# Assignment Template
## Aligned to California's Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

This template presents a process for helping your students read, comprehend, and respond to texts. We recommend that, at the beginning of the course, you guide your students through each step of the process. As they become familiar with the reading and writing strategies and internalize some of the basic processes, they will be able to complete some of the steps on their own. By the end of the course, your students should be able to read texts on their own, without elaborate preparation, and write about them coherently.

For additional information about the theories and research in the ERWC, consult Theoretical Foundations for Reading and Writing Rhetorically in the front matter. For a brief overview on how the template functions, see Appendix A: Assignment Template Overview with Key Questions. Several suggestions for formative assessment are offered within each module. For additional information, see Appendix B: Formative Assessment Strategies and the Online Resource: Formative Assessment for ERWC Professional Learning. Other Online Resources that may be valuable in implementing the ERWC effectively include Transfer and Engagement: From Theory to Enhanced Practice and Modifying the ERWC Assignment Template for English Learners at the Intermediate and Early Advanced Levels.

Notes about California's Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy cited in this document:

- The standards listed in this document are for grades 11-12 unless otherwise specified.

- Prerequisite standards from earlier grades are indicated for selected elements of the template.

- Some elements of the template do not correlate precisely with specific standards. These elements of the template include activities that are preliminary to work that will be done later in connection with specific standards or that reinforce work done previously.

- Reading standards cited in the template are for informational text. The parallel standards for reading literature should be substituted when the text is literary. Modules that include literary texts will indicate the reading standards for literature as appropriate.

- Similarly, standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects can be substituted for reading and writing standards when the text is in a discipline other than English Language Arts.

- Correlation charts indicating the analogous CCSS for ELA in grades 7-10 and for the literacy standards in other disciplines are available; see Online Resource: Correlation Charts of the ERWC Assignment Template and CCSS for ELA/Literacy.

- The CCSS College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (page 40), Writing (page 49), Speaking and Listening (page 59), and Language (page 64) are important resources for the ERWC. Also important is the list of the capacities of a literate individual identified in the introduction (pages vii-viii). Find these in the latest edition of California's CCSS for ELA/Literacy at the URL here: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>.

**Template Overview**

# Reading Rhetorically

| **Prereading** | Getting Ready to Read |
| | Exploring Key Concepts |
| | Surveying the Text |
| | Making Predictions and Asking Questions |
| | Understanding Key Vocabulary |

| **Reading** | Reading for Understanding |
| | Considering the Structure of the Text |
| | Noticing Language |
| | Annotating and Questioning the Text |
| | Analyzing Stylistic Choices |

| **Postreading** | Summarizing and Responding |
| | Thinking Critically |
| | Reflecting on Your Reading Process |

# Connecting Reading to Writing

| **Discovering What You Think** | Considering the Writing Task |
| | Taking a Stance |
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| | Getting Ready to Write |

# Writing Rhetorically

| **Entering the Conversation** | Composing a Draft |
| | Considering Structure |
| | Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism) |
| | Negotiating Voices |

| **Revising and Editing** | Revising Rhetorically |
| | Considering Stylistic Choices |
| | Editing the Draft |
| | Responding to Feedback |
| | Reflecting on Your Writing Process |

# Reading Rhetorically

To "read rhetorically" means to focus not only on what the text says but also on the purposes it serves, the intentions of the author, and the effects on the audience. This section is designed to scaffold the practices of fluent academic readers for students who are developing as academic readers, writers, and thinkers.

## Prereading

Prereading describes the processes that readers use as they prepare to read a new text. It involves surveying the text and considering what they know about the topic and the text itself, including its purpose, content, author, form, and language. This process helps readers develop a purpose and plan for reading, anticipate what the text will discuss, and establish a framework for understanding the text when they begin reading.

*The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to prepare students in advance of reading increasingly complex and sophisticated texts. These brief, introductory activities will prepare students to learn the content of California's Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in the sections of the template that follow.*

### Getting Ready to Read

As your students approach a reading assignment, use prereading activities such as quickwrites, group discussions, brainstorming, rankings and rating scales, graphic organizers, role-play activities, scenario discussions and readings or other prereading techniques to help your students. Such prereading activities help motivate them to read, focus them on key issues and topics, and promote an inquiry approach to reading and writing. These activities enable students to

- Make a connection between their own personal world and the world of the text
- Activate or develop prior knowledge and experience related to the issues addressed in the text
- Share their knowledge relevant to the text
- Consider their opinions or biases before reading
- Set purposes for reading
- Begin to formulate the issue their writing will address

See Appendix C: Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies for other possible prereading activities.

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### Exploring Key Concepts

Reading and writing about social and personal issues can be seen as entering into a conversation with others who have thought and written about the same questions. Exploring key concepts provides an entry point for the conversation about the issues raised by the module. Key concepts are highlighted and taught through activities that will be revisited during the module in your students' discussions and writing. Key concepts provide a frame for future activities related to knowledge building and academic language, including vocabulary.

The introduction of key concepts may include strategies such as the following:

- Identifying and discussing a key concept or term in such activities as defining, discussing denotation and connotation, and comparing and contrasting
- Organizing key concepts and key terms by categorizing them or using charts or semantic maps and webs
- Generating questions that anticipate the issues in the text
- Assessing and providing background knowledge for conceptual understanding

**CCSS for ELA/ Literacy**

**Reading – Informational Text**

5a. Analyze the use of text features (e.g., graphics, headers, captions)…CA

## Surveying the Text

Surveying the text gives students an overview of what the reading selection is about and how it is organized and presented. Surveying also helps readers create a context for making predictions and generating questions to guide their ongoing reading. To survey the text, students can

- Look for titles and subheadings
- Notice the length of the reading
- Search for any information about the author
- Discover when and where the text was first published
- Note the topics and main ideas

*The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to prepare students in advance of reading increasingly complex and sophisticated texts. These brief, introductory activities will prepare students to learn the content of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy in the sections of the template that follow.*

## Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Predicting and asking questions help students engage their knowledge and experience prior to reading, set purposes for reading, and anchor their thinking in the text. In helping students make predictions, draw their attention to features of the text relevant to the particular genre and rhetorical situation, and ask students to think about the character and identity of the writer, the nature of the audience, and the purpose of the writing. Students can become more aware of how they form predictions by providing evidence from the text they have surveyed. Based on the results of surveying the text, students can consider the following questions:

- What do you think this text is going to be about?
- What do you think is the purpose of this text?
- What is the author's opinion on the topic? How do you think you know?
- Who is the intended audience for this piece?
- How could you turn the title into a question (or questions) to answer as you read?

You might alternatively create an anticipation guide or use additional strategies to stimulate predictions (see Appendix C: Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies).

**Language**

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11-12 reading and content,* choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

   a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, para-graph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the mean-ing of a word or phrase.

   b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*). **Ap-ply knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots and affixes to draw infer-ences concern-ing the meaning of scientific and mathematical terminology. CA**

   c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., **college-level** dic-tionaries, **rhyming dictionaries, bilingual diction-aries,** glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or deter-mine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage. **CA**

   d. Verify the prelimi-nary determina-tion of the mean-ing of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

# Understanding Key Vocabulary

Teaching selected key words crucial to the concepts of the text in advance of reading and then reinforcing them throughout the reading process is an important activity for students at all proficiency levels. Knowledge of these word meanings can significantly shape text comprehension. After students have read the text the first time they can identify additional key words and phrases essential for making meaning. The following approaches for learning words are important to consider when planning vocabulary instruction:

## Specific Words

- Present new words representing known or new concepts
- Clarify and enrich meanings for known words
- Foster the transfer of words into students' speech and writing

## Independent Word Learning Strategies

- Familiarize students with word parts/morphology
- Give students practice with context clues
- Teach students to find definitions
- Help students develop procedures for dealing with unknown words

## Word Consciousness and Incidental Word Learning

- Promote metalinguistic awareness (noticing words and language)
- Discuss words
- Expose students to rich language and wide reading
- Engage students in word play

See Appendix D: Vocabulary Development Activities for explanations of specific methods that support vocabulary development.

6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

# Reading

The reading process involves using the knowledge developed during prereading to understand the text and to confirm, refine, or refute the predictions that the reader has made about the text. This section begins by asking students to read "with the grain," also called "playing the believing game." Once students have established their understanding of the text, they then read "against the grain," also called "playing the doubting game." Both processes help students comprehend a text more deeply.

**Reading – Informational Text**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

## Reading for Understanding

The first reading provides a sense of the text and helps readers identify main ideas as well as evidence to support their developing interpretations. Students initially read with the grain, or "play the believing game," agreeing with the author as they examine their predictions. Questions such as the following will help students revisit their predictions:

• Which of your predictions turned out to be true?

• What surprised you?

• If any of your predictions were inaccurate, what in the text misled you?

• Can you answer the question you created from the title?

• What, if anything, is confusing to you?

In addition to revisiting their predictions, students can use other strategies to increase their understanding of the text during the first reading. Depending on the level of scaffolding students need, you may wish to encourage them to mark the text with their initial reactions.

See Appendix C: Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies for a brief explanation of other metacognitive strategies that help students understand the text.

# Considering the Structure of the Text

Considering the structure of the text, or otherwise graphically representing different aspects of the text, helps students gain a clearer understanding of the writer's rhetorical approach to the text's content and organization. Such activities also often lead to further questions and predictions that will help students analyze and more effectively comprehend what they have read. The following strategies (Mapping the Organizational Structure and Descriptive Outlining) illustrate ways of focusing on text construction.

## Mapping the Organizational Structure

Ask your students to map the organization of the text by taking the following steps:

- Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there several introductory paragraphs? Is it in the middle of a paragraph? How do you know that the text has moved on from the introduction?
- Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How do you know that the text has reached the conclusion?
- Discuss in groups or as a class why the lines were drawn where they were.

In this activity, thinking and reasoning about organizational structure is more important than agreeing on where the lines should be drawn. See Appendix E: Using Classroom Discussion Strategies to Foster Rhetorical Literacies for more information on organizing effective discussions.

## Descriptive Outlining

The next step in mapping the organizational structure is to produce a descriptive outline by asking students to make a distinction between the *content* and *rhetorical purpose* of each section. When introducing this activity, it is helpful to prepare a text by dividing it into sections determined by the textual organization and modeling for students what the text says versus what it does (highlighting the difference between content and rhetorical purpose). After modeling this process, ask students to take the following steps:

- At the end of each section, specify what the section says (content) and then what it does (why the writer put it there).
- At the end of the text, describe the overall content and purpose of the text.

After this has been done, you may want to ask the following kinds of questions:

- What does each section say? What is its content?
- How does each section affect the reader? What is the writer trying to accomplish?
- Which section is the most developed?
- Which section is the least developed?

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

- On the basis of your descriptive outline of the text, what do you think is the main argument? Is that argument explicit or implicit?

*Note:* You may offer a more challenging variation of this activity by asking students to do these steps on their own (dividing the text into sections by rhetorical function). At the end of each section they mark, they should articulate the content and purpose of the section.

### Drawing Conclusions from Structure

After your students have analyzed the structure of a text, they can prepare to write a summary or rhetorical précis by considering the following questions:

- How are the author's arguments ordered? (Which arguments come first, in the middle, last?) What is the effect of this on the reader?

- How has the structure of the text helped make the argument clear, convincing, and engaging?

See the Online Resource: Understanding Text Structures for additional strategies for considering the structure of the text, such as clustering, webbing, and graphic organizers.

**Reading – Informational Text**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

**Language**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

a. Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and

## Noticing Language

The purpose of Noticing Language is to make students aware of how particular language features are used in written texts so they will be better able to both comprehend them and subsequently incorporate these features into their own writing. Revisiting words, phrases, and sentence structures deepens comprehension and builds lexical, semantic, and syntactic awareness. Depending on what your students need, analyzing linguistic features in a text such as verb tense patterns or use of the passive voice can suggest material for instruction. Attending to this information can help students notice features of academic language and then monitor their own understanding and production of those same features. You may want to ask students to do the following:

- Mark words, phrases, or sentences that may still be confusing, writing down brief notes explaining what about them is confusing.

- Identify grammatical patterns such as verb tenses, time markers (last week, since, tomorrow), modal verbs (can, could, must, might, should), or singular and plural noun forms.

- Analyze the logical relationships between the parts of sentences by focusing on the following:

is sometimes contested.

b.  Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.

- transition words and phrases (conjunctive adverbs such as "therefore," "in addition," "similarly," "therefore," "moreover," "nevertheless")

- coordinating conjunctions (such as "for," "and," "nor," "but," "or," "yet," "so")

- subordinating conjunctions (such as "although," "before," "because," "even though," "if," "as soon as")

- parallel structures (using the same pattern of words to show that ideas at the word, phrase, or clause level have the same degree of importance)

- other complex phrasing patterns (such as participial phrases, adverbial phrases, absolutes)

• Practice composing complex sentence structure by creating original sentences following the pattern of a sentence or two from the text

By observing where students have confusion or patterns of inaccuracy in their own writing, you can identify opportunities for instruction and reinforcement. For ideas for how to create these kinds of activities, see the Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing sections at the end of each module.

## Annotating and Questioning the Text

Annotating a text enables readers to explore more deeply how a text works to inform or persuade its readers. During the initial reading, the recommended strategies encouraged students to read "with the grain," "playing the believing game." In rereading, it is helpful if students read "against the grain," or "play the doubting game." This is where the conversation shifts and the reader begins to question the text and the author.

As students reread the text, ask them to annotate it by making marginal notations (e.g., asking questions, expressing surprise, disagreeing, elaborating, and noting any instances of confusion). For a sample annotation rubric, see Appendix F: Rubric for Assessing Annotation, Summary, and Response.

You may want to begin this activity by modeling the process and then having students collaborate to suggest annotations for a portion of the text before having them annotate the remainder of the text independently.

The following approach is one way to structure annotation.

1.  Ask students to label these possible elements in the left-hand margin:

    • Summary

    • Introduction

    • Issue or problem being addressed

    • Author's main arguments

    • Author's examples

    • Conclusion

2.  Ask students to note in the right-hand margin their reactions to what the author is saying.

**Prerequisite Grade 8 Standard: Reading – Informational Text**

1.  Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

2.  Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; …

**Grades 11-12 Reading – Informational Text**

2.  Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; …

**Speaking & Listening**

1.  Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one,

- Personal connections that support or refute the author's points
- Reflections on the quality of the evidence or examples
- Questions about the author's ideas or assumptions
- Challenges to the author's inferences or conclusions

Finally, ask students to exchange their annotations and compare their labeling and responses in pairs, trios or small groups. For information on organizing effective discussions, See Appendix E: Using Classroom Discussion Strategies to Foster Rhetorical Literacies. Remind your students that they will be revisiting their annotations when they begin writing.

## Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Analyzing Stylistic Choices helps students see the linguistic and rhetorical choices writers make to inform or convince readers. The following questions address language use at all levels—word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and discourse.

- What are the denotative and connotative meanings of the key words?
- How do specific words the author has chosen affect your response to the text?
- Which words or synonyms are repeated? Why?
- What figurative language does the author use? What does it imply?
- What effects do the choices of sentence structure and length have on the reader?
- To what extent does the language of the text support the purpose of the author?
- In what ways does it help convey the identity and character of the author?
- To what extent has the writer used language that is purposefully crafted for the intended audience?

### Sidebar

**Reading – Informational Text**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

**Language**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
   a. …apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
   a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
   b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues,* building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

# Postreading

Postreading describes the process that readers follow once they have read and reread a text. It can involve restating the central ideas of the text and responding to them from a personal perspective, but it also often includes questioning the text and noting its rhetorical strategies, evaluating its arguments and evidence, and considering how it fits into the larger conversation about the topic.

**Prerequisite Grade 8 Standard: Reading – Informational Text**

2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Grades 11-12 Reading – Informational Text**

2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Writing**

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Summarizing and Responding

**Summarizing** the ideas of others accurately is a fundamental element of academic writing. Summarizing is a powerful metacognitive skill that enables readers and writers to synthesize a text's meaning. It integrates the results of previous reading processes students have engaged in and helps them further understand major ideas and the relationships among them.

Some options for having students summarize a text are the following:

- Ask students to use the annotations from the left margins and/or the descriptive outlining activity to construct a summary using their knowledge of the author's structure of the text.

- Ask your students to work in groups, each one summarizing a main part of the text, and then have the entire class work together to create a coherent paragraph that summarizes all the main points of the text.

- Use SQP2RS, GIST, Reciprocal Teaching, or another effective approach for teaching and reinforcing skills for summarizing. See Appendix C: Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies for additional explanations. See also Appendix I: Using Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism for additional information on teaching summarizing.

**Responding** gives students the opportunity to articulate their personal reactions to the text. Possible ways to invite students to respond to the text are the following:

- Ask students to revisit the reflections they made in the right margin when they annotated the text and write a paragraph based on their experiences and opinions.

- Ask students to write open-ended questions that can be used as the basis for a class discussion.

# Thinking Critically

In thinking critically students move beyond initial reactions toward deeper evaluations of texts by questioning and analyzing the rhetorical choices of the author. The following questions will help students examine Aristotelian r rhetorical appeals.

## Questions about Logic (Logos)

- What are the major claims and assertions made in this reading? Do you agree with the author's claim that . . . ?
- What evidence has the author supplied to support the claims? How relevant and valid do you think the evidence is? How sound is the reasoning? Is there any claim that appears to be weak or unsupported? Which one, and why do you think so?
- What counterarguments has the author addressed?
- Do you think the author has left something out on purpose? Why?
- How have the author's ideas developed over the course of the text?

## Questions about the Writer (Ethos)

- What can you infer about the author from the text?
- Does this author have the appropriate background to speak with authority on this subject?
- Is the author knowledgeable?
- What does the author's style and language tell the reader about him or her?
- Does the author seem trustworthy? Why or why not?
- Does the author seem deceptive? Why or why not?
- Does the author appear to be serious?

## Questions about Emotions (Pathos)

- Does this piece affect you emotionally? Which parts?
- Do you think the author is trying to manipulate the readers' emotions? In what ways? At what point?
- Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
- Does the author use humor or irony? How does that affect your acceptance of his or her ideas?

For information on organizing effective discussions, see Appendix E: Using Classroom Discussion Strategies to Foster Rhetorical Literacies.

## Further Considerations

The rhetorical appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos form the basis of rhetorical analysis in the ERWC. For additional methods of rhetorical analysis, including further dimensions of argument, see the Online Resource: Rhetorical Concepts and Strategies.

on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Although ERWC is primarily concerned with expository and persuasive texts, literary texts can also be analyzed rhetorically. See the Online Resource: Teaching Literary Texts Rhetorically–Advice for Teachers and Module Writers, for more information about applying rhetorical approaches to literary texts.

*The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to reinforce students' learning of the content of the CCSS for ELA/ Literacy in the preceding sections of the template and transfer that learning to other settings.*

## Reflecting on Your Reading Process

Reflection is an essential component in learning. Students benefit from discussing what they have learned about how to read and sharing that information with the rest of the class. Reflecting on their own reading process helps students consolidate what they have learned about being a thoughtful and active reader. The following questions may be used as the focus of a discussion or as the topic for a quickwrite:

• What have you learned from joining this conversation? What do you want to learn next?

• What reading strategies did you use or learn in this module? Which strategies will you use in reading other texts? How will these strategies apply in other classes?

• In what ways has your ability to read and discuss texts like this one improved?

# Connecting Reading to Writing

Although the writing process can be divided into stages, writing, like reading, is essentially a recursive process that continually revisits previous moments. Up until this point, students have been "writing to learn" by using writing to take notes, make marginal notations, map the text, make predictions, and ask questions. Now students are ready to build on the ongoing dialogue they have had with sources, peers, and teachers, producing their own texts by using the words, ideas, and arguments that have been raised in readings and class discussion. In this transitional moment, their reading will inform, inspire, and guide their writing as they shift from being an audience for the writing of others to addressing their own audience as writers themselves.

## Discovering What You Think

Allowing time for students to consider and process what they have read helps them establish a connection with the writing assignment. It promotes information gathering and idea generation as students begin to craft a response to a writing task. This transition from reading to writing provides opportunities for students to analyze information gathered during reading, assess its value, and begin to imagine the trajectory their own argument might take as they develop their thinking and plan to convince readers of their stance.

**Writing**

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning … focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

## Considering the Writing Task

In the workplace, the audience and purpose for writing are often very clear. While school is a preparation for various workplaces and real world activities, writing assignments frequently involves an invented audience and purpose. A well-designed writing prompt can minimize the sense of pretense and model the basic elements of an actual rhetorical situation. The assignment will be the frame that your students use to decide what they will write about and how they will use the material from the texts they have read. (See the Online Resource: Designing a Writing Prompt for more information about designing your own prompts.)

Here are some strategies to help your students read the assignment carefully.

- Help students identify key *verbs* in writing assignments and define the nature of the support they should provide. The explanations in Appendix G: Key Assignment Words can help clarify some key terms.

- Help students specify the topic or focus of the text they are going to write. Is the topic specified for them? Do they have choices to make about it?

- Help students determine the rhetorical purpose of the writing. Are they informing or reporting? Are they persuading their readers of something? Help them recognize how the purpose of the assignment will affect the type of writing they will do. Here are some questions to help them consider this issue:

    - What genre is this? Is it a letter, an essay, a report, an email, or something else?

    - What format will this have?

    - What are the reader expectations for this genre?

    - What is your rhetorical purpose?

- Remind your students to read the assignment for information about process and deadlines. You may want to help them sketch out a timeline for completing the assignment in reasonable steps.

- Ask your students to examine the assignment for information about how they will be graded. What criteria will be used to evaluate their written work? Do they understand each criterion?

- Have your students look for information in the assignment about the audience for their writing. (See "Getting Ready to Write.")

For information on timed writing strategies, see the Online Resource: Preparing Students for On-Demand (Timed) Writing.

## Taking a Stance

In this section, students will determine what their stance is toward the issues and the material. Essentially, they will begin to state their opinions from multiple perspectives in order to clarify their own position. The writing assignment frames the readings in a new way.

Ask students to begin to explain their stance or position in response to the prompt. Some questions to guide this process follow:

- What is the gist of your argument in one or two sentences? Turn these sentences into a working thesis statement.

- What would you say is your main claim at this point in time?

- How do your ideas relate to what others have said?

- What arguments or ideas are you responding to?

- What evidence best supports your argument? What evidence might you use in relation to what others say about your argument? How does it support your argument?

**Writing**

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning … focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Speaking & Listening**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades*

- What background information does the reader need to understand your argument?
- What will those who disagree with you have to say about your argument? What evidence might they use to refute your ideas?
- How did your views change during the reading? What factors caused you to change? Could you use these factors to change someone else's views?

As students write, their understanding of the information they have generated about the rhetorical context may (and frequently will) change. Revisiting the rhetorical context at different stages of the writing process can lead to a deeper and more complex understanding of the topic and its significance. Looking at the situation from multiple perspectives can help students identify their own stance. This requires students to take an alternate position or see the situation from another point of view.

### Trying on Words, Perspectives, and Ideas

One way to practice looking at the situation from multiple perspectives is to engage students in an activity in which they adopt different personas. First, give each student a persona or perspective to represent. The perspectives could be based on the writers of the articles they have been reading or sources quoted in them, but they could also be based on other people they know or know of, such as the teacher, the school principal, the President of the United States, or even a movie actor or a rock star. Then, give your students some questions based on the issues raised by the articles they have been reading. These could be policy questions (What should we do about _____?) or value questions (Is _____ good or bad?). Their task is to think, "What would _____ say about this?" "How would _____ answer this question?" What words would he or she use? Encourage your students to use vocabulary from the articles in representing their adopted position. At the end of the activity, ask your students to state what they themselves really think.

## Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

Students can select evidence by returning to the readings, their notes, their summaries, their annotations, their descriptive outlining, and other responses in order to highlight information they may use to support their claims and refute the claims of those who disagree. The students determine the relevance, specificity, and appropriateness of their evidence in relation to the rhetorical situation.

Reflecting on the following questions provides an opportunity for students to evaluate their evidence:

- How closely does this piece of evidence relate to the claim it is supposed to support?
- Is this piece of evidence a fact or an opinion? Is it an example?

broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; …

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Writing**

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning … focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

- If this evidence is a fact, what kind of fact is it (statistic, experimental result, quotation)?
- If it is an opinion, what makes the opinion credible?
- What makes this evidence persuasive?
- How well will the evidence suit the audience and the rhetorical purpose of the piece?

## Getting Ready to Write

Students now need to add relevant ideas and observations from their own experience to the evidence they have gathered. To help students generate this information, you might want to introduce a variety of traditional prewriting activities:

- Brainstorming
- Freewriting
- Informal outlines
- Clustering/Mapping
- Quickwrites

See Appendix H: Prewriting Strategies for more information on prewriting.

After responding to readings, collecting notes, and adding observations, students are now prepared to extend their thinking and develop content. As they take notes at this point, students will have written words and sentences they can use in their first draft.

To encourage them to do some writing in preparation for their first drafts, you might have students do some of the following activities:

- Read and edit their "gist" statements from different perspectives
- Respond through brainstorming to questions about their argument, evidences, purposes, etc.
- Write summaries of audience "positions" on the topic
- Use frames from *They Say/I Say* (Graff and Birkenstein) to practice stating the differences between views
- Generate working titles and subheadings and write about how these relate to message and purpose

# Writing Rhetorically

Thinking of writing as a rhetorical activity invites students to consider the importance of audience, purpose, ethos, situation, message, and genre as they write to affect readers in particular ways. The rhetorical approach calls for them to consider the circumstances that inform the occasion for writing before deciding on an argument and ways to develop and organize it. Thus writing rhetorically emphasizes contextualized thinking, sense making, and persuasion as prerequisites for considerations about form or genre. At this point as students begin to compose a first draft, they are about to make an active contribution to the conversation among voices and texts with which they have been interacting. At this stage, writing is generally "reading-based" in that it synthesizes the viewpoints and information of various sources to help the writer establish his or her position in the ongoing conversation.

# Entering the Conversation

Writing can be a way of discovering what we think and working through our personal concerns, for example in diaries and journals, but most often we write to communicate our ideas to others. In addition to forms of print and electronic media, such as letters, newspaper articles, memos, posters, reports, online forums, and Web sites, writing broadly conceived also includes texting, emailing, posting to a blog, submitting a message to a discussion board, tweeting, and using social media sites like Facebook. All of these forms of writing, as well as the more formal academic essay required in schools and universities, involve writers entering ongoing conversations in order to communicate thoughts, insights, and arguments.

## Writing

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Composing a Draft

For most writers, writing is a multi-draft process. As they create their first draft, writers take risks, explore ideas, and think on paper, knowing that they will have an opportunity later to revise and edit. When students plan to turn in their first drafts as their final drafts, they often pursue correctness and completion too early. If it is clear from the beginning that revision is an important part of the writing process, students can experiment with tentative positions and arguments that can be evaluated, refined, and sharpened in a later draft. While students will want to keep their audience in mind throughout the writing process because thinking about audience is a guide to effective writing, the first draft is generally "writer-based" and discovery-oriented in that it serves to help the writer think through the issues and take a position. The first draft is often where students find out what they really think about a particular issue or topic.

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Writing**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

   a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

   b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

   c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

## Considering Structure

No rigid formula will cover all of the writing that students may be asked to do, but almost all writing has a beginning, middle, and end—even lab reports and journal articles have well-established standard sections and subheads. Formulaic essay structures such as the five-paragraph essay may be appropriate for some tasks, but most writing in the real world, and even in the university, does not take this form. The following are considerations that writers may want to take into account when organizing their texts.

### The Beginning or Introduction

- Directs readers' attention to the topic or issue the writing addresses
- Establishes the importance of the topic
- Provides background information that the audience may need
- Introduces the thesis, purpose, or main claim of the writing in order to suggest how the piece will be developed

### The Middle or Body

- Explains, illustrates, and develops the topic or issue
- Contains as many paragraphs as are necessary to develop the ideas
- May have sections and subheads in some types of writing
- Contains examples or arguments supported by evidence
- Often quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes other texts in support of the purpose of the writing
- May present and analyze data
- Often addresses counterarguments or alternative positions or explanations
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

### The Conclusion

- Connects the writing to some larger claim or idea
- Points the reader to next steps or new questions raised by the writing
- Identifies the conclusion the writer has reached and its significance
- Evaluates or analyzes the conclusions drawn
- Explains the implications of the major point of the writing

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

   a. Introduce a topic **or thesis statement;** organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. **CA**

   b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

   c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Writing**

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation **including footnotes and endnotes. CA**

## Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism)

One of the most important features of academic writing is the use of words and ideas from written sources to support the writer's own points. There are essentially three ways to incorporate words and ideas from sources, as shown below:

• Direct quotation: Jeremy Rifkin says, "Studies on pigs' social behavior funded by McDonald's at Purdue University, for example, have found that they crave affection and are easily depressed if isolated or denied playtime with each other" (15).

• Paraphrase: In "A Change of Heart About Animals," Jeremy Rifkin notes that McDonald's has funded studies on pigs that show that they need affection and playtime with one another (15).

• Summary: In "A Change of Heart About Animals," Jeremy Rifkin cites study after study to show that animals and humans are more alike than we think. He shows that animals feel emotions, reason, make and use tools, learn and use language, and mourn their dead. One study even shows that pigs need affection and playtime with one another and enjoy playing with toys (15).

Learning to cite accurately and determining how best to incorporate the words and ideas of others are essential for students to establish their own

ethos. For a more detailed explanation of how to teach students to avoid plagiarism and cite sources, see Appendix I: Using Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism. See also the Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing unit for the module Into the Wild.

Students need practice choosing passages to quote, leading into quotations, and responding to them so that they are well integrated into their own text. Paraphrasing passages, which some students avoid because it requires an even greater understanding of the material to put it in their own words, is another important skill in academic writing. Students can practice these skills by choosing quotations, paraphrasing them, and then discussing whether they agree or disagree and why. This can be done in a pair or group activity in which students choose quotations and then help each other paraphrase them.

## Negotiating Voices

The goal of negotiating voices is for students to be able to distinguish their ideas from those of their sources and to make clear their stance in relationship to those sources. In the section above, students practiced selecting useful and interesting material, punctuating direct quotations, and recasting the language for paraphrases and summaries. The following activity can help students put direct quotations, indirect quotations, concepts, facts, ideas, and opinions from other writers into their own texts while keeping all the voices distinct.

### Using Model Language

Students are often confused when they discover that their sources disagree. (How can they put these dissonant voices in conversation with one another?) One strategy to help your students orchestrate voices from varied sources is to give them models of introductory language, such as the following templates or frames:

- The issue of _____ can be viewed from several different perspectives.
- Experts disagree on what to do about _____.

You might then give them language that introduces ideas from particular writers:

- Noted researcher John Q. Professor argues that . . .
- In a groundbreaking article, Hermando H. Scientist states that . . .
- According to Patricia A. Politician . . .

Contrary views can be signaled by adding transitional phrases:

- However, the data presented by Hermando H. Scientist show . . .
- On the other hand, Terry T. Teacher believes . . .

The student writer then needs to add his or her own voice to the mix:

- Although some argue for _____, others argue for _____. In my view . . .
- Though researchers disagree, clearly . . .

Many similar frames for introducing the words and ideas of others and signaling a stance on those ideas can be found in *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, which is an excellent resource for helping students enter the conversation in academic writing. Your students might also create their own set of frames by looking at language used by professional writers.

### Identifying Model Language and Signal Phrases

Give your students a newspaper article or an editorial in which the writer summarizes or synthesizes several different perspectives and argues for his or her own position. Ask them to underline phrases that signal relationships among different ideas and perspectives and make a list of these phrases that they can use in their own writing.

# Revising and Editing

Most students equate revising with editing, but more advanced writers understand that revision involves "re-evaluating" the concepts of the paper: the use of information, the arrangement and structure of arguments, and the development and significance of ideas. Revision—as both a reading activity and a writing activity—is based on an assessment of how well the writing has communicated the author's intentions—the argument or ideas of the text. Revising for rhetorical effectiveness encourages writers to address issues of content and structure before they edit—or address sentence-level concerns such as word choice and grammatical accuracy.

**Writing**

1c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

1d. & 2e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

1f. **Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study, or analogy. CA**

## Revising Rhetorically

A rhetorical approach to revision can help your students understand that revision is a strategic, selective process; what writers choose to revise depends on the ultimate purpose of their writing.

### Rhetorical Analysis of a Draft

A rhetorical analysis of a rough draft requires the writer to assess writing based on the purpose of the writing, the message of the argument, the needs of the audience, and the ethos the writer adopts.

Here are some questions that support a rhetorical assessment of a draft:

• What is the rhetorical situation? Who is my audience, and what is my argument?

• What types of evidence and appeals does this audience value most highly?

• How can I establish my own authority to address this issue? What credibility do I have with this audience?

• What are the most important factors contributing to either the success or failure of the argument?

• What is the most relevant feedback I have received about this audience and context?

2c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by…revising … rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

**Reading – Informational Text**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

**Speaking & Listening**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in

Some activities that support rhetorical analysis of a draft include scoring sample essays; getting feedback on a single paragraph; responding to questions about rhetorical content; reflecting on their own changes; creating a Purpose/Argument/ Persona/Audience (PAPA) Square graphic organizer; writing a rhetorical précis; preparing a descriptive outlining; and answering questions about ethos, pathos, and logos. See the Online Resource: Rhetorical Concepts and Strategies for explanations of these strategies. See Appendix J: Collaborative Scoring of Student Writing, for suggestions about using collaboratively scored essays in a revision activity. You may want to use Appendix K: Essay Evaluation Form, Part I-Revising Checklist to provide feedback to students for revision. This checklist is based on Appendix L: English Placement Test Scoring Guide. Finally, you might ask your students to rewrite the form in their own language as a way to understand it better, or you may create a feedback form of your own.

## Revision Workshops

You can stimulate effective conversations about student writing by scaffolding revision workshops that target specific concepts for revision (i.e., paragraph continuity, effective introduction strategies, or signposts for logic, etc.). When teachers are able to demonstrate moves good writers engage in during revision, they invite students into discussions about writing that develop revision vocabulary and revision reading skills. See the Online Resource: Revision Strategies for specific revision workshop strategies.

groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues,* building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Language**

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

   a. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

**Writing**

1f. **Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study, or analogy. CA**

2d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

## Considering Stylistic Choices

Writers can make stylistic choices in order to enhance the clarity of their messages, make emotional connections with readers, and establish their ethos. These choices draw readers in or push them away. Students can consider the effectiveness of their stylistic choices by responding to the following questions:

• How will the language you have used affect your reader's response?

• Which words or synonyms have you repeated? Why?

• What figurative language have you used? Why did you use it?

• What effects will your choices of sentence structure and length have on the reader?

• In what ways does your language help convey your identity and character as a writer?

• Is your language appropriate for your intended audience?

## Editing the Draft

While the first draft of an essay is generally writer-based, as writers revise, they create writing that has the reader in mind, writing that is, in other words, more reader-based. At this point, they will need to address surface level issues such as grammar and usage errors, sentence clarity, sentence variety, word choice, and various other stylistic features. Students benefit from instruction that targets particular constructions and asks them to make observations about those constructions. Identifying and practicing these constructions and conventions constitutes a major part of an individual's editing knowledge.

As you have worked through these modules with your students, you have probably also been assigning activities from Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing. That instruction offers units on specific topics designed to go with particular modules. But now students must apply their grammar and usage knowledge to their own writing. To accomplish this, you might want to use Appendix K: Essay Evaluation Form, Part II-Editing Checklist for peer work, individual work, or conferences with you. Using these guidelines as the focus of the task of editing will give your students a consistent checklist for each writing task. Beyond this appendix, students can consult either an Online Writing Lab (OWL) or a grammar/usage handbook for explanations of any rules or conventions that confuse them. The Purdue Online Writing Lab is one of the best, most comprehensive resources available for editing. You also might consider marking your student papers exclusively for one skill at a time, letting the skills accumulate as the term progresses.

## Responding to Feedback

Students need feedback on their writing. Some of this can be from peers during the revision stage, but instructor feedback is essential. Although responding to drafts and conferencing with students is undoubtedly time consuming, it is important to intervene in the writing process at the most useful points and to make comments that are well targeted to both the assignment's demands as well as to the student's needs and language development processes. For suggestions on managing this process, see Appendix M: Handling the Paper Load.

The most valuable point for students to receive feedback is before they revise and edit, so they can actively apply what they learn from your response to the next draft. One particularly effective time for instructor response is after

students have produced their first revised, "reader-based" draft. Students can then use instructor feedback to revise and improve the final draft they will submit for a final grade. As students see their own writing evolve, an improved grade can serve as additional motivation for them to put sustained effort into revisions.

Most writing instructors make a distinction between "global" issues, such as thesis, focus, and arguments, and "local" issues, such as grammatical and usage errors. While all students need both global and local responses, English learners will benefit from more frequent and extended opportunities to receive and respond to feedback. English learners may also benefit from instructor response to specific aspects of the English language—for example, particularly difficult or idiosyncratic grammatical forms that English learners are still in the process of acquiring.

Below are some common ways to respond:

- Use a preprinted evaluation form (rubric) to respond to your students' writing (see Appendix K), and include notes in the margin that correspond to the marks on the evaluation form.

- Annotate the paper, focusing on the 2-3 most important aspects or features of the text (so as not to overwhelm students with too much feedback at once), and make a summary comment at the end that supports the annotations in the body of the paper.

- Meet one-on-one with each student and review the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. In this situation, you and your students might each keep an index card to track the kinds of changes being made on each paper over time.

## Minimal Marking

Sometimes there is no time, or no need, for the full responses noted above. A more minimalist response can address global concerns by answering the two questions below and underlining a few targeted errors.

- What is the best thing about this draft?
- What is the biggest overall difficulty with this draft, and how could it be improved?

Local concerns can then be addressed by underlining errors and having students attempt to identify and correct them. For students with few errors, you might underline all of them. For students with many errors, you might identify a particular type of problem that is causing the most confusion or distraction and underline only that pattern of error. In other words, the instructor might write something like "I am underlining sentence fragments. Please try to correct them. If you have questions, please ask." Then underline fragments throughout the paper. Some instructors simply put a checkmark in the margins to indicate that there is a problem in a particular line.

For suggestions for how to scaffold the identification of errors for students, please see Providing Editing Feedback that Makes a Difference behind the tab, Guidelines for Teaching Rhetorical Grammar.

**Acting on Feedback**

When students get their papers back with feedback, ask that they consider all of the feedback they got from various peers, instructors, and others and make decisions about what changes they are going to implement. Some questions for them include the following:

- What are the main concerns your readers had in reading your draft?
- Do all of the readers agree?
- What global changes should you consider (thesis, arguments, evidence, organization)?
- What do you need to add?
- What do you need to delete?
- What sentence-level and stylistic problems do you need to correct?
- What kinds of grammatical and usage errors do you have? How can you correct them?

It is useful for instructors to model this revision process with a sample paper. When students can observe and collaboratively participate in how to move from feedback to revision, they are better able to internalize the moves proficient writers make in revision and subsequently engage in these moves independently.

## Reflecting on Your Writing Process

Reflection is an essential component in learning. Students benefit from discussing what they have learned about how to write and sharing that information with the rest of the class. This activity supports shared understanding of key terms, important moments and moves in developing writing, and generalizations that organize students' approaches to writing. Reflection allows students to articulate their attitudes and assumptions about literacy and the role it plays in their developing academic identities.

You may want to direct reflection by asking some of the following questions:

- What have you learned about your writing process?
- What were some of the most important decisions you made as you wrote this text?
- How did "writing about your writing" influence the way you developed your text?
- In what ways have you become a better writer?

*The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to reinforce students' learning of the content of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy in the preceding sections of the template.*

**Writing**

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

# Assignment Template
## Aligned to California's Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

## Appendixes

A. Assignment Template Overview with Key Questions
*John R. Edlund, Mira-Lisa Katz, and Nancy Brynelson*

B. Formative Assessment Strategies
*Norman Unrau and Jennifer Fletcher*

C. Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies
*Marcy Merrill and Chris Street*

D. Vocabulary Development Activities
*Marcy Merrill and Chris Street*

E. Using Classroom Discussion Strategies to Foster Rhetorical Literacies
*Mira-Lisa Katz and Adele Arellano*

F. Rubric for Assessing Annotation, Summary, and Response
*Roberta Ching*

G. Key Assignment Words
*Kim Flachmann*

H. Prewriting Strategies
*Kim Flachmann*

I. Using Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism
*John R. Edlund*

J. Collaborative Scoring of Student Writing
*Roberta Ching*

K. Essay Evaluation Form: Part I–Revising Checklist and Part II–Editing Checklist
*Adapted from the English Placement Test Scoring Guide*

L. English Placement Test–Essay Scoring Guide
*English Placement Test Development Committee*

M. Handling the Paper Load
*Kathleen D. Rowlands*

## Online Resources

1. Formative Assessment for ERWC Professional Learning
*Norman Unrau and Jennifer Fletcher*

2. Transfer and Engagement: From Theory to Enhanced Practice
*Nelson Graff*

3. Modifying the ERWC Assignment Template for English Learners at the Intermediate and Early Advanced Levels
*Roberta Ching*

4. Correlation Charts of the ERWC Assignment Template and CCSS for ELA/Literacy
*Nancy Brynelson and Roberta Ching*

5. Understanding Text Structures
*Kathleen D. Rowlands*

6. Rhetorical Concepts and Strategies
*Nelson Graff and Jennifer Fletcher*

7. Teaching Literary Texts Rhetorically: Advice for Teachers and Module Writers
*John R. Edlund*

8. Designing a Writing Prompt
*John R. Edlund*

9. Preparing Students for On-Demand (Timed) Writing
*Kathleen D. Rowlands*

10. Revision Strategies
*Rick Hansen*

# Assignment Template Overview with Key Questions

## Reading Rhetorically

To "read rhetorically" means to focus not only on what the text says but also on the purposes it serves, the intentions of the author, and the effects on the audience. This section is designed to scaffold the practices of fluent academic readers for students who are developing as academic readers, writers, and thinkers.

## Prereading

Prereading describes the processes that readers use as they prepare to read a new text. It involves surveying the text and considering what they know about the topic and the text itself, including its purpose, content, author, form, and language. This process helps readers develop a purpose and plan for reading, anticipate what the text will discuss, and establish a framework for understanding the text when they begin reading.

### Getting Ready to Read

What could students do to help access background knowledge relevant to the text?

### Exploring Key Concepts

What important concepts or questions in the text should students think about before reading it? What tasks or activities would help them focus on these concepts?

### Surveying the Text

What do you want students to notice in or about the text before they read?

### Making Predictions and Asking Questions

How can you help students make meaningful predictions or assumptions about the content or arguments of the text before they read?

### Understanding Key Vocabulary

What words in the text are crucial to understanding, yet might be difficult for some students? How can you help students learn these words?

# Reading

The reading process involves using the knowledge developed during prereading to understand the text and to confirm, refine, or refute the predictions that the reader has made about the text. This section begins by asking students to read "with the grain," also called "playing the believing game." Once students have established their understanding of the text, they then read "against the grain," also called "playing the doubting game." Both processes help students comprehend a text more deeply.

## Reading for Understanding

What might students do to recognize aspects of the text that might contradict their expectations or otherwise cause them difficulty?

## Considering the Structure of the Text

What should students notice about the structure of the text? How can you help them analyze it?

## Noticing Language

Are there words, grammatical patterns, or turns of phrase typical of academic language that may be new to students or potentially difficult for them to understand? How can you help students notice, understand, and use them?

## Annotating and Questioning the Text

What can you do to help students begin a dialog with the ideas, assumptions, and arguments of the text?

## Analyzing Stylistic Choices

What did the author intend or imply by making specific choices of words, sentence structures, organizational strategies, or use of other linguistic features? How can you help students notice these effects?

# Postreading

Postreading describes the process that readers follow once they have read and reread a text. It can involve restating the central ideas of the text and responding to them from a personal perspective, but it also often includes questioning the text and noting its rhetorical strategies, evaluating its arguments and evidence, and considering how it fits into the larger conversation about the topic.

## Summarizing and Responding

How can you help students express the ideas and arguments of the text in their own words?

## Thinking Critically

How can you help students notice and respond to the rhetorical decisions made by the author, especially regarding ethos, logos, and pathos?

## Reflecting on Your Reading Process

How can you help students reflect on both the problems they had reading this text and the discoveries they made about the use of specific reading strategies?

# Connecting Reading to Writing

Although the writing process can be divided into stages, writing, like reading, is essentially a recursive process that continually revisits previous moments. Up until this point, students have been "writing to learn" by using writing to take notes, make marginal notations, map the text, make predictions, and ask questions. Now they are ready to build on the ongoing dialogue they have had with sources, peers, and teachers, producing their own texts by using the words, ideas, and arguments that have been raised in readings and class discussion. In this transitional moment, their reading will inform, inspire, and guide their writing as they shift from being an audience for the writing of others to addressing their own audience as writers themselves.

## Discovering What You Think

Allowing time for students to consider and process what they have read helps them establish a connection with the writing assignment. It promotes information gathering and idea generation as students begin to craft a response to a writing task. This transition from reading to writing provides opportunities for students to analyze information gathered during reading, assess its value, and begin to imagine the trajectory their own argument might take as they develop their thinking and plan to convince readers of their stance.

### Considering the Writing Task

How do you want students to use the material from the text? What writing skills and rhetorical strategies do you want them to work on? What writing task will best help students perform these tasks?

### Taking a Stance

How can you help students consider possible positions on the issues raised by the text and decide what stance they will take and how they will support it?

### Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

How can you help students select evidence from the readings and their notes, summaries, annotations, descriptive outlines and other responses to support their position and deal with contrary evidence?

### Getting Ready to Write

What sort of pre-writing strategies will help students begin to compose their texts?

## Writing Rhetorically

Thinking of writing as a rhetorical activity invites students to consider the importance of audience, purpose, ethos, situation, message, and genre as they write to affect readers in particular ways. The rhetorical approach calls for them to consider the circumstances that inform the occasion for writing before deciding on an argument and ways to develop and organize it. Thus writing rhetorically emphasizes contextualized thinking, sense making, and persuasion as prerequisites for considerations about form or genre. At this point as students begin to compose a first draft, they are about to make an active contribution to the conversation among voices and texts with which they have been interacting. At this stage, writing is generally "reading-based" in that it synthesizes the viewpoints and information of various sources to help the writer establish his or her position in the ongoing conversation.

# Entering the Conversation

Writing can be a way of discovering what we think and working through our personal concerns, for example in diaries and journals, but most often we write to communicate our ideas to others. In addition to forms of print and electronic media, such as letters, newspaper articles, memos, posters, reports, online forums, and Web sites, writing broadly conceived also includes texting, emailing, posting to a blog, submitting a message to a discussion board, tweeting, and using social media sites like Facebook. All of these forms of writing, as well as the more formal academic essay required in schools and universities, involve writers entering ongoing conversations in order to communicate thoughts, insights, and arguments.

## Composing a Draft

How can you help students write an initial, exploratory draft in which they "try on" positions, work with evidence, and mold their thoughts into a coherent statement?

## Considering Structure

How can you help students discover the most effective way to organize their text?

## Using the Words of Others (and Avoiding Plagiarism)

How can you help students learn to quote, paraphrase, and summarize their sources appropriately and document them accurately?

## Negotiating Voices

How can you help students represent the dialog between their own views and their various sources?

# Revising and Editing

Most students equate revising with editing, but more advanced writers understand that revision involves "re-evaluating" the concepts of the paper: the use of information, the arrangement and structure of arguments, and the development and significance of ideas. Revision—as both a reading activity and a writing activity—is based on an assessment of how well the writing has communicated the author's intentions—the argument or ideas of the text. Revising for rhetorical effectiveness encourages writers to address issues of content and structure before they edit—or address sentence-level concerns such as word choice and grammatical accuracy.

## Revising Rhetorically

How can you help your students analyze the rhetorical situation and revise their texts to fit?

## Considering Stylistic Choices

How can you help students revise their language to make it more effective?

## Editing the Draft

How can you help students find and correct grammatical and mechanical errors?

## Responding to Feedback

What kinds of feedback do students need from their instructor and their peers in order to improve their texts?

## Reflecting on Your Writing Process

How can you help students realize what they have learned from writing this assignment and how they can improve future writing that they do?

# Formative Assessment Strategies

Researchers have found several important aspects of formative assessment that can inform our understanding of it and maximize its impact. To be effective, formative feedback should answer three key questions:

- Where am I going?
- How am I going?
- Where to next?

The table below entitled Phases and Focus of Formative Assessment provides a summary and overview of the role that teachers and students play when answering questions that offer effective feedback. The table shows what teachers and students can do when addressing each of those three formative assessment questions.

|  | **Where Am I Going?** | **How Am I Going?** | **Where to Next?** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher | Clarify and communicate learning goals and success criteria to students. | Create an instructional environment for tasks, activities, and discussions that generate evidence of learning.<br><br>Observe and analyze evidence of student performance and procedures that would improve it. | Give feedback to students that clarifies for them what they need to understand and/or do to close the gap between current performance and learning goals.<br><br>Provide support for process-oriented and self-regulated learning. |
| Student | Understand the learning goals and the success criteria. | Gain a clear picture of the gap between what learning goals are expected and what progress toward them has been achieved. | Using the feedback they have received regarding their progress so far, envision their next challenge, plan steps to meet the challenge, and monitor progress toward learning goal. |

## Phases and Focus of Formative Assessment for Teacher and Student

Observation and analysis of student learning behaviors "on the fly" often contribute formative assessment information related to mastery of conceptual and procedural knowledge. Pre-designed formative assessment strategies that teachers can use in a more predictable format often generate information that also enables teachers to examine those forms of knowledge. An extensive set of formative assessment activities is provided here for teachers to review and use at appropriate moments during classroom instruction.

## Formative Assessment Strategies

1. **Ticket out the Door.** This progress-monitoring strategy requires students to demonstrate some brief content knowledge before they leave class. Students first create their "ticket" by tearing off a small square or slip of paper; they then write an easily assessable piece of content knowledge on their ticket to hand to their teacher on the way out of class. Only students who have a correct answer may leave class. If students have an incorrect answer, they must try again and go to the back of the line.

2. **Application Cards.** This assessment strategy addresses the question "How will I ever use this in the future?" by asking students to imagine how they will apply their learning to new tasks and contexts. At the end of an activity, lesson, or unit, students write down a potential real-world application of what they have learned. This strategy promotes greater transfer of learning. See Angelo and Cross (1993) for examples of classroom use.

3. **No-Points Quiz.** A "No-Points Quiz" is a low-stakes strategy that can give teachers a "pulse check" on student comprehension. Removing the point value from a quiz helps students see learning as a process. One good way to use this strategy is to "quiz" students on differences between key terms (e.g., connotation and denotation or purpose and audience). By describing these differences in their own words, students begin moving beyond a receptive or introductory understanding of the word to an expressive or internalized understanding. This activity can be done as a written quiz the teacher collects or as a pairs conversation the teacher monitors. (See The Value of Life.)

4. **Pencil Poll.** A Pencil Poll gives teachers a quick visual survey of student learning. The teacher asks the class a question that can be answered in only two ways (e.g., true or false, agree or disagree, fact or opinion, run-on or fragment, etc.). Students must hold their pencils vertically for one response and horizontally for the other response. For instant electronic classroom feedback, see Poll Everywhere (http://www.polleverywhere.com).

5. **Once Around.** Sometimes referred to as a Whip, the Once Around asks each student in the class to orally share an example of content learning, often as quickly as possible. The teacher first identifies the category of knowledge students must share—for example, students may have to name a coordinating conjunction or a modal verb. The teacher then chooses a student to start the Once Around, and each student calls out their response in turn.

6. **Mini-Presentations.** This strategy asks students to make a brief, sometimes ungraded, presentation on course content or procedural knowledge. Students could analyze a text using an overhead projector or a document camera; teachers can also assign individual slides in a PowerPoint to single students or groups of students. Teachers can then coach students as needed during the mini-presentation.

7. **One-Sentence Summary.** This simple exercise asks students to answer the following questions on a particular topic: Who? What? When? Where? Why? They then condense their response into a single sentence. See Angelo and Cross (1993) for examples of classroom use.

8. **Exit Slip.** Like the Ticket out the Door, the Exit Slip requires students to demonstrate their learning before leaving class. In this case, students may be asked to write a summary of key content or perform a specific task to be collected by the teacher in class (rather than at the door). Teachers can then review the Exit Slips to make instructional decisions.

9. **Fuzzy/Clear.** Using index cards or half sheets of paper, students record something from the day's lesson that is still "fuzzy" or confusing to them on one side of the paper and something else that is now clear to them on the other side. Teachers can then address "fuzzy" content in a subsequent lesson.

10. **3-2-1 Review.** This formative assessment strategy works well as an opening activity. Students demonstrate their understanding of a previous lesson by listing content learning in a structured review. The first category of review has three responses (e.g., List three prereading strategies), the second category has two responses (e.g., List two vocabulary strategies), and the third category has one response (e.g., List one definition of rhetoric). Students then share their 3-2-1 reviews, and the teacher clarifies any misperceptions before continuing with the next lesson.

11. **Popsicle Stick or Playing Card Responses.** Used as a quick spot check, numbered popsicle sticks or playing cards that correspond to individual students can be a helpful strategy for assessing the learning of students who may be reluctant to volunteer responses. The teacher poses a question to the whole class then randomly selects a popsicle stick or playing card. Only the student with the matching number (either the roster number or a matching playing card) answers the question. Use two decks of cards for the second option.

12. **Student "Closer."** Pre-assigning a student "Closer" who will be responsible for summarizing the day's learning is an excellent way to promote greater student ownership of learning. In this strategy, a different student provides a "group paraphrase" of key content and discussion at the end of class each day. The "Closer" answers the question "What did we learn today?" using his or her own words and limiting the response to under five minutes.

13. **Process Quickwrites.** Process quickwrites, or freewrites, help students articulate the means by which they achieve academic ends. This activity promotes metacognition and allows teachers to informally assess procedural knowledge by asking students to describe how they implement the reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking strategies they select for specific purposes.

14. **Peer Response to Summary.** The Peer Response to Summary asks students to identify and evaluate required elements in a partner's summary, thereby providing students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge of this genre while receiving feedback on their own writing. (See Good Food, Bad Food.)

15. **Vocabulary Self-Assessment.** Used as a post-reading activity, a Vocabulary Self-Assessment can be a helpful progress-monitoring strategy. Students compare their familiarity with each word before and after reading the text, thus charting their progress from receptive word knowledge to expressive word knowledge. See Allen (1999) for examples of classroom uses.

16. **Revisiting Key Vocabulary.** This learning experience aims to increase students' active or expressive word knowledge in preparation for academic writing.

17. **Charting Multiple Texts.** This postreading activity provides a quick assessment of students' reading comprehension. Teachers may see at a glance if students have understood the issue and central claim of each of multiple texts and if they can produce examples and comparisons to demonstrate and support those claims. (See The Value of Life.)

18. **Muddiest Point.** Like Fuzzy/Clear, Muddiest Point targets student confusion to identify areas for re-teaching. In this highly efficient formative assessment strategy, students simply answer the question: "What was the muddiest point in_____?" See Angelo and Cross (1993) for examples of classroom use.

19. **Student-Generated Test Questions.** Student-Generated Test Questions allow teachers to assess what learning students consider important, what kinds of questions they consider fair, and how well they understand key content. In this activity, students write questions for a possible quiz after studying the material. Questions could be multiple choice, true or false, matching, or constructed response. See Angelo and Cross (1993) for examples of Classroom use.

20. **Guided Composition.** The purpose of a Guided Composition is to elicit a paragraph of student writing in order to informally diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses in the area of sentence construction. Students first listen as the teacher reads a paragraph from a selected text aloud at a normal rate of speed. The teacher next reads the paragraph aloud again while, this time, the students take notes. Students then try to reconstruct what they heard using their notes. At the end of the unit, students will edit their paragraphs, applying what they have learned about English grammar. This activity is also known as a dictocomp. (See Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing.)

# Prereading, Reading, and Postreading Strategies

APPENDIX C contains prereading, reading, and postreading strategies, along with background information for each phase of the reading process. Some strategies may be used in more than one phase of reading.

## Prereading Strategies

Before reading, we can help students build background knowledge by asking them to question what they already know about the topic. If they know little or nothing about it, then it is up to the teacher to devote significant time building up that knowledge before reading ever begins. Effective readers also preview the text by looking at the title, the pictures, and the print in order to evoke relevant thoughts and memories. Finally, strategic readers set a purpose for reading by asking questions about what they want to learn as they read.

We use prereading activities to be sure students have enough background information to understand the topic or concept to be discussed. Prereading activities arouse students' curiosity and interest, a crucial component of engaging students with content. In addition, prereading helps students learn content through activities that encourage them to anticipate and predict what they will learn. Prompting students to ask questions is an effective way to help students develop purposes and motivation for reading texts. Prereading activities also provide opportunities for students to learn essential words, terms, or concepts ahead of time so students are not lost when these new terms or ideas arise.

**Anticipation Guide.** Anticipation guides can look different to serve different purposes. They are especially effective in small groups, which allow for quick work reading the questions, comments, or directions and then responding and coming together again to exchange and discuss ideas. This process allows time for students to activate their prior knowledge and identify their biases. An example of this is available through the URL here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=s7ztfDG5fec

**Knowledge Rating.** This prereading strategy asks students to rate their understanding of certain terms or concepts from a reading assignment. You can provide students with a list of words or concepts or have them find them on their own.

**Picture Walk.** For a Picture Walk, an image is presented to the students to activate their prior knowledge. They construct words or phrases that describe the picture, which they then share. They can advance by categorizing the terms or phrases or can use the activity without the categories.

**Ranking.** This activity involves an itemized list of events, situations, or ideas that students number by importance, sequence, or chronology.

**Scenarios.** Scenarios ask students to play a role in a situation that captures the concept to be learned.

**Surveying the Text.** Prereading starts with a survey of the reading assignment. Here are five items to look at in a text: (1) titles and subtitles; (2) pictures, graphs, and captions; (3) bold and italicized words; (4) the first and last paragraphs; and (5) headings. Make predictions and ask questions as you move through the survey.

## Reading Strategies

During reading, effective readers monitor their comprehension by using context clues to figure out unknown words and by discussing, imagining, and predicting where they think the discussion is going. Eventually, they integrate new concepts with existing knowledge.

To construct meaning, the learner needs to be purposefully and actively involved with the text. Knowledge of reading comprehension strategies during reading is a crucial factor. Also important are metacognition (understanding what one has learned) and metacomprehension (realizing when one has or has not understood) to ensure that readers will recognize when and under what conditions a comprehension strategy needs to be used.

**Bookmarks.** An interactive bookmark is a slip of paper with questions, ideas, key terms, or other concepts printed on both sides. When students use such interactive bookmarks as writing-to-learn tools, they are able to note their thinking, identify and define difficult vocabulary, and engage thoughtfully with the text as they are reading. Bookmarks help students think about how they read (reflecting on the mental process itself) and what they read (focusing strategically on content, style, and form). They can also be used to facilitate a reader's ability to develop interpretations and aid in their formulation of questions to help anchor reading in the text. See Burke for examples of classroom uses.

**Chunking.** Proficient readers monitor their comprehension and often "chunk" their reading—break it up into smaller units—to help them understand what they are reading. Chunking can be used with complex sentences or with longer passages, depending on the reader's needs. Such divisions will vary from person to person. See Schoenbach et al. and Burke for examples of classroom uses.

**Graphic Organizers.** By visually representing a text, graphic organizers help students understand textual and informational structures and perceive connections between ideas. Graphic organizers can also support comprehension and help students reflect on which parts of a text are the most important. See Schoenbach et al. and Burke for examples of classroom uses.

**Quickwrites.** A form of freewriting, quickwrites are spontaneous, stream-of-consciousness responses to a single issue or related issues (Fulwiler).

**Reciprocal Teaching.** For Reciprocal Teaching, students take turns leading a small group in a discussion of a reading selection. In this small-group activity, students interact in structured ways to guide the small group toward reasonable predictions, important questions, essential clarifications or explanations, and coherent summaries. See Schoenbach et al. and Burke for examples of classroom uses. Also see Palincsar and Brown.

**SQP2RS.** This is the process of (1) surveying—previewing a text or part of a text; (2) questioning—listing two or three questions you think will be answered in the text; (3) predicting—listing three or four items you think you will learn by reading this text and then asking the class to choose three or four of them to focus on; (4) reading the assigned text; (5) responding—confirming and negating predictions, answering the questions already generated

and asking new ones, and discussing the text with the class; and (6) summarizing— either by speaking or writing. See Echevarria et al. and Vogt.

**Talking to the Text/Annotating the Text/Highlighting.** Writing responses and questions in the margins and underlining and highlighting key ideas are ways of increasing readers' engagement with ideas presented in the text. These interactions with the reading material help to activate students' prior knowledge and support their comprehension. See Jordan, Jensen, and Greenleaf and Burke for examples of classroom uses. Also see Davey.

**Think Aloud.** Narrating the thought process while reading a passage aloud can help students externalize points of confusion, articulate questions about the text or its content, and make connections between the text and the students' background knowledge and life experience. It is common to have students alternate reading sentences, paragraphs, or sections aloud. Think Alouds help make internal thinking processes accessible. See Schoenbach et al. and Burke for examples of classroom uses. Also see Kucan and Beck for a review of the research.

## Postreading Strategies

A few final strategies are most effective after students read through a text.

**Five Word Summary:** This strategy starts with five words and contains four steps.

Step 1—Using words from the reading, create a list of the five most important words. These should all be words that explain and/or clarify the main point of the reading.

Step 2—Choose a partner, and compare your five-word list to a partner's. The two of you will now have five minutes to create a *new* list of the five most important words by synthesizing your two original lists. Be sure to choose those terms from your lists that represent the reading's main idea.

Step 3—In pairs, now join another set of partners to form a group of four. Each pair will share its five-word list; then the group of four will once again discuss which words are really most essential to the main idea of the reading. Each group will also have five minutes to create a newly synthesized list of five key words. While you can try to persuade your peers that your word choices are the best, *your group must be in agreement about its final list.*

Step 4—On your own, use the final list of five key words that your group of four agreed on, and write a summary paragraph of the reading. Use all five words from your final list in your paragraph. Underline each of the five key words in your summary. Be sure that the words you chose support/explain/clarify the main point of the reading.

**GIST** (Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text): Involving five major steps, this strategy is an excellent way to show students how to write a summary: (1) read the passage or chapter; (2) circle or list the important words, phrases, and ideas; (3) put the reading material aside; (4) use the important words, phrases, and ideas to generate summary sentences; and (5) add a topic sentence. See Cunningham et al. for more information on this strategy.

**Rereading or repeated reading:** Rereading increases readers' comprehension and raises their confidence, especially with challenging texts. It also helps less-skilled readers develop fluency. See Schoenbach et al. and Burke for examples of classroom uses.

**Say, mean, matter:** This strategy involves answering three questions as they relate to a reading selection: What does it say? What does it mean? Why does it matter? The purpose of this exercise is to encourage students to move beyond literal-level thinking (Blau).

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# Vocabulary Development Activities

We recommend using the strategies listed in Appendix D throughout the ERWC modules.

**Concept Map.** For a Concept Map, students generate additional words, contexts, examples, and non-examples for a new term, concept, or key vocabulary word.

**Cubing.** Originally created by Cowan and Cowan Neeld, students freewrite about a vocabulary term, using each of the six ways to discuss the term: describe it, compare it, associate it, analyze it, apply it, and argue for or against it. Allow students to write about each "side" of the cube for roughly three minutes. After they have completed all six sides, students can share or develop their own definition of the term.

**Denotation/Connotation.** Students predict word meanings or look up words based on their denotations (dictionary definitions) and connotations (personal meanings).

**Frayer Model.** Students define the key concept, describe its attributes, compare and contrast it to other related concepts, provide examples of it, and explain why the examples are appropriate. Using this model, the students can distinguish between examples and non-examples (Frayer, Frederick, and Klausmeier).

**Rich Use of Language.** Reading research shows that the more experiences and richer experiences students have with new words, the more likely they are to learn the word. Those experiences include opportunities for oral and written use of the new words as well as identifying and understanding them in context. Teachers can provide students with more word practice by having them use the new words to create scripts for performing commercials, skits, roles, poems, raps, songs, and so forth.

**Self-Assessment Charts.** These charts allow students to view key terms from the text to see whether they know them and, if so, to what extent. Students can then learn the words they do not know, and teachers will gain some insight into which words may need direct instruction.

**Semantic Maps, Webs, Spiders.** This graphic organizer is for categorizing, grouping, and organizing information.

**Semantic Feature Analysis Charts.** These charts are used to judge the similarities and differences of a group of people, items, or events. Some examples of Semantic Feature Analysis charts are available at this URL: <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/semantic_feature_analysis/>

**Sorting Activities.** Students sort words by derivation or by concept. For a sorting activity, the teacher makes a list of words that are related either by root/derivation or by concept. The

words are then listed on a grid and manipulated with signs or symbols. The teacher may choose to have an open sort (no headings provided) or a closed sort (headings provided).

**Synonym/Antonym Chart with Examples.** Students identify synonyms for the new word given, increasing their list of words that are similar but also enhancing their own understanding of the word in relation to other words that share the meaning. To promote even more understanding and more words in their "banks," students can look at antonyms. Then they can provide examples of the word in sentences or give the context.

**What Am I?** This is an activity in which questions are asked about what the vocabulary term is and what it is not on the basis of the meaning of the word. Students might explore one word and "teach" it to the class, sharing the clues discovered while studying the word.

**Word Trees.** For this activity, students make a tree of words related in some way—through derivation, meaning, roots, and the like.

**Vocabulary Notebooks or Logs.** With vocabulary logs, students direct their own learning as they identify and log unknown or difficult words they find in a text.

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# Using Classroom Discussion Strategies to Foster Rhetorical Literacies

Because we know that well organized classroom conversations can significantly enhance academic performance,[1] all ERWC modules offer students in-depth and frequent opportunities (in pairs, trios, small and large groups) to collaboratively discuss high-interest topics written in different genres for varied purposes. Such plentiful occasions for talk –about content, structure and rhetorical stance – cultivate students' curiosity, motivation and engagement, develop their thinking through sharing ideas with others, and prepare them to participate fully in university-level academic work.

## Talking Together about Texts and Ideas Promotes Students' Independent Literacy Practices

Students who have access to high-level, meaningful conversations about complex literacy practices like those embedded in the ERWC are eventually better able to internalize these ways of thinking, ultimately making such habits of mind their own. Through strategic classroom conversations with peers and teachers, students come to understand what kinds of questions to ask, what distinctions are important to make, and what lines of reasoning make sense given varied rhetorical contexts.[2] When students are able to "make their thinking visible"[3] to one another (and become aware of it themselves) through substantive discussions, they eventually begin to take on the academic "ways with words,"[4] they see classmates and teachers skillfully using. Such inquiry-oriented dialogue supports students' future independent literacy practices, builds classroom community, and democratizes the learning process; when people are thinking together to expand their own and others' understandings of texts, everyone stands to succeed.

## Authentic Discussions about High-interest Topics Support Comprehension and Encourage Multiple Perspectives

Researchers have found that the classroom approaches which best support students' abilities to perform complex literacy tasks "were those that used discussion to develop comprehensive understanding, encouraging exploration and multiple perspectives rather than focusing on correct interpretations and predetermined conclusions."[5] Engaging students in responding to questions about topics of inherent interest to them, every ERWC module relies on text-based conversations because "discussions about and around text have the potential to increase student comprehension, metacognition, critical thinking, and reasoning, as well as students' ability to state and support arguments."[6] Although less teacher-talk and more student-talk are not guarantees of enhanced student comprehension, researchers note that successful discussion encourages "teachers to yield the floor to students…" and attend not only to the content but also the nature of student conversation – who is participating and in what ways.[7]

## Strategic Discussions Facilitate Release of Responsibility for Learning to Students

Through these frequent and varied opportunities for students to become immersed in texts through talk – with one another, with teachers, and with texts – the ERWC supports the "gradual release of responsibility"[8] to students. This is a crucial step in helping young people become progressively more independent learners, thinkers, readers and writers. As students gain competence participating in such inquiry-based academic conversations, both large and small, they are also able to make more strategic and independent choices as readers and writers about which rhetorical tools to deploy at a given moment depending on context and purpose. They are also better equipped to reflect metacognitively on their own literacy processes and practices and to responsively change them as needed. This is authentic and deep literacy learning in action.[9]

## Discussions Encourage Rhetorical Thinking, Reading and Writing

Finally, the ERWC's numerous questions about ethos, pathos, and logos, which stretch across the curriculum as a whole, teach students that authors deploy rhetorical and linguistic strategies designed to persuade readers. Students are sometimes surprised to discover that they are the people (readers) these strategies are being intentionally employed to persuade. As they become better able to perceive the rhetorical machinery in action and to feel that they are personally part of the conversation, they sense that they have some control over text. Their awareness of this emerging power "to read between the lines" – to analyze and evaluate authors' arguments and speculate about their purposes for writing – increases comprehension of and engagement with texts and ultimately augments students' capacities to think, read and write rhetorically. The conversational back and forth – between people as well as on paper and screen – is central to the ERWC's rhetorical approach to developing adolescents' literacies and literate identities.

## Strategies for Promoting Rich Classroom Discussions

Building students' skills for engaging in effective classroom conversations necessitates strategic planning and preparation. Teachers may want to consider a number of elements that together facilitate and support their students' practice, development, and application of academic talk.

**The Physical Environment:** Fisher, Frey & Rothenberg (2008) offer practical tips and ideas on how to create a classroom environment that promotes productive talk through room arrangements, visual supports and flexible seating to build a community of learners.

**Developing Classroom Routines for Conversational Interaction:** Students need explicit instruction on the rules of engagement (behavioral norms) for entering into and maintaining productive academic conversations. See Fisher, Frey and Rothenberg (2008), Zweirs and Crawford (2011) and Schoenbach, Greenleaf and Murphy (2012) for detailed examples of strategies for modeling attentive listening, encouraging student participation, and teaching students to build on and respectfully challenge others' ideas.

**Scaffolding Academic Conversations:** Many students, especially English learners, benefit from the support of sentence starters and/or sentence frames for building their repertoire of classroom discussion language. Zwiers (2008), Zweirs and Crawford (2011) and Schoenbach, Greenleaf & Murphy (2012) include examples of functional language starters and frames that students can use to help them employ language for purposeful and productive whole class and small group discussions. These include language for asking questions, offering evidence, shifting the focus, connecting various participants' ideas, and stating an opinion. (See example from Zwiers & Crawford (2011) below.)

**Effective Questioning:** Having the capacity to formulate and respond to "good" questions enables students to initiate and maintain substantive, rhetorically grounded conversations. Zweirs (2008), Zweirs & Crawford (2011), Fisher and Frey (2012), Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko and Hurwitz (1999), Schoenbach, Greenleaf and Murphy (2012), Tovani (2000) and Burke (2000) provide extensive explanations and descriptions of teaching and learning strategies that employ varied approaches to questioning. Strategies such as Questioning the Author, ReQuest, Question-Answer Relationships (QAR), Think Aloud, and Reciprocal Teaching help students ask questions to justify, clarify, elaborate, predict, wonder, imagine, connect, picture and more.

**Flexible Grouping for Productive Classroom Talk:** To ensure that all students have opportunities to engage in high-level academic discussions, teachers can introduce a variety of grouping structures with accompanying "talk formats." Michaels, et al. (2010) explain the importance behind establishing conversational routines with specific participatory structures for both teachers and students. What they term "accountable talk" – classroom discussion that promotes and sustains academic learning – occurs when teachers employ "moves" that encourage students to be accountable to the classroom community, demand rigorous reasoning, and incorporate use of discipline appropriate evidence. For conversational accountability to become routine, students need to become familiar with the conventions and skills associated with various participation structures. Teachers' instructional decisions regarding which structure to utilize at any given moment will depend on academic goals at hand. (See, *The Accountable Talk Sourcebook* [2010] for a more extensive explanation of how to create classrooms that foster rigorous, academically productive and engaging talk.)

**Structured Group Work:** Fostering a classroom environment that truly encourages all students to participate, talk and interact includes effective collaborative group work practices. Much has been written about the benefits of small group collaboration but in order for this participatory structure to result in students' equitable participation, increased academic language use and higher levels of academic learning, it is important to prepare them – teach them – to work cooperatively and design group work tasks that require positive interdependence, a genuine exchange of information, and negotiation of meaning. Fisher & Frey (2008), Zwiers (2008), and Frey, Fisher & Everlove (2009) discuss in detail essential guidelines for introducing, managing and implementing structured group work and for supporting students' ongoing development of group communication skills.

Selected discussion strategies that incorporate the norms and skills previously discussed include:

**The Discussion Web (Alvermann, 1991):** This hybrid discussion strategy is designed to include all students in classroom discussion of a debatable topic. Incorporating all four communicative modes (listening, speaking, reading and writing) students have multiple, structured opportunities to interact while gathering text-based evidence. Students are given a content-based reading, a focusing question and clear directions and scaffolds for developing arguments supporting both sides of the question. See Buehl (2009) for directions, sample Discussion Web and Discussion Web graphic organizer.

**Structured Academic Controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 1994):** Like the Discussion Web, Structured Academic Controversy is another cooperative approach to conversation in which small teams of students learn about a controversial issue from multiple perspectives. Students work in pairs, reading materials to identify the most salient parts of the argument from one perspective. Pairs present their arguments to each other, debate, and then switch

sides, debating a second time, and finally coming to consensus through a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the argument.

**Teacher-Like Conversation Skills that Students Can Learn (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011):** In their book, *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk That Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings,* Zwiers and Crawford posit that teachers can (and should) teach their students to facilitate conversations using the same strategies and language they themselves use to foster classroom discussion. They offer the following chart (77) to illustrate both the conversational skills and accompanying sentence-stems for students to learn in order to move towards more independent, student controlled academic conversations.

| Teacher-Like Skill | Possible-Things to Say |
| --- | --- |
| Pose a thought-provoking question to get the conversation going or make it go deeper | Why….? <br><br> How….? <br><br> In your opinion….? |
| Let the partner say as much as he or she can; encourage the partner to think aloud | That's interesting, please keep going. <br><br> Tell us what you are thinking. <br><br> Tell me more about… |
| Keep the goal or topic in mind; get the conversation back on track; maintain focus | What are we trying to do? <br><br> What is our goal? <br><br> Remember, our central question is… |
| Value others' thinking; remember what a person said earlier and connect to it. | Great idea! Let's write that down. <br><br> Connecting back to what you said about…we can… <br><br> Do you think that…? |
| Don't pick one side of an issue; be impartial and inquisitive; encourage open-mindedness and value different perspectives. | Then again, we need to remember… <br><br> What about…? <br><br> What are other points of view? |
| Question a source; challenge an idea. | Where did that evidence come from? <br><br> What makes that a reliable source? |
| Generate theories, big ideas, and truths about the world, history, life, and so on. | We might interpret this as… <br><br> One theory could be that… |
| Clarify another person's or your own idea (when you see wondering faces and wandering minds.) | Interesting, so what you are saying is… <br><br> In other words…. |
| Paraphrase, emphasizing that the idea helped to move the discussion forward. | Okay, so you are saying…That helps us. <br><br> Juan highlighted that…Let's build on this. |
| Be specific, clear, brief and sincere. | Specifically, I mean that…. |

1  Applebee, 1996; Applebee et al., 2003; Cazden, 2001; Nystrand, 1997; Frey, 2013; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz, 1999; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Murphy, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978.

2  As the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) explains, what is at first an *interpersonal* skill, discussing and analyzing texts and ideas with peers, eventually becomes an *intrapersonal* skill; as students gain experience talking, thinking and writing about academic texts collaboratively with peers, they build the skills they will need to engage internally in such "dialogue" when they are thinking, reading and writing independently.

3  Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz, 1999; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Murphy, 2012.

4  Heath, 1988.

5  Applebee et al., 2003, p. 722.

6  Murphy, et al., p. 743.

7  Murphy, et al. p. 761

8  Duke et al., 2011; Fisher and Frey, 2008; Pearson and Gallagher, 1983.

9  The Committee on Deeper Learning and 21st Century Skills (National Research Council) recommends the following research-based teaching methods: Using multiple and varied representations of concepts and tasks; Encouraging elaboration, questioning, and explanation; Engaging learners in challenging tasks; Teaching with examples and cases; Priming student motivation; Using formative assessment (181).

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# Annotation/Summary/ Response Rubric

Once students have completed their Summary and Response papers, you can collect the annotation and summary/response and grade them using the following rubric.

*1 = serious problems   2 = developing competence   3 = minimal competence   4= clear competence*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1   2   3   4 | **Annotation:** The writer has systematically annotated the reading, identifying the main idea, major points, and important examples. The writer has also included some personal reaction. |
| 1   2   3   4 <br> (x 2) = <br> _____ | **Content of the Summary:** The writer clearly states the title and the author and then demonstrates concise understanding of the focus of the passage. The writer includes all the important supporting points and examples but excludes unnecessary detail and personal opinion. |
| 1   2   3   4 | **Organization of the Summary:** The paragraph begins with a sentence(s) accurately explaining the main idea of the passage, and the organization is logical, generally coinciding with the original organizational pattern. The writer effectively uses transitions and concludes appropriately. |
| 1   2   3   4 | **Content of the Response:** The writer clearly describes a personal connection to one or more ideas in the passage, using thoughtful detail and appropriate register. |
| 1   2   3   4 | **Language:** The writer communicates in his/her own words showing consistent control of language conventions and effective use of vocabulary. |

Directions: Circle the number in each category that best describes the student's proficiency. Multiply the "Content of the Summary" by 2. Add the numbers and then divide by 6 to get an average score.

Total _____

Average _____ (Total divided by 6)

# Key Assignment Words

**Analyze**
Break the issue or problem into separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part and the relationships among them. Sometimes this involves looking carefully at causes and effects.

**Analyze the Argument and the Conclusion**
Look at the truth and persuasiveness of the reasons given for a position and the degree to which the conclusion is justified on the basis of those reasons.

**Compare and Contrast**
Describe the similarities and differences between two objects, situations, or ideas. Sometimes this involves a before-and-after comparison.

**Define**
Tell what a particular word or term means in your essay. Usually, this is not a dictionary definition; rather, it clarifies the way in which you are using the term.

**Describe**
Give a detailed account, naming characteristics, parts, or qualities.

**Discuss**
This is a general term that covers explanations, reasoning, pro and con arguments, examples, analysis, and so forth.

**Evaluate**
This term literally means to determine the "value" of something, to discover how good or bad some- thing is. It usually means that you should argue that something is good or bad, then discuss your reasoning.

**Explain**
Help the reader understand the reasoning behind your position by showing the logical development in step-by-step fashion. You might also be asked to show how something works or how to do something.

**Illustrate**
In a writing prompt, this usually does not mean to draw pictures. Instead, it means to give examples.

**Prove**
This usually means that you should support your opinions with facts and arguments.

**State**
State your opinion strongly and concisely.

# Prewriting Strategies

Preparing to write, or prewriting, strategies are activities that help you explore a subject and generate ideas about it. Your mission at this stage is to stimulate your thinking before and during the act of writing. Whenever you generate new material throughout the writing process, you are prewriting. The most popular and effective prewriting activities are brainstorming, clustering/mapping, discussing, freewriting, informal outlining, questioning, quickwrites, and scanning. The more ideas you generate now and throughout the entire writing process, the more you have to work with as you draft your essay.

**Brainstorming:** A list of related words and phrases based on free association.

**Clustering/Mapping:** The process of mapping any ideas that come to mind on a specific topic.

**Note:** This activity involves writing a key word or phrase at the center of a page and drawing a circle around it, then writing and circling any related ideas that come to mind and drawing lines to the ideas that prompted the new words.

**Discussing:** The act of talking with another person about one's subject matter and grappling aggressively with the ideas in the process.

**Freewriting:** The strategy of writing for a brief period of time about anything that comes to mind. *Note:* Based on free association, this strategy is connected prose rather than a list.

**Informal Outlining:** A list of the main ideas and details related to the specified topic in the order in which they will likely be addressed.

**Questioning:** The process of asking questions that will generate new ideas and topics. *Note:* This process is often based on the five Ws and one H: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

**Quickwrites:** Brief, informal reactions to specific queries or statements.

**Scanning:** The process of skimming and spot reading to generate ideas and form opinions.

# Using Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism

Academic writers use words and ideas from written sources to situate themselves in ongoing scholarly conversations about issues of concern in their fields. We want students to join the academic conversation, engage with the ideas of others, and express and support their own views. This means that they must learn to integrate the words and ideas of sources in their own texts and properly document them. This appendix addresses the following topics:

- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Quoting Sources
- Paraphrasing Sources
- Summarizing Sources
- Framing and Responding to Quotations
- Documenting Sources
- MLA Format

## Avoiding Plagiarism

When a writer takes words and ideas from another writer and represents them as his or her own, we call it "plagiarism." The worst form of plagiarism is when a student turns in an entire paper written by someone else—a friend, a parent, or someone on the Internet. That is academic dishonesty, a form of fraud that defeats the learning goals of the assignment. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that can after multiple offenses result in expulsion from a university.

However, academic progress is built on the work of others. We don't want students to be afraid of using sources. As students struggle to incorporate quotes, to paraphrase and summarize sources, they will make mistakes. They will occasionally rely too much on the words or syntax of the source, or they will fail to document properly. These should be seen as teachable moments, not crimes. Fear of plagiarism can lead to avoiding the use of sources and can inhibit learning as much as actual plagiarism. The inability to properly use sources can actually lead to plagiarism later, when a student is given a serious research assignment that he or she does not have the skills to do. If we can keep in mind the distinction between plagiarism that is an attempt at academic fraud and plagiarism that arises from an honest error in using sources, we can support students in learning the skill of using sources effectively.

One common mistake is when students think that they do not have to cite sources for paraphrases and summaries because changing a few words makes it their own. Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries must have sources cited both in the text and in the bibliography or "Works Cited" page at the end. It is not just words but also ideas that must be documented. Clearly marking ideas

that writers take from other sources also helps them establish an explicit stance, distinguishing the previous conversation from their own contributions to that conversation.

## Quoting Sources

The first step is to choose the right passages to quote. When students initially begin working with a text that is a potential source of ideas for their writing, they should be encouraged to underline main ideas, strong statements, interesting facts, and effective language. To begin the writing process, the student should return to these underlined portions with the writing project in mind. The following questions will help students think about what parts of the source they may want to use:

- Is there a sentence or passage that sums up or is representative of the author's position or approach?
- Is there a sentence or passage that I strongly agree or disagree with?
- Is there something in the text that is particularly well said?
- Is there something that will support (or refute) the position I am going to take in my paper?
- Are there any controversial statements?

If the student is working with multiple texts and authors, it may be useful for him or her to write down quoted passages on note cards, taking care to indicate the source and the page number or other bibliographic information.

When quotations are integrated into the text, writers usually frame the quoted material with their own text identifying the author and the source and enclose the quoted material in quotation marks. In the U.S., the period or comma goes inside the quotation marks unless the writer is using a parenthetical citation, in which case the punctuation follows the closing parenthesis. Question marks go inside or outside depending on whether they are part of the quote or the student is asking a question about the quote. Students should practice correctly punctuating the quotes they have chosen. Here are some examples:

> In "A Change of Heart about Animals," Jeremy Rifkin notes that "In Germany, the government is encouraging pig farmers to give each pig 20 seconds of human contact each day and to provide them with toys to prevent them from fighting."

> Rifkin asks, "Should wild lions be caged in zoos?"

> Is Jeremy Rifkin correct when he says, "The human journey is, at its core, about the extension of empathy to broader and more inclusive domains"?

If a passage the student wants to quote is longer than a couple of sentences, it can be set off as a block quote. Block quotes are indented and are often single-spaced.

> Rifkin finds that even animals mourn their dead.

>> Of course, when it comes to the ultimate test of what distinguishes humans from the other creatures, scientists have long believed that mourning for the dead represents the real divide. It's commonly believed that other animals have no sense of their mortality and are unable to comprehend the concept of their own death. Not necessarily so. Animals, it appears, experience grief. Elephants will often stand next to their dead kin for days, occasionally touching their bodies with their trunks. (15)

Block quotes are especially useful when the writer is going to analyze the language, structure, or arguments of the passage in some depth. Students often overuse them, however, thinking that they are easy to drop into their text.

Direct quotes create the most distance between the writer's perspective and the perspective of the source. When we use quotation marks to represent another's speech or writing, we are signaling that these are the exact words of the source, and we are setting off those words as distinct from our own. There is a high degree of separation. On the other hand, when we use reported speech to represent what the other said, we change the grammatical form and lose the quotations marks, so that the words of the other are not entirely separated from our own. Our words and the other's words are merged to some extent. The current writer's voice and the source writer's voice are speaking more harmoniously. When we paraphrase, these voices are merged even more. We are still indicating through citation that our words and ideas have a source, but in a sense we are speaking those words ourselves.

Direct quotes are best used only when the writer is going to analyze the language of the source, when something is particularly well said, or when the source has particular authority and the student wants to use the ethos of the source to bolster his or her own argument.

Completing one of the following statements for each selected quote may help students discover what their response to the quote is, and later help them integrate the ideas into their own paper.

- I agree with this because . . .
- I disagree with this because . . .
- The author has a point, but has not considered . . .

## Paraphrasing Sources

A paper should not be a series of direct quotes strung together with transitions and introductory phrases. Direct quotes should be used judiciously, for good reasons. In academic research papers, most of the ideas from sources appear in paraphrases. To paraphrase is to represent or report the words of another in one's own words. However, student writers tend to resist paraphrasing because it is much more difficult than quoting. To paraphrase, one must completely understand the original, whereas one can often get away with dropping in a quote that one is uncertain about. Students think that quotes "speak for themselves." They do, but if they are not introduced, framed, and integrated, especially if the student doesn't understand them completely, they create incoherence. More on this in "Framing and Responding to Quotes" below.

The simplest form of paraphrase is reported speech. This is a grammatical transformation that changes a direct quote into a report of what someone said. For example, look at the following conversation:

Belinda: "Where are you going Harry?"

Harry: "I 'm going to the library to study Shakespeare." (leaves)

Dolores: "Where did Harry go?"

Belinda: "He said he was going to the library to study."

When Belinda reports what Harry said, she changes his words from first person to third and his present tense to past. This transformation into reported speech is very common in conversation. In fact, whole conversations often consist of retelling what someone else said. Students are quite adept at this in speech, but having them record and transcribe conversations may help them move from oral ability to a literate practice. In an academic context, we might transform a quote such as this:

"I do find it curious that it has taken us so long even to bother to ask whether fish feel pain" (Braithwaite 8).

to a report like this:

> Victoria Braithwaite finds it curious that it has taken us so long even to bother to ask whether fish feel pain (8).

In this transformation, Braithwaite's language is merged to a certain extent with the writer's. The writer's voice and Braithwaite's are no longer separated by quotation marks. However, some might say that in this context the reported speech is too close to the original, and want to put quotation marks around part of the sentence:

> Victoria Braithwaite finds it "curious that it has taken us so long even to bother to ask whether fish feel pain" (8).

Note that the part in the writer's voice and the quoted words must fit together grammatically as a sentence.

Of course, the voices can be merged even further:

> Victoria Braithwaite finds it strange that it has taken us so long to think about whether fish feel pain (8).

As the voices merge, the style becomes smoother and easier to read and process. However, if we quote one word from the original it puts a lot of emphasis on that word and a lot of distance between our own voice and the source's:

Victoria Braithwaite finds it "curious" that we have been so unconcerned about whether or not fish feel pain (8).

This is sometimes called using "scare" quotes, indicating that although others use this word in this context, the current writer has some doubts about it.

The ability to paraphrase a passage without significantly altering its meaning is an indication that the student understands the material and can use it in his or her own writing without creating incoherence. Students can practice by choosing quotes from the previous activity. recasting them in reported speech, and then changing the words and the syntax even more to merge the voices further. Note that with paraphrasing (and summarizing) having students use language that appropriately attributes the ideas to their source is especially important.

Students can practice paraphrasing by taking the quotations they have selected and reporting them in various ways.

## Summarizing Sources

To paraphrase is to put a passage from a source into one's own words. To summarize is to put the main ideas of an argument, an article, a section, a chapter, or a whole book into one's own words. If several sources are being cited, it may be useful to summarize the arguments of one or more of them. A summary is also a good way to introduce the general content or position of an article before analyzing it in more detail. For example, one could use this summary of the Rifkin article to introduce a section that looks at each of the studies he cites in more detail:

> In "A Change of Heart about Animals," Jeremy Rifkin cites study after study to show that animals and humans are more alike than we think. He shows that animals feel emotions, reason, make and use tools, learn and use language, and mourn their dead. One study even shows that pigs need affection and playtime with one another, and enjoy playing with toys (15).

The Descriptive Outlining process described in the "Considering the Structure of the Text" section

of the ERWC Assignment Template is an effective way to gather the information necessary for a good summary.

## Framing and Responding to Quotations

Quotes, paraphrases, and summaries should not be dropped into the writer's text for no apparent reason. At the very least, the source material should be framed by a lead in and a response. For example, here is a way to frame another block quote from the Rifkin article:

> Jeremy Rifkin argues every step of the way that animals are more like humans than we imagine them to be. He sets up every traditional distinction between humans and animals and then knocks it down with a study that shows that distinction to be questionable. Thus we expect him to be leading to a conclusion that we should not eat animals, or use them in experiments. Instead, he concludes
>
> > The human journey is, at its core, about the extension of empathy to broader and more inclusive domains. At first, the empathy extended only to kin and tribe. Eventually it was extended to people of like-minded values. In the 19th century, the first animal humane societies were established. The current studies open up a new phase, allowing us to expand and deepen our empathy to include the broader community of creatures with whom we share the Earth. (15)
>
> Rifkin presents human history as if it has been a step-by-step extension of empathy to more and more species. Is this true? Even if it is, which seems doubtful, this conclusion does not follow from the evidence that Rifkin presents.

When students use material from sources in their texts, they should think about the following:

- What purpose does this serve for my reader?
- How does this material support my argument or make my point?
- How can I put this material in a clearer context?
- How can I help my readers understand this material?

## Documenting Sources

The two most common documentation systems used in university work are those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA). Different disciplines use different styles. English departments use MLA and the social sciences APA, although linguists working in English departments also use APA. Historians usually document sources according to the system in the *Chicago Manual of Style.* The popular *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian presents a version of Chicago style. Scientific journals usually use the style of the Council of Science Editors (CSE). There is no way that a high school teacher could prepare students for all of the different documentation systems they will encounter in a university. However, although the formats are different, the basic elements of any documentation system are the same.

Whatever format they use, your students will need to learn to record all the necessary information and acquire the habit of documenting sources. They will need to record, at a minimum, the author, title, city of publication, publisher, date of publication, and page number when citing a source. In this section, it is impossible to provide sample citations for all of the different types of sources your students may want to use, so we will provide only some very basic examples in MLA. Online style manuals are available for the major citation styles. One of the best and easiest to use is the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/. That site covers both MLA and APA.

**MLA Format**

The MLA format was revised in 2009. One must now include the "medium of publication," which is usually Print or Web, but could also be Film, CD-Rom, or DVD. The URL is no longer necessary for web sources. For articles that originally appeared in print but have been accessed through an online database, the name of the database is required, typed in italics.

**Books.** Here is the MLA format for the citation for a typical book:

Last name, First name. *Title of Book.* Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Print.

Here is an example with multiple authors:

Bean, John C., Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gilliam. *Reading Rhetorically: A Reader for Writers.* New York: Longman, 2002. Print.

**Newspapers.** Here is the bibliographic information for the article quoted above in MLA format. Because it was published in a newspaper, the format and the information included differ somewhat from the basic citation given above.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "A Change of Heart about Animals." *Los Angeles Times* 1 Sept. 2003: B15+. Print.

**Web sites.** Students often want to incorporate material from Web sites. To document a Web site, they will need to give the name of the author (if known), the title of the site (or a description, such as "Homepage," if no title is available), the date of publication or update (if known), the name of the organization that sponsors the site, and the date of access. For example,

*University Writing Center.* 26 June 2003. University Writing Center, California Polytechnic State University, Pomona. 26 May 2004. Web.

The author for the above site is unknown, so no name is given. This entry would appear in the Works Cited section alphabetized by "University."

**In-Text Documentation.** MLA style, as well as all other documentation styles, also require in-text documentation for every direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase, and summary. Students are often confused by this, believing that documentation is necessary only for direct quotations. If the author's name is given in the text, the page number should be given in parentheses at the end of the sentence containing the material. If not, both the author's name and the page number are required in the in-text citation. For example, here is a paraphrase of material from the Rifkin article. Because the author is not named in the text, the last name goes in the parentheses:

> It is well-established that animals can learn to use sign language. A long-term study at the Gorilla Foundation in Northern California shows that Koko, a 300-pound gorilla, can use more than 1,000 signs to communicate with her keepers and can understand several thousand English words. She also scores between 70 and 95 on human IQ tests (Rifkin 15).

An academic paper is most often a dialogue between the writer and his or her sources. If your students learn to quote, paraphrase, summarize, and document sources correctly, they will be well on their way to becoming college students.

This short introduction presents only the basic concepts of MLA documentation. Your students will need access to the Purdue OWL, mentioned above, or a book such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers,* 7th Edition, which covers the system in more detail.

# Works Cited

Braithwaite, Victoria. "Hooked on a Myth: Do Fish Feel Pain?" *Los Angeles Times* 8 Oct. 2006: M.5. Print.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "A Change of Heart About Animals." *Los Angeles Times* 1 Sept. 2003: B15. Print.

Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. Purdue U. Web. 23 March 2013. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

# Collaborative Scoring of Student Writing

Collaborative scoring is a method for a group of readers to come to consensus about qualities that they will look for in student writing. Guided by a rubric, they balance the strengths and weaknesses of a paper in order to assess its overall effectiveness. It requires readers to set aside their personal tastes and preferences and enables them to score papers in a way that is consistent with each other and with previous scoring sessions. While no method of scoring writing can be completely objective, collaborative scoring removes much of the subjectivity normal in grading one's own students and enables teachers to talk to students about the strengths and weaknesses of their writing from a more objective position. Collaborative scoring is usually used to score academic essays, but the same process can be applied to scoring other types of student writing including summaries and responses, letters or memos, or rhetorical précis.

Collaborative scoring is also a powerful tool for bringing a whole department together around the topic of student writing and the best ways it can be fostered. When teachers see how a large number of students respond to a writing task and talk with other teachers about the writing, not only of their own students but of everyone else's, it can strengthen a program. The discussions that emerge can be opportunities to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum, consider possible changes to address students' needs, and share strategies for improving students' abilities to read and write in response to a common assignment.

While there is certainly no one way to plan and carry out a collaborative scoring session, experienced leaders often follow the process outlined below.

## Preparing for Collaborative Scoring

- Establish and communicate the ground rules for administering the writing task.
    - Will students write in class or out of class?
    - How long will they have to write?
    - Will the text(s) that they write about be distributed in advance?
    - Will teachers be able to teach the text(s), or will students be required to read independently?
    - Will students be able to discuss the text(s) in advance?
    - Can students use other texts or must they write about only the text(s) that are given?
- Communicate to students in advance the expectations for the task.
    - What will the task be?
    - What are the ground rules?
    - What process will be used to evaluate their writing?

- What scoring guide will be used?
- Create a norming packet.
  - Collect a random sample of papers from several teachers that will include papers at all score points on the scoring guide.
  - Invite a small number of experienced readers (three is a good number) to select benchmark papers (a typical example for each score point used to orient readers to the application of the scoring guide) and range finders (papers that readers score and then discuss to help arrive at agreement on the traits of papers at each score point).
  - Ask the readers to take notes as they score a small number of papers, and then discuss why readers gave the scores they did, trying to come to consensus on papers where there was disagreement.
  - Repeat this process through several rounds until readers are reasonably in agreement. Continue scoring until a pool of papers is created from which to select the norming papers.
  - Choose the benchmark papers first. They should represent a typical response to the topic at a particular score point and should be neither especially strong or especially weak. Avoid choosing papers that take an unusual approach or are borderline and could generate controversy about the score.
  - Once readers have agreed on the most representative papers to serve as benchmarks, use the same process to select one or more sets of range finders. These papers may be somewhat atypical, representing a less common approach to the topic, having some qualities that make them more borderline, or containing features like plagiarism, for which teachers need to be alert. However, be careful not to select papers that will generate a lot of disagreement in the grading session.
  - Arrange the range finders in order, strongest to weakest. Mix the benchmarks. You may also want to include a pair of papers that represent a passing paper and a failing paper in order to clarify the difference since this distinction will be the most difficult and important one during the actual scoring session.
  - Once you have created the packet, you may want to create a cover sheet to help teachers keep track of the scores they assign during the norming session and the reasons they gave those scores.

*Sample Cover Page for Norming Packet*

| Paper | Score | Comments |
|-------|-------|----------|
| **A** | 3 | *Well organized, but points are underdeveloped; lots of language error including many sentence fragments.* |
| **B** | 5 | *Strong response to topic; good analysis and effective use of personal experience.* |
| **C** | | |

## Running the Norming Session

- Reread the norming packet in advance, making sure you can defend the scores that you have assigned the papers.

- At the session, ask readers to review the scoring guide; explain the organization of the guide and the traits that readers should focus on while scoring. Remind readers that holistic scoring (assigning a score based on the overall impression of a paper) requires balancing the strengths and weaknesses of the paper as a whole.
- Ask readers to read the benchmark papers and take notes, looking for the elements that explain the score on the scoring guide that they represent. Discuss the rationale for the scores.
- Ask readers to read and score the range finders. Collect scores on a grid by asking readers to raise their hands as you call for scores.

*Sample Grid for Collecting Rangefinder Scores*

|   | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A** |   | / | //// | /// | / |   |
| **B** |   |   |   |   |   |   |

- Once scores have been collected for a paper, lead a discussion about the score the paper represents as well as the reasons some readers gave different scores. Validate their observations, but try to achieve a consensus around the "correct" score. Occasionally a paper looks very different upon rereading. If you realize that you and your expert readers have made a mistake, it's important to admit it and change the score.
- Have readers score additional sets of range finders if needed and time permits. You may wish to conclude the training by focusing on a pair of papers that represent the difference between passing and failing (a "3" versus a "4" on a six-point scoring guide). Taking time to articulate more clearly the distinctions can result in greater reader agreement once the scoring session begins.
- Before scoring begins, let readers know where to write their scores (front of the paper? back of the paper? on a separate page?), how to identify themselves (reader number? initials?), how to hide the first score (sticky dots?), what to do if the second reader disagrees with the first (return the paper for a third reading? add the two scores? leave it up to the teacher to resolve?), what to do when the scoring of a paper is finished (write the final score on the cover? on a separate sheet?). Also make sure teachers know how to share papers (pass to a second reader? return to be redistributed?) Let teachers know if they should not read their own students' papers.

**Leading the Scoring Session**
- During the scoring session, discussion should be kept to a minimum. If you need to talk to a reader, keep your voice down, and discourage teachers from reading passages out lout or conversing.
- Papers should receive two readings. In order to preserve objectivity, it's best not to let teachers read their own students' papers.
- As scoring leader, it's a good idea to be the second reader for each reader at the beginning to make sure everyone is grading consistently. You also may want to read "splits" (scores that are one point apart) and "discrepancies" (scores that are two points apart). If you identify a pattern of misgrading, bring it to the attention of the reader, and suggest rereading the paper. However, giving lots of feedback can cause readers to lose confidence and become even more erratic, so be judicious in how often or how much you intervene.

- If a large number of readers are scoring papers, divide them into tables and ask an expert reader to lead each table. They can also help resolve splits and discrepancies.
- If readers identify a consistent problem that was not resolved during norming or if a pattern of discrepancies emerges, take time to talk as a group about how to handle the issue so that everyone deals with it consistently.

## Using the Results of Collaborative Scoring in Class

- Conducting a collaborative scoring session in class before returning the scored papers can be a valuable teaching opportunity. Asking students to score their peers' papers and subsequently their own can validate the scoring process while helping them internalize the rubric so they can apply the standards it reflects to their own writing in the future.
- As much as possible, follow the same procedures that were used in the actual grading session. Discuss the criteria and benchmark papers before asking students to score 3 or 4 range finders and defend the scores they gave using the rubric and evidence from the papers.
- Once students are normed, return their own paper (with the score removed), and ask them to score it; then give them their actual score. Conclude by asking them to write about how they will revise their papers in the light of what they have learned.
- Alternatively, show students a strong passing paper and discuss its strengths. Then discuss a failing paper (not from your class and without identifiers), and discuss how it could be revised to make it passing. Then return the scored essays, and ask students to reflect on how they would revise their own paper.
- In either case, be sure to ask students to revise and edit their papers and turn in a final draft in order to capitalize on what they have learned through the scoring process.

## Closing the Assessment Loop

- After the collaborative scoring session, it's important for teachers to have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned about their students' strengths and weaknesses as writers. This discussion can take place at the end of the scoring session or soon afterwards.
- The experience can highlight specific skills and abilities that students need to strengthen, therefore suggesting instruction that needs to happen before the next assessment. For example, many students may have had trouble writing a conclusion, suggesting that they all would benefit from a lesson on how to write a conclusion that grows out of an argument rather than one that is simply a restatement of what has been said earlier in the paper.
- Sometimes an issue emerges that suggests a need to revise the curriculum. If teachers observe that most students had problems developing their ideas with evidence, a single lesson is unlikely to be sufficient. Teachers will need to plan how to provide students with more instruction and practice in selecting evidence and incorporating it into their writing over the course of a grading period or perhaps even the whole year.
- Analytic scoring is an alternative to holistic scoring. Instead of asking readers to assign a score based on an overall impression of a paper, readers use the rubric but score individual strands separately. For example, a score might be assigned for focus on the topic, use of the reading passage, organization and development, and command of language. Computing average scores for all students at a particular grade level or in particular classes can reveal a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, which again can serve to enable teachers to tailor future instruction more effectively.

# Essay Evaluation Form *(Based on the CSU English Placement Test Scoring Guide)*

**Part I: Revising Checklist**    Mark the appropriate categories.

|  | Superior Response | Strong Response | Proficient Response | Limited Response | Inadequate Response | Fundamentally Flawed Response | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Response to the topic** | Demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the assigned reading in developing an insightful response. Addresses the topic clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task. | Addresses the topic clearly, but may respond to some aspects of the task more effectively than others. | Addresses the topic but may not respond to all parts of the task thoroughly. | Misunderstands or does not respond to all parts of the task. | Indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task. | Fails to respond meaningfully to the topic. | |
| **Understanding and use of the passage** | Demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the assigned reading in developing an insightful response. | Demonstrates a sound critical understanding of the passage in developing a well reasoned response. | Demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage in developing a reasonable response. | Demonstrates a limited understanding of the passage, or makes poor use of it in developing a weak response. | Demonstrates very poor understanding of the main points of the passage, does not use the passage appropriately in developing a response, or may not use the passage at all. | Demonstrates little or no understanding of the passage or does not use it to respond to the topic. | |
| **Quality and clarity of thought** | Explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth. | Shows some depth and complexity of thought. | Provides basic analysis, but may treat the topic repetitively. | Lacks focus, sometimes fails to communicate ideas, or has weak analysis. | Lacks focus and coherence, and often fails to communicate ideas. | Is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent. | |
| **Organization, development, and support** | Is coherently organized and developed, with ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples. | Is well-organized and developed, with ideas supported by appropriate reasons and examples. | Is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples. | Is poorly organized and developed, presenting generalizations without adequate and appropriate support or presenting details without generalizations. | Has very weak organization, development, and support. | Is disorganized and undeveloped, providing little or no relevant support. | |
| **Sentence structure and command of language** | Has an effective, fluent style marked by sentence variety and a clear command of language. | Displays some sentence variety and facility in the use of language. | Demonstrates adequate control of sentence structure and language. | Demonstrates limited control of sentence structure and language. | Demonstrates inadequate control of sentence structure and language. | Lacks basic control of sentence structure and language. | |
| **Grammar, usage, and mechanics (See next page for details)** | Is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics. | May have a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics. | May have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. | Has an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with meaning. | Has numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning. | Has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning. | |

## Part II: Editing Checklist

| Problem | Questions | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| **Sentence boundaries** | Are there fragments, comma splices, or run-on sentences? | |
| **Word choice** | Are word choices appropriate in meaning, connotation, and tone? | |
| **Subject-verb agreement** | Do main verbs agree with the subject in person and number? | |
| **Verb tense** | Is the tense appropriate to the topic and style? Does the writing shift back and forth from present to past inappropriately? | |
| **Word forms** | Are any parts of verb phrases missing or incorrect? Are verb endings correct? Do other words have correct endings and forms? | |
| **Noun plurals** | Do regular plurals end in "s"? Are irregular plurals correct? Are there problems with count and non-count nouns? | |
| **Articles** | Are articles (a, an, and the) used correctly? (Note: Proper nouns generally don't have an article, with exceptions like "the United States" and "the Soviet Union." | |
| **Spelling** | Are words spelled correctly? | |
| **Punctuation and Capitalization** | Are periods, commas, and question marks used correctly? Are quotations punctuated correctly? Are capital letters used appropriately? | |
| **Pronoun reference** | Does every pronoun have a clear referent? | |
| **Other problems** | Are there other important problems? | |

# CSU English Placement Test – Essay Scoring Guide

At each of the six score points for on-topic papers, descriptors of writing performance are lettered to indicate

a.  response to the topic

b.  understanding and use of the passage

c.  quality and clarity of thought

d.  organization, development, and support

e.  sentence structure and command of language

f.  grammar, usage, and mechanics

## Score of 6: Superior Response

A **6** essay demonstrates superior writing but may have minor flaws. A typical essay in this category

a.  addresses the topic clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task

b.  demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the passage in developing an insightful response

c.  explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth

d.  is coherently organized and developed, with ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples

e.  has an effective, fluent style marked by sentence variety and a clear command of language

f.  is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

## Score of 5: Strong Response

A **5** essay demonstrates clear competence in writing. It may have some errors, but they are not serious enough to distract or confuse the reader. A typical essay in this category

a.  addresses the topic clearly, but may respond to some aspects of the task more effectively than others

b.  demonstrates a sound critical understanding of the passage in developing a well-reasoned response

c.  shows some depth and complexity of thought

d.  is well organized and developed, with ideas supported by appropriate reasons and examples

e.  displays some sentence variety and facility in the use of language

f.  may have a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

## Score of 4: Proficient Response

A **4** essay demonstrates adequate writing. It may have some problems, but they do not interfere with understanding. A typical essay in this category

a.   addresses the topic, but may not respond to all parts of the task thoroughly

b.   demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage in developing a reasonable response

c.   provides basic analysis, but may treat the topic repetitively

d.   is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples

e.   demonstrates adequate control of sentence structure and language

f.   may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics

## Score of 3: Limited Response

A **3** essay demonstrates developing writing, but has some significant problems. A typical essay in this category has one or more of the following characteristics:

a.   misunderstands or does not respond to all parts of the task

b.   demonstrates a limited understanding of the passage, or makes poor use of it in developing a weak response

c.   lacks focus, sometimes fails to communicate ideas, or has weak analysis

d.   is poorly organized and developed, presenting generalizations without adequate and appropriate support or presenting details without generalizations

e.   demonstrates limited control of sentence structure and language

f.   has an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with meaning

## Score of 2: Inadequate Response

A **2** essay demonstrates serious writing problems. A typical essay in this category has one or more of the following characteristics:

a.   indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task

b.   demonstrates very poor understanding of the main points of the passage, does not use the passage appropriately in developing a response, or may not use the passage at all

c.   lacks focus and coherence, and often fails to communicate ideas

d.   has very weak organization, development, and support

e.   demonstrates inadequate control of sentence structure and language

f.   has numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning

## Score of 1: Fundamentally Flawed Response

A **1** essay demonstrates fundamental writing problems. A typical essay in this category has one or more of the following characteristics:

a. fails to respond meaningfully to the topic

b. demonstrates little or no understanding of the passage or does not use it to respond to the topic

c. is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent

d. is disorganized and undeveloped, providing little or no relevant support

e. lacks basic control of sentence structure and language

f. has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning

Readers should not penalize ESL writers excessively for slight shifts in idiom, problems with articles, confusion over prepositions, and *occasional* misuse of verb tense and verb forms, so long as such features do not obscure meaning.

# Handling the Paper Load

Carl Barks, the creator of Scrooge McDuck, is credited with saying, "Work smarter, not harder." With many high school teachers having student loads of well over 180 (in southern California, high school teachers often meet with more than 250 students during a marking period), this appendix provides excellent advice for teachers struggling with the paper load. In fact, these words encapsulate a survival strategy for any teacher whose students do the amount of writing necessary to develop the skills they need to meet the Common Core State Standards, and to be ready for career and college writing demands.

"Working smarter" takes on a new dimension when we acknowledge more than thirty years of disquieting research about the effectiveness of teacher response to student writing. Researchers find that often students are so focused on their grades that they ignore teacher comments altogether. Even if students read the comments, studies have shown that they don't understand them. What is worse, even if students understand the comments, they don't know how to use them effectively (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1981). Finally, when students do make attempts to apply the comments, "they do not necessarily produce more effective writing" (Burnham, 125).

What we suggest here is that writing teachers must adopt more effective responses to student work. If identifying every mechanical error and writing extensive comments on student papers have little or no instructional value, we would be wise to identify those response modes that do support student writing development. Both time constraints and lack of instructional benefit suggest that handling the paper load (when students are writing as much as they should) means that teachers should reject the idea that they have to mark every paper intensively. It may even mean rejecting the idea that they have to read every piece of work that students write. Until teachers accept these two premises, they will continue to have difficulty with the paper load, and student writing may not improve as much as it could. The strategies listed below suggest alternate approaches that promise to be more effective.

## Teaching for Transfer

Effective management of the paper load begins before the first piece of student work is even assigned. The odds—the number of students to one teacher—are firmly stacked against us. In the past, in an effort to be "good" teachers, we may have done much of the editing work for our students. We can no longer afford to do so. If we identify all the organizational and mechanical problems in our students' writing, how will they learn to do that for themselves? To survive as writing teachers, we must help students become self-regulating writers, capable of planning, organizing, and editing without help. Consider the following questions as you think about your instructional practice:

- Where might my time and energy best be spent to maximize student learning?
- Who is doing the intellectual work in the class? How can I transfer more of that responsibility to my students?
- Are students applying what I presented in a mini lesson to their own work? What are their incentives for doing so? What routines and processes can I put into place so that applying new learning becomes an organic part of their writing processes?

If you are working smarter, not harder, the students are doing more of their own thinking. That also means they are doing the learning. Hopefully that means that what you see in their work in the spring will be greatly improved from what you encountered in the fall—in terms of content, organization, style, and conventional use of language. They still may be making mistakes in their usage, but the mistakes should be different from those they were making when they came into your class and should suggest that they are using language in more sophisticated ways than they were capable of in the fall.

## Grading Better Work

Good student writing is easier—and faster—to respond to than poor writing. Working smarter means creating instructional sequences that lead to better student products arriving on our desks.

- Offer choices. Students can learn—and you can assess student learning—by writing on a variety of topics and to a range of prompts. A side benefit is that reading student work will be far more engaging than it is when all the papers are saying the same things.
- Teach students to develop their own topics. Everybody might be writing on the same subject— *Into the Wild,* for example—but each could focus on different issues raised by the text.
- Involve students in setting their goals as writers. Develop a system where they can chart two or three major items they want to work on during the marking period (effective organization, interesting introductions, etc.), as well as two or three smaller issues (run-on sentences, apostrophes, title punctuation, etc.). During peer response, they ask classmates to read their drafts for one or two specific issues. When they hand in their final assignments for a grade, they identify the specific issues they want you to help them with. Part of their grade for the marking period might be based on the progress they made toward meeting their goals.
- Teach students effective peer response. (This will take time and practice, but is well worth the effort.) Readers can learn to answer some basic questions for writers:
  - Is my paper clear? Does it make sense?
  - Can you follow my discussion from the introduction to the conclusion?
  - Were there places where you were confused or lost? If so, where?
  - What else do you need to know?
- Broaden the audience for student writing. Exchange papers between classes and have students write responses to one another. Use Google Docs or a wiki (both are free) to have students read and respond to each other's drafts. Publish student work as a matter of course. (Publication can be as simple as posting papers on a school bulletin board or taking a class period to have students pass their papers around and read them before they come to you, or it can be as elaborate as creating a class publication.) When you remove yourself as the only reader for student work and when students have ready access to work done by their classmates, they are likely to invest more care in their final products.
- Teach students to edit drafts for specific features. If many in a class are having difficulty with

run-on sentences and you have provided a mini lesson modeling how to identify and correct them, give students colored markers to edit their own drafts for run-ons; then have them trade with a classmate to peer edit (in a different color) for the same feature. This strategy works for many writing issues (effective titles, eliminating forced beginnings such as "This essay will be about…," etc.) and greatly minimizes the need for you to address the same issues multiple times. In addition, we know that teaching conventional language use is most effectively done in the context of student writing. As students identify usage errors in their writing and in their classmates' writing, not only do they become more proficient self-editors, but they become capable of applying that learning to testing situations.

- In her excellent *English Journal* article "Time on My Hands: Handling the Paper Load," Margie Krest suggests the occasional use of peer grading, done before the final piece is written and handed in. Each paper is hung around the room with numbers identifying the writers instead of names. Students circulate, reading each paper and using a separate rating sheet to "grade" them and to offer comments. All responses are returned to the teacher who gives them to the writers to use as they prepare their final submissions. In addition to the generous feedback, simply reading how classmates have approached similar tasks has value for developing writers.

## Planning the Writing Experience—Beginning to End

- Plan thoughtfully and evaluate moderately. Students participate in numerous practices, rehearsals, and drafts as part of the learning process. Teachers coach these practices, rehearsals, and drafts, providing feedback to help students build toward success. Grading is reserved for "game day"—the work that presents evidence of what students have learned from those practices, rehearsals, and drafts.

- Optimize task design. Sometimes students produce poor writing because the prompt is poorly written, or they don't understand what it asks them to do. Model your prompts on released questions from the tests they will encounter. Trade prompts with colleagues to check that what your prompt asks writers to do is what you meant to ask. Help students learn to parse the prompts by teaching the academic language of writing prompts (see Appendix G).

- Teach students the explicit skills they need to perform well on a writing task. If they need to use quoted passages from a text, model the processes of selecting, introducing, quoting, and explicating a passage (see Appendix I). Teach them how to punctuate and cite properly, how to embed parts of a passage into the flow of their own language, how to use ellipsis to eliminate portions of a passage, and how to use brackets to signal a change in original grammar. Teach what the differences are between fact and opinion and what constitutes effective evidence. Effective pre-teaching should result in more proficient student work and less teacher response time.

- Be sure students have enough to write about. Teach them invention strategies for generating material. If they are writing in response to a text—literary or informational—be sure they have a rich understanding of that piece so they have something to say about it.

- Be sure students have enough time to write well. Give them time to gather the information they need for their writing. Having papers due on Monday instead of Friday gives students the weekend to polish work begun in class during the week. or enough time away from their work so that they can approach it with fresh eyes when they return to finish it on Monday.

- Eliminate some of the common problems before the papers come to you. Create a short yes/no check list of what students should look for before they turn in their papers: Formatting? Interesting title? Appropriate paragraphing? Vary the list throughout the year depending on what you and your students have focused on.

- Be sure students understand the task requirements before they complete their final drafts. If you use a rubric, share it with students. Use mentor papers to show what work meeting the criteria looks like. Discuss good student work, asking simply, "What works here?" Coach students to apply what they see in these papers to their own writing.

**Developing Shared Rubrics in the Department or the School.** Consistency in assessment tools helps students understand (and accept) what is expected of them. Creating shared rubrics based on samples of student work also simplifies assessment work for teachers. In *Papers, Papers, Papers: An English Teacher's Survival Guide,* Carol Jago shares several holistic rubrics developed by her English department at Santa Monica High School. Sample rubrics—both holistic and analytic (primary trait)— are widely available to use as starting points. Holistic rubrics (the kind used to score AP exams, the SAT essay, and the EAP) are more efficient to use but provide less information to student writers. Analytic rubrics provide writers with a more refined sense of their performance. Teachers can choose the rubric that best suits their needs. The California Common Core State Standards' inclusion of specific literacy instruction in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects offers an opportunity to develop and share rubrics school-wide.

**Focusing on Selective Responses.** Reduce the number of papers you grade, but increase the amount of writing students do.

- Don't grade drafts or "rehearsals." Writers benefit from multiple opportunities to experiment with possibilities without fear of failure. Don't grade spontaneous writing-to-learn pieces that students do in class, such as entrance or exit tickets or quickwrites in preparation for a discussion. Such work is produced quickly as a thinking tool. Its benefit is primarily for the writer as a learner, although it has value for the teacher as both a pedagogical tool and as an artifact for ungraded formative assessment that answers the questions, "What do my students know now? What do they need to learn next?" (See Appendix B.)

- After students have written three or four process pieces, have them select the one that best displays what they know and can do as writers or the one that demonstrates progress on specific learning goals. They rework and polish their selected piece for grading.

- Use portfolio assessment. Store all student work. Before the end of each marking period have students choose samples of tasks—formal and informal—that demonstrate that they have learned certain writing skills. They need to attach a reflection to each piece explaining their selection and the evidence it provides of their proficiency. A reflection for the portfolio as a whole can discuss what students feel they have learned as writers and identify learning goals for the future. Portfolios should be graded holistically.

- Consider ways to embed collaborative writing experiences where students are writing more and you are grading less. You might include letters to classmates about a shared reading. Writing roulette is an effective strategy. One student begins a story and at a given signal passes it to another. After reading the beginning, the next student continues the tale. After several transfers, the teacher announces that the next student must finish the narrative. The pieces are returned to the originator and then read by all contributors in turn. Student-selected pieces are shared aloud. Discussion might focus on what made the shared stories effective or the challenges faced (and met) by writers as they added to each story in turn. Partner essays, group reports or research projects, and group essay exams are other possibilities for collaborative writing.

**Increasing the Impact of your Responses.** Evidence suggests that student writing improves when students are asked to respond to a teacher's comments on their work.

- Be supportive of what students have accomplished in each piece as well as of their growth over time. Assume the role of writing coach. Specifically identify student proficiencies in order to help them develop those further.
- Comment on, rather than correct, student work. Many students are quite happy to let teachers polish their work for them but learn little from teacher corrections. At the same time, too many corrections can be overwhelming to a developing writer who sees no way to address them all and simply gives up. Comment like a supportive reader. Effective comments are personal and specific. Begin by identifying one or two aspects of the writing that are effective so that the student has a base from which to build. Then note one or two components that need work for the next assignment. Give them specific suggestions for how to improve on the next (or a similar) writing task.
- Target comments and corrections. The most effective responses are likely to be those that refer directly to criteria recently addressed in class.
- Have students write learning reflections, discussing what they know and what they need to work on.
- Ask students to write a response to your comments on their papers. This can be a credit/no credit task in addition to their paper grade, or it might be a required task to be completed before the paper grade is recorded.
- Develop a system for helping students correct usage errors. After papers are returned, give students class time to cross out unconventional use and correct identified errors in a new color. Usage handbooks, peers, and the teacher are all available for support. A system for tracking patterns of error over time helps students edit new pieces more effectively. See Kathleen D. Andrasick's *English Journal* article, "Independent Repatterning: Developing Self-editing Competence" for an example of one such system.
- Throughout your instruction, work to help your students develop as self-regulated learners. For example, have students write a note to themselves offering advice for their next essay. Their advice could include language from the rubric or the standards or might identify issues related to preparation or time management. They might attach this note when they hand in their next piece of writing.

### Use Your Time Wisely
- Spend more time responding to, and assessing, student work at the beginning of the course than at the end.
- Skim/read a number of papers before responding to the first one in order to develop a sense of how the class has responded to the task as a whole. Your comments will be more targeted.
- Stagger due dates. Don't have all the papers due at the same time. You are less likely to procrastinate if the stack of papers demanding your response is a reasonable size.
- Have big projects due on Monday, not Friday. You are likely to receive better work.

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