Unit 3 Writing: The Art of Argument

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **10-12 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit will expose students to debatable issues by teaching them to jump into existing arguments, weigh and evaluate sides, reasons, and evidence, and rehearse and compose their own positions. As students learn to develop more focused arguments, they research and acknowledge counterclaims, and develop more nuanced reasoning. They will narrow their topics and write with intention for their intended audiences. The unit will include some more nuanced texts for students to study as they grow more sophisticated at critical reading and more adept at navigating the art of argument.

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. In this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revised July 2023

Standards

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

Additional applicable Interdisciplinary Standards and related requirements may be included:

Amistad Commission

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

Asian American and Pacific Islander History Law

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

New Jersey Diversity and Inclusion Law

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including:

economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance.

Commission on Holocaust Education

This unit further reflects the goals of the Holocaust Education mandate where students are able to identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior; understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination; understand that issues of moral dilemma and conscience have a profound impact on life; and understand the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

LA.W.7.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.7.1.A	Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
LA.W.7.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
LA.W.7.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
LA.W.7.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.7.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument

	presented.
LA.W.7.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
LA.W.7.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
LA.W.7.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
LA.W.7.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LA.W.7.9.A	Apply grade 7 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history”).
LA.W.7.9.B	Apply grade 7 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims”).
LA.W.7.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.7.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.7.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.7.3	Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
LA.SL.7.4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
LA.SL.7.5	Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
LA.SL.7.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.L.7.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.7.1.A	Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
LA.L.7.1.B	Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.
LA.L.7.1.C	Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.
LA.L.7.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.7.2.A	Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie but not He wore an old[,] green shirt).
LA.L.7.2.B	Spell correctly.

LA.L.7.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.7.3.A	Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
LA.L.7.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.7.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.7.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

- How can I figure out where I stand on an issue?
- How can I get other people to listen to and respect my stance?

- You must remain unbiased when researching a topic in order to understand both sides of an argument.
- An awareness of the opposing side will enable you to refute counter-arguments effectively.
- A tolerance of multiple perspectives is essential to understanding the art of argument.

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Students Will Know/Students will be Skilled at

Students will know:

- how to use sufficient elaboration for textual evidence
- how to identify counterarguments
- how to refute counterarguments
- how to establish a convincing tone
- how to maintain a consistent stance

Students will be skilled at:

- Using argument vocabulary properly (stance…)
- Identifying elements of argumentation in a mentor text
- Understanding and applying various techniques to strengthen an argument
- Developing supportable theories with a firm stance (talk protocol?)
- Writing in parallel construction
- Writing concisely
- Crafting a thesis statement with 3 distinct reasons
- Ranking reasons in order of importance
- Providing multiple pieces of relevant textual evidence to support each reason in the thesis statement.

- Citing them appropriately using the MLA method

Students will be able to independently use their learning to…

- Craft a well written thesis statement with a clear stance & 3 distinct reasons

  Topic + Stance + Reason 1, Reason 2, Reason 3 (in order of importance)
  Place thesis statement in last line of introductory paragraph

- Write concisely
- Use parallel construction
- Develop a solid argument
- Support an argument with multiple pieces of relevant textual evidence
- Utilize counter arguments to support argument further
- create a toolbox of these skills and strategies to use on their academic journeys
- Apply these skills to other disciplines and everyday life

Potential Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three 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:

- Various photo prompts and story starters to provide low risk writing opportunities
- Descriptive language "show and tell" guessing game: Students bring an object from home that they can describe in vivid detail. All objects are displayed. As writer reads their description, class must try to identify the object being described.
- Answer essential questions
- Teacher observations/conferring notes

- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences/Partnership Discussion and Rehearsing
- Writer's Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Teacher checklists using mini-lessons for measurable skills
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing Partnership work and discussions
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Listening in on partnership discussion of writing piece
- Drafts online (Google Docs)
- Writing Club work and discussions
- Pro/con t-charts or other preferred note taking methods
- Flash drafts to provide low risk writing opportunities (refer to TCWRP p. 22)
- Generating a strong thesis statement (formula for scaffolding: Topic + Stance + Reason 1, Reason 2, Reason 3)
- Parallelism activities & assessments
- Concision activities & assessments
- Argument talk protocol (refer to TCWRP p. 97-98)
- Debate

Summative including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 1-2 final pieces.
- Published pieces
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios
- During publishing students read their piece to assess oral speaking and reading skills
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Learning Progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Rubrics and Student Samples
- Rubrics: created for the standards-based report card as well as teacher-created.
- On-demand Writing Assessments
- Standards should be addressed
- Literary theory generation as a precursor to thesis and argument essay writing. Students create a theory about a literary text and support it with properly cited relevant evidence
- Infomercials, PSA's and/or advertisements: Students create and advertise their own products developing a "thesis" promote the purchase/use of their product (fun way to create and support a strong claim!)
- Passion Poems: Students spend time researching a topic that their passionate about, generate a strong claim and explain their stance in poetic form
- Speeches: Students will research a controversial issue, develop a thesis and support it with properly cited, relevant textual evidence. Student create a visual to enhance their speech and note cards to help support their oral elaboration.

Benchmark Assessments:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-

aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, grades 3-8, Levels L-Z, Heinemann (part 3, Writing about Reading section)
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)

Learning Plan

Middle School Writing instruction follows a balanced literacy approach including a number of strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop. These 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. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where writers share their work with others in the school community.

Lessons should 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 architecture of a writing conference includes:

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

Throughout the year, students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. A variety of writing forms, including digital writing, are emphasized. Grammar lessons are embedded in writing instruction, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modeling is done through published and student-crafted mentor texts. Teachers focus equally on process and product with an emphasis on synthesizing across texts for nuanced understandings; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High-and low-stakes writing and timed and untimed assignments will be used throughout the unit.

Sentence study teaches syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Students will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific sentence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please see this grade level folder for details.

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

This particular unit focuses on teaching students to jump into arguments, weigh and evaluate sides, reasons and evidence; and rehearse and compose their own positions. Students are expected to stake a position between two fairly polarized options. They will also learn to develop more focused arguments, research and acknowledge counterclaims, and develop more refined reasoning. In this unit, students should identify issues that matter to them, form groups around issues, conduct their own research, qualify their claims, and analyze the logic of their arguments.

For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Select and begin this unit by channeling your students into a class study of a social issue
- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and synthesis
- Select mentor texts for modeling
- Prepare for conferences and/or small groups with students
- Prepare students to choose their own topics (Bend 3)
- Create formative and summative assessments
- Have discussions about arguments to rally students to feel relevance and included
- Before beginning BEND 1, familiarize students with argumentative terminology, such as: topic, claim, reasons counter argument (counterclaim), support, refute (rebuttal), bias.

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. This Middle School ELA folder for grade 7 contains instructional materials for writing.

Suggested Instructional Materials

- Student-generated models to mentor writerly moves, literary elements, and author's craft
- MLK " I Have A Dream Speech" excerpt
- Patrick Henry " Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" excerpt
- Various SCOPE articles
- Various Newsela articles
- Various TEDtalk videos
- Various multimodal text sets including reality TV (Dance Mom image, Girl Scout Institute study, Op-ed piece)
- OAS/HAS Library databases(EBSCO, Facts on File, Procon.org, SIRS, Discovery Ed etc.)
- Oh, Rats! by Albert Marrin
- Various audio sources (www.stuffyoushouldknow.com (it's also a podcast!!), https://www.npr.org/series/4692815/youth-radio, https://youthradio.org/,
- Various web sources: https://letters2president.org/, http://tweentribune.com/, http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate, https://www.washingtonpost.com/, https://www.stuffyoushouldknow.com, https://www.nytimes.com/section/learning

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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.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each writer:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students have individualized choice of topics within each unit.
- Instruction provides focused small-group strategy lessons.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing.
- Offer graphic organizers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offer oral assessments
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts.
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- 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
- 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.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines

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