

Unit 4: Conducting Academic Research, Writing Arguments, & Presenting (Weeks 23-29)

Content Area: **Template**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Full Year**
Length: **9 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit 4: Conducting Academic Research, Writing Arguments, & Presenting Our Work

This unit serves multiple purposes and is one of the most important of the course. In it, students will be assessed on their ability to conduct academic research, which will require them to master the Reading Informational Text standards. The findings of their research will be used to craft a 6+ paragraph argumentative research paper, which requires mastery of the Writing Arguments standards as well as the Research standards. Finally, after completing the research process and writing the paper, students must then master the Speaking and Listening standards, as they will then persuade their audience of their findings via a captivating oral presentation.

NJ DOE RATIONALE: In this unit, students will extend their knowledge and research skills established in Unit 2 to produce a thorough, long-term research project. The unit emphasizes reading information and media literacy to build students understanding of identifying bias and evaluating sources. Topics and products can be determined by the needs and purposes of districts statewide (including many of the possible products listed in Unit 2). To inform the product, students will read/analyze models in the genre in which they are writing, read informational texts, and discuss their questions/findings to inform their writing.

Essential Questions

1. What are the essential steps of the research process?
2. What does academic research look like in a technology-driven world?
3. What are the essential elements of an argumentative research paper?
4. What are the essential elements of an engaging and informative presentation?

Pre-Assessments

Students will work together in groups. Each group will be given an article that presents two sides to a debatable issue (delayed school start times). Individually, each student will read and annotate the article, then develop a for/against list for the topic based on the evidence given in the article. Then, together, they will discuss the article and decide as a group which side they agree with and develop a tentative 3-point thesis with evidence-based reasons as support. This exercise will serve as practice before they are expected to go through this process on their own with their own research of a debatable topic, and at the same time, it will allow

teachers to decide how to proceed with instruction.

Instructional Plan

Capstone Resources for Direct Instruction:

Capstone Project Overview Direct Instruction: Review all capstone requirements via [this slideshow](#) (2019-2020) or [this slideshow](#) (2020-2021); includes whole-group topic- testing practice.

Source Reliability & Citation Direct Instruction: Review how to test a source for reliability and how to cite properly via [this presentation](#).

Review the outline process thoroughly, providing a [blank template](#) students will use to outline their essay and then reviewing my [specific outline](#) as a model.

Review how to turn outline into clear, convincing essay. I will use [my essay](#) as a model. [This version](#) provides my comments as well.

Review elements of a compelling research presentation, [sample presentation](#), and [grading rubric](#).

Pre-Assessment

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT to develop a thesis based on the relevant textual evidence we find.

WALT central ideas are essentially just thesis statements, i.e., if you can understand the overarching message(s) of a nonfiction text, you can both understand and develop a thesis.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can research from a place on inquiry

I can develop an arguable thesis statement

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Pre-Assessment:

See activity details above.

(See [School Start Times Article Assignment](#) & [Partner Worksheet](#))

Formative Assessments

Practice Activity

Instructional Materials and Resources

Articles

Worksheets

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Capstone Overview

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT central ideas are essentially just thesis statements, i.e., if you can understand the overarching message(s) of a nonfiction text, you can both understand and develop a thesis.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can identify the central idea of nonfiction texts

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Capstone Project Overview Direct Instruction: Review all capstone requirements via [this slideshow](#) (2019-2020) or [this slideshow](#) (2020-2021); includes whole-group topic- testing practice.

Formative Assessments

Capstone Overview Quiz: Students will take a quick MC quiz post-capstone presentation so that the teacher can check for understanding/ provide review if necessary before moving on.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Capstone Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Choosing Topics

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT the structure of nonfiction pieces is often much more linear and straightforward than fiction.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can create a search strategy

I can use the library databases to conduct preliminary research

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Brainstorm Session/Topic Exploration: Students will have ample time to brainstorm and [explore capstone topic](#)

Topic Testing: Students will use a [flowchart](#) to determine the viability of their chosen topic(s), i.e., is it arguable? Are there at least two distinct sides to the argument? Is there enough relevant current research on it? Is it narrow enough? Etc.

Formative Assessments

Google Form Check In

Instructional Materials and Resources

Capstone Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Source Reliability

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT recognize the various rhetorical devices that authors use to convey their purpose.

WALT understand a work by studying it via multiple sources and perspectives.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can determine the reliability of sources

I can find sources on my topic

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Source Reliability & Citation Direct Instruction: Review how to test a source for reliability and how to cite properly via [this presentation](#).

Research & Database Direct Instruction: Students will visit the LMC for the librarian’s presentation on the research process and how to navigate CHS’s databases.

Formative Assessments

Found Sources

Instructional Materials and Resources

Capstone Resources

Library Databases

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Writing Conferences

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT the structure of traditional student-written academic writing is often quite different from nonfiction writing in the real world.

WALT provide relevant and adequate evidence to support our thesis in the form of paraphrases and direct

quotations.

WALT share our writing and get feedback from multiple perspectives to improve.

WALT to constantly revisit our writing to improve upon it, as the writing process is recursive.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can undergo the recursive writing process

I can revisit my writing to make changes

I can revise my writing based on the feedback of other

Instructional Strategies and Activities

1. First Round of Individual Conferences:

Students will meet with the teacher to review their topic choices and decide which one is the best fit for the purpose of this project. Students can only begin research once topic is tested, discussed, and approved by the teacher. ([2021 Approval Sheet](#))

2. Second Round of Individual Conferences: After completing Step 1 of their Individual Research Process, all students will be required to meet individually with me to review their work and ensure they're on the right track.

3. Third Round of Individual Conferences: Once students have completed all of task #10, they will meet with their teacher to discuss all of their sources and their current tentative thesis and evidence. Once the teacher approves their work, they will be ready to move onto their essay outlines.

4. Fourth Round of Individual Conferences: After students submit their outlines, the teacher will spend ample time providing valuable feedback on their work. Then, the teacher will meet with each student individually to ensure students understand the feedback and are ready to move onto their essay.

5. Fifth Round of Individual Conferences: After students submit their essays, the teacher will spend ample time providing valuable feedback on their work. Then, the teacher will meet with each student individually to ensure students understand the feedback and are ready to revise and edit their work for their final draft.

Formative Assessments

First one-on- one conference with the teacher: This allows the teacher to ensure all students have chosen a viable topic that will work for the purposes of this research project.

-Second one-on- one conference with the teacher: This allows the teacher to ensure all students are caught up on the research process thus far, i.e., they've found, read, printed, and annotated two reliable sources about their topic and they've decided on a preliminary thesis based on the information they've gathered thus far.

-Third one-on-one conference with the teacher: This allows the teacher to individually check all students'

work to ensure they've gathered six reliable sources and are prepared to start outlining their essay.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Individual Research Process

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT organize our presentations clearly and logically.

WALT begin our presentations with an engaging hook.

WALT include minimal text on our slides; the general rule is, if you can say it orally, you don't need to type it on the slide.

WALT include relevant images and videos on our slides.

WALT include evidence in multiple forms, such direct quotations, paraphrases, charts, graphs, and infographics.

WALT conclude our presentation in a clear, logical, and thought provoking way.

WALT include space for questions in our presentation.

WALT engage with our audience members to both inform and entertain them.

WALT include evidence in multiple forms, such direct quotations, paraphrases, charts, graphs, and infographics.

WALT speak clearly, professionally, and confidently during our presentations.

WALT rehearse multiple times in preparation for our presentation.

Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"

I can present my findings logically

I can create an engaging and clear presentation

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Step 1: Students will start by searching for two reliable sources on their topic. These sources must provide an overview of their topic as well as an explanation of both sides of the debate. Once found, students will print both articles, copy down their citation information, annotate them, and complete this [worksheet](#), which asks them to choose a side of the debate, develop a thesis and three reasons to support that side, choose three pieces of evidence from the two articles to use as support, and brainstorm more research questions/ relevant topic to explore next in their research process. ([Updated for 2021](#))

Step 2: Once students' work has been approved by me during the previous conference, they may continue gathering reliable articles on their topic. All articles must be printed, annotated, summarized, and fully cited. They will have about a week (4+ full class periods) to complete this task; they must find and be able to use at least six sources in their essay.

Step 3; Outline

Step 4: Draft of Essay

Step 5: Revise and Edit based on feedback received in conferences

Step 6: Presentation

Formative Assessments

Essay

Instructional Materials and Resources

Capstone Resources

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Modifications and/or Accommodations

Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)

English Language Learners

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

Special Education Students

Chunking: The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

Checking for Understanding: It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

Extra time: The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

Oral Reading: The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

Timers: The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

Students with 504 Plans

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Checking for Understanding: It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

Extra time: The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

Gifted & Talented Strategies

Extensions/Enrichments: Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

Modify/Change Activities: Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

Students at Risk of School Failure

Directions or Instructions: Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

Peer Support: Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

Alternate or Modified Assignments: Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

Increase One to One Time: When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

Contracts: It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

Hands On: As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

Tests/Assessments: Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

Seating: Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.11–12.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.L.VL.11–12.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
ELA.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.
ELA.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.
ELA.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.
ELA.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.
ELA.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.
ELA.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).
ELA.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.
ELA.SL.II.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.
ELA.SL.PI.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.
ELA.SL.UM.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.
ELA.SL.AS.11–12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
TECH.9.4.12.IML.8	Evaluate media sources for point of view, bias, and motivations (e.g., NJSLSA.R6, 7.1.AL.IPRET.6).

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.K-12.2.a	Cultivate working relationships with individuals possessing diverse perspectives, skills, and personalities.
CS.K-12.2.b	Create team norms, expectations, and equitable workloads to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
CS.K-12.2.c	Solicit and incorporate feedback from, and provide constructive feedback to, team members and other stakeholders.

Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLs for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math

SOC.K-12.2	Gathering and Evaluating Sources
	Finding, evaluating and organizing information and evidence from multiple sources and perspectives are the core of inquiry. Effective practice requires evaluating the credibility of primary and secondary sources, assessing the reliability of information, analyzing the context of information, and corroborating evidence across sources. Discerning opinion from fact and interpreting the significance of information requires thinking critically about ourselves and the world.

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP3	Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP7	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP9	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP.K-12.CRP10	Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Climate Change, Informational and Media Literacy

See Crosswalks

SEL Competencies

SEL.PK-12.3.3

Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

SEL.PK-12.4.1

Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills

SEL.PK-12.5.2

Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others