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

Focus: "The ability to read, write, and analyze; the confidence to stand up and demand justice and equality; the qualifications and connections to get your foot in that door and take your seat at that table -- all of that starts with education." - Michelle Obama

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 evidenciary 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 refute 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, revising, editing, 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.

Revised: July 2024

Standards

L.SS.11–12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and place, and is sometimes contested.
L.SS.11–12.1.B	Observe hyphenation conventions.
L.SS.11–12.1.C	Recognize spelling conventions.
L.KL.11–12.2.A	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.
L.KL.11–12.2.B	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
L.VL.11–12.3.C	Analyze how an author or speaker uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text or discussion.
RI.CI.11–12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how they are developed and refined over the course of a text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex account or analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices as they develop ideas throughout the text regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RI.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of an author's choices as they develop ideas throughout the text regarding a complex set of ideas or sequence of events, and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop.
RI.TS.11–12.4	Evaluate the author's choices concerning structure and 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.
W.AW.11–12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
W.AW.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.
W.AW.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.
W.AW.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.
W.AW.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.
W.AW.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).
SL.PE.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.

Essential Questions

- What are the characteristics of critical readers and writers?
- How does language work to persuade an audience?
- What considerations have to be taken into effect when designing an argument for a specific audience?
- What is a claim statement? How should it work to create an effective argument?
- How do evidence and reasoning develop a complex argument?
- Why should a writer present and refute a counterargument?

Students Will Know and Be Skilled At

- how to develop and present both written and verbal arguments.
- the importance of multiperspective when crafting and analyzing arguments.
- that both arguments delineate a clear point of view, use effective evidenciary support, and experiment with persuasive, rhetorical strategies.
- that effective arguments often present a call to action or an attempt to enact change in society.
- investigating print and electronic resources to bolster their claims.
- clarifying and refuting counterarguments and presenting strong rebuttals.
- establishing concessions that present fair, balanced assessments of controversial issues.
- working through the process approach to writing instruction including idea generation, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

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
- 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

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 Argumentative Essays

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

Learning Plan

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.

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:

- Accessing speech-to-text function on computer.
- Using visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts.
- Allowing students to set individual goals for writing/reading.
- Offering graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offering oral assessments.
- Supplying study guide questions and access to class notes.
- Working in partnerships.
- Giving responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student.
- Using additional time to compete a task or project.
- Scaffolding by chunking material and texts.
- Individualizingreading choices based on ability and level .
- Providing frequent breaks.
- Using an alarm to help with time management.
- Assessing individually or in small groups.
- Marking text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it.
- Receiving help coordinating assignments.
- Modifying the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual.
- Differentiating roles in discussion groups.
- Using digital technology, eBooks, audio version of printed text.
- Creating alternate assignments or homework.
- Providing distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Using art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment.
- Managing executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines.
- Clarifying key terms and definitions at the beginning of the unit to create a shared vocabulary for analysis and evaluation.
- Encouraging students to self-advocate and use alternate methods of presenting information.
- Encouraging 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.