

Unit 4: Writing to Take a Stand and Propose a Solution

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Summary: Students will learn to develop and present written as well as verbal arguments (that stem from written arguments) that delineate a clear point of view, use effective evidentiary support, and experiment with persuasive, rhetorical strategies so as to enact change in society. Students will investigate print and electronic resources to bolster their claims, clarify and rebutt counterarguments, and establish concessions that present fair, balanced assessments of controversial issues. Ultimately, students will defend their proposals and encourage their readers to take action through the use of powerful descriptions, statistics, anecdotes, examples, and intentional organization that builds interest and invests them in a cause. To achieve this goal, students will continue to engage in reading about writing techniques in addition to reading sample, mentor text essays from a variety of sources in order to gain a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, and tone. As they work through the process of brainstorming, drafting, editing, revision, and publishing, students will come to value their own capacity to think critically, write effectively, and take ownership of their ideas. In order to share critical interpretations of strong writing and to offer feedback to their peers, students will actively engage in whole class discussions, small group conversations, as well as teacher-student conferences as they allow for an enhanced understanding of different perspectives on writing.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Career Readiness: This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers. When completing this course, students can make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: June 2023

Standards

LA.L.11-12.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.11-12.2.A	Observe hyphenation conventions.
LA.L.11-12.2.B	Spell correctly.
LA.L.11-12.6	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.
LA.W.11-12.1.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.
LA.W.11-12.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning 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.
LA.W.11-12.1.C	Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) 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.
LA.W.11-12.1.D	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
LA.W.11-12.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LA.W.11-12.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.RI.11-12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.4	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).
LA.RI.11-12.5	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.
LA.RI.11-12.6	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.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in

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

LA.SL.11-12.1.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.
LA.SL.11-12.1.B	Collaborate with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and assessments (e.g., student developed rubrics), and establish individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.11-12.1.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.
LA.SL.11-12.1.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.
LA.SL.11-12.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
LA.SL.11-12.4	Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.SL.11-12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.11-12.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Essential Questions

- How are rhetorical strategies useful in convincing one's audience to do something?
- How does a writer develop a "call for action" via a written argument?
- How does one develop an effective written claim?
- How should research be integrated into an argumentative essay?
- What details are most important in an argument? Which details should be omitted?
- What does it mean to "take a stand" in regard to a controversial issue?
- What role do counterarguments, rebuttals, and concessions play in a written argument?
- What strategies for developing an argument may be gleaned from various mentor texts?
- Why is it essential to master the writing process if one is to produce a strong argument?

Essential Understandings

- Advancing through the writing process allows for stronger development and refinement of a claim and its evidence.

- Argumentation is a real-world endeavor that promotes an exchange of free ideas in a democratic society.
- How to effectively and persuasively present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- How to work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Mentor texts act as samples to convey how arguments can and should develop using strong rhetorical strategies.
- There are essential components necessary to build a strong, logical, written argument.

Students Will Know

- How to develop an effective claim statement, support it with logic and appropriate evidence, and challenge any counterarguments.
- How to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, drafting, editing, revising, and rewriting
- How to evaluate both a writer's and a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- How to integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
- How to 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.
- How to weave the use of rhetorical strategies into an original argument in order to strengthen it and convey a specific tone.

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Articulating a call to action within a written proposal.
- Collaborating with peers in the brainstorming and editing parts of the writing process.
- Explaining the difference between ethos, pathos, and logos as elements necessary in the development of an argument.
- Participating in respectful, collaborative discussions that elicit further analysis of controversial topics.
- Progressing through all of the stages of the writing process to ensure proper development and refinement of the topic.
- Scrutinizing mentor text arguments to determine the use of persuasive strategies and logical development of ideas for optimal effect.
- Utilizing technology to convey and defend written proposals.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark

assessment screeners, administered two times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Teacher Observations
- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- Writers Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites), emphasizing author's craft
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation
- Peer and self-evaluations of learning
- Entrance and Exit Tickets
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal
- Textual Analysis Reading Responses
- Dialectical Journal
- Rhetorical Precis
- SOAPStone Analysis

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- On-demand Writing Assessments, timed and untimed
- Researched Presentations
- Performance Assessments
- Project-based Learning
- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- Visual Literacy Prompts
- Digital Portfolios
- Online Discussion Forums
- Analytical and Expository Essay

Benchmark:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
 - Engage in text set analysis using visual literacy and close reading analysis strategies to compose a claim and use evidence as support
 - Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
 - SAT (grades 11-12)
 - Final Exam
 - IXL
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- Answer the essential questions.
 - Demonstrate understanding of ideas discussed in class through teacher-student conferences.
 - Engage in all aspects of the writing process to develop a complex, well-supported argument that initiates a call to action.
 - Engage in small and large group discussions to explore ideas and generate arguments and counterarguments to address in a paper.
 - Examine mentor texts to highlight strategies used to frame effective and powerful arguments.
 - Formulate an argumentative claim statement that may be logically substantiated.
 - Listen to discussions for the purpose of self-reflection.
 - Listen carefully to discussion for the purpose of offering commentary and feedback to one's peers.
 - Locate and utilize both print and online resources as evidence to bolster a claim in a written argument.
 - Offer feedback and reflections to peers in a manner that demonstrates respect and tolerance for other views.
 - Prepare a presentation, based on a written argument, explaining a concept as a culminating project.

Learning Plan

Taught using a Writing Workshop approach, this unit of study will move through the development and publication of a work or multiple works of writing (while study mentor texts relevant to a specific genre of study or rhetorical mode). Strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop include mini-lessons, shared writing, independent writing, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, partnerships and/or writing clubs. Writing Workshop emphasizes immersion, independence, and choice. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer. Various forms of writing including digital writing are emphasized as well. Grammar instruction is embedded in writing instruction through mini-lessons, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modelling is done through mentor texts, both published and student-crafted. Teachers focus on process in addition to product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets may be used as materials. High-and low-stakes, timed and untimed pieces are all important. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where writers share their work with others in the school community.

Lessons may follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses 'think alouds' when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point

- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point.

The teacher will confer and offer feedback throughout the writing process. The architecture of a writing conference includes:

- Research
- Decide
- Teach and Coach with guided practice
- Link

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Suggested Lessons:

- Introduce real world writing to take a stand and propose a solution through a brief, basic argumentation exercise that asks "Would you rather...?" Provide students with options, have them write quick reflections on their choices, and then orally discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each choice to "take a stand."
- Clarify that "taking a stand" necessitates making a sound, logical, and impassioned argument. Present essential questions and define key terminology in regard to argumentative and persuasive writing. Include terms such as: claim, evidence, counterargument, concession, logos, pathos, ethos, fallacy (including types of fallacies such as: oversimplification, hasty generalization, post hoc, ergo propter hoc, begging the question, false analogy, either/or thinking, non sequitor). Have students identify fallacies and correct illogical thinking via written practice exercises.
- Highlight the need, in argumentation, to know both sides of an issue using a four-square argument chart. Have students explain a recent argument that they had with a parent or friend by listing their side of the argument/what their parent's response would be and then parent's side of the argument/and what their response would be.
- Engage in mentor text reading, annotation, and analysis using model texts that include: D. Zirin's "What Pro Sports Owners Owe Us," M. Sherry's "In Praise of the F [Failure] Word," as well as a trio of readings on what constitutes effective punishment (J. Tangney's "Condemn the Crime, Not the Person," D. Kahan's "Shame is Worth a Try," and C. Cannon's "Petty Crime, Outrageous Punishment"). In each work, use a variety of groups (large, small, pair) to have students assess audience, point of view, purpose, meaning, and tone, development and structure of the argument, evidence, rhetorical strategies and use of language. Have students develop short, written responses in response to their reading and discussion to develop a counterclaim and argument to one developed in a mentor text.
- Have students move beyond taking a stand to proposing a solution. Students will attempt to convince their classmates to "do something" by delineating ideas, both orally and in writing, to (for example): Get and Stay Healthy, Ensure Cyber Safety, Be Fiscally Responsible, and Protect/Save the Earth.

- Explore personal, free choice argumentative writing through a developed brainstorming/invention phase that involves first exploring current problems. Have students log onto Arlintoninstitute.org which is a non-profit research group that specializes in thinking about future change. Have students read online editions of their FuturEdition e-newsletter. Have students explore stories related to growth and change in the communication, energy, medical-biomedical, environmental, etc. fields. From this reading, have students select a topic to develop into their argument where they will take a stand.
- Utilize argumentative/persuasive writing techniques and strategies to develop an essay topic in which they take a stand and motivate their audience to take action. In their essay, they will engage in research using print and credible, online sources/databases to then: describe a problem, propose a solution, defend their proposal and counter others' concerns.
- Students select rhetorical strategies highlighted in the mentor texts to incorporate in their original writing
- Model the creation of an argumentative claim statement. Then, have students develop a focused statement of their own that establishes the writer's claim and reasoning.
- Using Chromebooks, laptops, or personal devices, draft an argumentative essay of 500-1000 words that cites details as well an interpretation of the meaning of the details for the reader
- Conference with peers and instructor for the purpose of editing and revision
- Engage in individual editing and revision
- Student presentations and/or sharing followed by submission of final draft

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved [Core Book List](#) while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

- 40 Model Essays by Aaron and Kuhlrepetto
- 642 Tiny Things to Write About by San Francisco Writer's Grotto
- Available whiteboard and/or other technology (including personal devices) for student presentations.
- Current Issues and Enduring Questions by Barnet and Bedau
- Current MLA Handbook.
- Gallagher's Write Like This
- Grammar Girls's quickanddirtytips.com
- Library media databases including Facts on File, EBSCO, and Points of View.
- Library print resources.
- Mechanically Inclined by Anderson
- Models for Writers by Rosa and Eschholz

- owl.english.purdue.edu
- The St. Martin's Guide to Writing
- The Writer's Resource by Day and McMahon
- Time Magazine
- www.npr.org
- www.nytimes.com
- www.ProCon.org
- www.theatlanticmonthly.com

Suggested Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

[Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here](#) for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

Possible accommodations include:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing/reading
- Offer graphic organizers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques
- Offer oral assessments
- Supply study guide questions and access to class notes
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is more accessible for the student
- Take additional time to complete a task or project
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts
- Individualize reading choices based on ability and level
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Small group and one on one assessment
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed
- Use art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Encourage students to self-advocate and use alternate methods of presenting information
- Encourage the use of asynchronous learning to promote student autonomy and flexibility throughout

the analysis and writing process.

Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan