders were transitioning to high school when she heard from some former students that they were repeating math or couldn’t get into a science class. (At Granger, almost all students take Algebra I in 7th or 8th grade, though some repeat it in 9th grade; and all students take Biology in 9th grade.)

The principals are also working on a feeder visit to the high school that will allow 9th graders to sit in on high school classes to familiarize themselves with how high school works. “Granger wants to be a great feeder to (the) High School,” Peralta says. “We want to make sure that our students have the skills to succeed in high school, and we want to make sure that our students are prepared, whether they choose to or not, to go to college.”

Graphic Organizer for Session 3 Note-taking

As you read:	
1) Underline the choices educators at Granger have made for students	
2) Circle in the text where students have the opportunity to make their own choices about learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What strategies would you change? Why?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What strategies are missing?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What strategies would you add if you worked at Granger?	

Collect all materials at the end of the day to be distributed at the beginning of Session 4.

***** STOP. SWITCH TO ADMINISTRATION GUIDANCE MATERIALS FOR Sessions 4 AND 5 INSTRUCTION. *****

Session 4	Task Administration Guidance Booklet
Purpose	Provide planning and writing time for the writing assessment
Materials	Task Administration Guidance Booklet Task Administration Student Response Booklet
Total Time	45 minutes

Session 5	Task Administration Guidance Booklet
Purpose	Provide writing time for the writing assessment
Materials	Task Administration Guidance Booklet Task Administration Student Response Booklet
Total Time	45 minutes

Analytic Scoring Guide: Next Pages

Common Core State Standards Rubric: Reading Information/Writing *Argument*: Analytic Version/7th Grade

I. READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS (NOTE: THIS APPLIES WHERE THERE ARE SPECIFIC READING TASKS)

CCS STANDARDS	Needs Major Support/ Provides No Evidence (0): The student has not yet acquired the basic reading, writing, and thinking skills required by standards-based junior-high school instruction. Needs major support in and out of class to make progress.	Emerging (1): The student has basic reading, writing, and thinking skills for participating and producing grade-level work but needs explicit support for building skills, practice, and clear feedback to become and stay an active member of the class.	Developing (2) The student is developing the higher-order reading, writing, and thinking skills necessary for becoming proficient but needs support, demanding assignments, and clear feedback to work independently.	Proficient (3) The student has developed the higher-order reading, writing, and thinking skills to transition to upper-level high school work. Still needs support, demanding assignments, and clear feedback to become high-school-ready	Exemplary (4) The student has developed the level of reading, writing, and thinking skills needed for rigorous high school courses.
RIT 7.10: Read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range	Does not identify or misidentifies the central idea of one or more of the informational texts used.	Identifies the central idea, topic, or issue of the texts, but not supporting details. Does not draw inferences or make connections across texts.	Identifies the central idea and some supporting details from the texts, draws simple inferences. Does not make connections across texts.	Identifies the central idea and analyzes key supporting details from the texts, draws inferences (such as author's position and purpose), implies connections across texts.	Identifies the central idea and analyzes key supporting details from the texts thoroughly, draws inferences (such as author's position and purpose), makes clear connections across texts.
RIT 7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what texts say explicitly as well as	Relies only on personal opinion and experience to analyze a text.	Cites only general evidence to support the analysis of a text (e.g., mentions topics, event, person, from	Cites some specific textual evidence to support the analysis of a text, typically limited to single quote	Cites a number of examples of specific textual evidence, supporting relevant points in the analysis;	Cites sufficient, specific textual evidence, from throughout the text, clearly connecting to and supporting relevant

inferences drawn from them		text, etc.).	or instance.	implies some inferences from examples	points in the analysis; explicitly states inferences from a number of examples
RI: 7.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose and analyze how the author distinguishes his/her position from that of others	Fails to identify or misinterprets / misidentifies the author's point of view or purpose	Identifies author's point of view or purpose but does not analyze how the author distinguishes his/her position from that of others	Identifies the author's point of view or purpose and implies or alludes to how it differs from that of others	Identifies the author's point of view or purpose and clearly distinguishes it from at least one other	Identifies the author's point of view or purpose and clearly and thoroughly distinguishes it from a range of others
RIT 7.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims	Does not trace or evaluate the argument.	Traces, but does not evaluate the argument	Traces the argument; evaluates the argument generally, without addressing reasoning and evidence	Traces and evaluates the argument, assessing reasoning OR evidence	Explicitly traces and evaluates the argument and specific claims, thoroughly assessing the reasoning and evidence given

II. EVIDENCE AND REASONING

	Needs Major Support/ Provides No Evidence (0):	Emerging (1):	Developing (2):	Proficient (3):	Exemplary (4):
W.7.1 Take a clear position; Introduce claims	Takes no clear position, makes no identifiable claim; only writes generally on the topic.	Takes a position; Implies, but does not state, a claim.	Takes a clear position that is clear and present for much of the text, which may contain contradictions or irrelevant points that distract from the argument. At least one claim is clearly stated.	Takes a clear position that remains constant throughout the text and is supported by more than two claims.	Takes a clear position that remains constant throughout and is supported by several detailed claims
W.7.1 Support claims with logical reasoning and relevant evidence	States or insists on purely personal claim with no logical reasoning or evidence	Develops own claims with some logical reasoning or evidence from the texts	Develops own claims consistently, using some logical reasoning and at least one piece of evidence from the texts;	Develops own claims consistently; presents clear logical reasoning, examining a sufficient range of evidence from the texts	Develops own claim thoroughly, employing a detailed, well-reasoned logical argument, thoroughly examining a wide range of evidence from the texts
W.7.1 Acknowledge and evaluate counter-claims examining and responding to them objectively	Develops no evidence of a balanced look at the issue; ignores or dismisses counterclaims.	Other opposing claims are mentioned but not examined.	Other opposing claims are acknowledged and examined,	Other opposing claims are acknowledged, examined and evaluated against the writer's claim.	Other opposing claims are acknowledged, examined and evaluated against the writer's r claims in a way that is fair and

					balanced.
W.7.1 Provide a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented.	Provides no conclusion or provides conclusions that are disconnected from the body of the essay.	Provides an implicit conclusion that may restate the opening position but develops it no further.	Provides an explicit conclusion that summarizes several of the major claims.	Provides an explicit conclusion that summarizes all of the major claims that have been developed OR offers insights and implications.	Provides an explicit conclusion that summarizes all major claims that have been developed and includes closing insight or implications.

Notes: Essays that do not address the topic are “unscorable.”

Essays that are mostly or entirely copied from the source documents should receive a score of 0.

Add note about essays that are unfinished – what is the policy on an essay with no conclusion, for example?

III. Organization and Clarity					
	Needs Major Support/ Provides No Evidence (0):	Emerging (1):	Developing (2):	Proficient (3):	Exemplary (4):
W.7.1 Use words, phrases and clauses to create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence.	Does not write coherent prose using the structure of an argument.	Presents argument as a collection of ideas or points linked using few or simple transitional words (and, also, then, etc.).	Presents argument as a sequence of points and evidence, linked using more explicit transitional words and phrases (because, finally, further, etc.).	Presents argument as a coherent and logically sequenced series of points and evidence using a range of explicit transitional words and phrases.	Presents argument as a coherent, clear, and logical sequence of points relating the major claims and counterclaims, linked with a wide range of explicit transitional words and phrases.
W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produces writing in which there is little development or organization.	Produces writing that is on the topic but where there is only a loose collection of information and claims with no overarching organization.	Produces writing in which there is a simple statement of position, some relevant information, and a brief conclusion.	Produces writing in which there is a clear claim, followed by the examination of several claims and counterclaims, and a conclusion that reflects how the argument has developed.	Produces writing in which there is a clear claim, followed by the balanced examination of several claims and counterclaims, and a conclusion that reflects how the argument has developed and its implications.
Not explicitly in W.7.4 Produce focused paragraphs which feature clear topic	Writing is not divided into paragraphs.	Produces body paragraphs which are not organized by clear topic divisions, or in which topic	Produces one or two body paragraphs; topic sentences may be implicit, but overall, paragraphs	Produces three to four organized body paragraphs, each of which features topic sentences and two to	Produces five or more distinctly organized body paragraphs, each of which features clear topic sentences supported by at least four appropriate and

sentences, supported with sufficient claims, reasons, and evidence.		sentences are not supported by claims, reasons or evidence.	follow a consistent pattern of organization, with one or two examples of claims, reasons, or evidence, some of which may be off-topic.	three appropriate examples or claims, reasons, or evidence.	relevant examples of claims, reasons, or evidence.
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IV. Language and Conventions

	Needs Major Support/ Provides No Evidence (0):	Emerging (1):	Developing (2):	Proficient (3):	Exemplary (4):
W. 7.1 Establish and maintain a formal style.	Writes as s/he might speak; language is informal and/or choppy, using incomplete sentences; the tone and framing are highly personal.	Writes in a style appropriate for written communication; frames the argument largely from a personal point of view, without objective treatment of claims from texts.	Writes in a style appropriate for written communication; personal views dominate, but claims from texts may be included as background.	Writes in a formal style, treats claims and counterclaims from texts fairly.	Writes in a formal style and treats claims and counterclaims from texts objectively and fairly; acknowledges limits or raises questions related to own position.
Language Standards: Use the conventions of English spelling and grammar to make meaning clear.	Lack of basic English conventions makes positions, claims, or conclusions unclear.	Employs basic English conventions so that overall meaning is clear, with a pattern of errors that detract significantly from clarity.	Employs a range of English conventions so that broad meaning and finer points are clear, with a pattern of errors, some of which may detract from clarity.	Employs a wide range of English conventions so that broad meaning and finer points are clear, with only occasional errors that do not detract from clarity.	Employs a full range of English conventions so that broad meaning and finer points are clear. Essentially error-free.
L 7.6: Accurately use grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases.	Uses vocabulary and structures of daily conversation.	Uses some words and phrases that may be academic and / or domain-specific, but which may be below grade level or used	Uses a number of academic and domain-specific words and phrases, some of which are grade-appropriate and used	Uses a range of academic and domain-specific words and phrases, most of which are grade-appropriate and used accurately.	Accurately uses a wide range of grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

		inaccurately.	accurately.		
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