

# 04\_Researching & Writing to Persuade

Content Area: **ELA**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **5 Weeks (25 Days)**  
Status: **Published**

## **OBJECTIVES, ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS, ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

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**Essential Question:** How do different electives motivate students and prepare them for the future?

### **Students will understand the following:**

- Different school electives offer unique opportunities for learning and personal growth.
- Comparing and contrasting school electives allows for informed decision-making based on individual interests, abilities, and future goals.
- Engaging in school electives can contribute to their personal growth, enhance their skills, and broaden their perspectives.
- Creating persuasive presentations or arguments helps advocate for their preferred school elective and influence others' opinions.
- Developing a plan of action for pursuing a chosen school elective helps set goals and guide their progress.
- Reflecting on their experiences in a chosen school elective fosters self-awareness and identifies areas for improvement and further exploration.
- Collaborating with peers through discussions and debates enhances their understanding of the significance and impact of different school electives.

## **General Overview, Course Description or Course Philosophy**

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Students have strong feelings about school, especially which classes they like the most. In this CommonLit 360 Unit, students explore a hypothetical situation where their school is cutting all electives, except for one. It is up to students to decide which one should be saved- computer science, cooking, or music? As students read engaging texts, watch videos, and participate in debates, they will build a balanced view on the topic and take a position in their argumentative presentation. As they prepare their multimedia presentation, students will learn how to sway their readers by engaging a specific audience, using effective visual communication, and drafting a pitch to deliver strong and compelling reasons to save their chosen elective. Students will love learning how to argue effectively about this relevant topic. By the end of the unit, students should be able to use evidence from the unit's informational texts to argue about which elective they want to save. To demonstrate this skill, they write a pitch and argumentative presentation that examines what elective they would like to save and why someone should save it.

## **CONTENT AREA STANDARDS**

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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.

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.

W.7.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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”).

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”).

L.7.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. A. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie but not He wore an old[,] green shirt). B. Spell correctly.

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.

RI.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.7.2. Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.7.3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led)

with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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.

B. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

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| LA.RI.7.1  | Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.   |
| LA.RI.7.2  | Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.  |
| LA.RI.7.3  | Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).  |
| 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.7.4   | Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)  |
| 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.7.8   | 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.SL.7.1  | Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.   |
| 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.   |

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| 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. |
| SOC.6.3              | Active Citizenship in the 21st Century<br><br>In a democratic government, there are multiple processes by which individuals can influence the creation of rules, laws, and public policy.                    |
| SOC.6.3.8.CivicsPR.5 | Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.                   |

## **RELATED STANDARDS (Technology, 21st Century Life & Careers, ELA Companion Standards are Required)**

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| TECH.K-12.P.3 | Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.                      |
| TECH.K-12.P.4 | Demonstrate creativity and innovation.   |
| TECH.K-12.P.5 | Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.         |
| TECH.K-12.P.8 | Use technology to enhance productivity increase collaboration and communicate effectively. |

## **STUDENT LEARNING TARGETS**

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Refer to the 'Declarative Knowledge' and 'Procedural Knowledge' sections.

### **Declarative Knowledge**

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Students will understand that:

- Analyzing and evaluating different options or choices helps make informed decisions.
- Conducting effective research is essential for gathering reliable information and evidence.
- Comparing and contrasting different alternatives or options helps in making well-informed judgments.
- Critically evaluating the impact of choices is crucial for personal growth and goal achievement.
- Gathering perspectives from individuals with expertise or experience provides valuable insights.
- Creating persuasive presentations or arguments requires logical reasoning, evidence, and persuasive techniques.
- Prioritizing choices based on personal values, interests, and aspirations leads to better decision-making.
- Developing and implementing action plans is necessary to effectively pursue chosen options or goals.
- Reflecting on experiences helps identify areas for improvement, growth, or further exploration.
- Engaging in collaborative discussions, debates, or problem-solving activities enhances critical thinking and communication skills.

## **Procedural Knowledge**

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Students will be able to:

- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of different school electives.
- Conduct research to gather information about various school electives.
- Compare and contrast different school electives based on their interests, abilities, and future goals.
- Evaluate the impact of school electives on personal growth and development.
- Create a persuasive presentation or argument advocating for their preferred school elective.
- Prioritize their choices among school electives based on their own values and aspirations.
- Develop a plan of action to pursue their chosen school elective and set goals accordingly.
- Reflect on their experiences in a chosen school elective and identify areas for improvement or further exploration.
- Collaborate with their peers to discuss and debate the significance of different school electives.

## **EVIDENCE OF LEARNING**

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Refer to the 'Formative Assessments' and 'Summative Assessments' sections.

## **Alternate Assessments**

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- Interview Projects
- Podcast Creations
- Teacher/Student Conferences
- Oral Presentations
- Multimedia Presentations
- Portfolio Assessments

## **Summative Assessments**

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Constructed reading responses, reflection activities, argumentative essay, class project.

## **Formative Assessments**

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Close reading, shared reading, independent reading, discussions, reflection writing, exit tickets, and quizzes.

## **Benchmark Assessments**

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- iXL
- Edulastic

## **RESOURCES (Instructional, Supplemental, Intervention Materials)**

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Resources utilized will be but are not limited to:

### **Unit Texts: Teacher Selected Nonfiction Articles Below-Core Texts**

- “Arlington Heights Parents Oppose District 25’s Plan To Cut Electives” by Karen Ann Cullotta
- “Middle School Music And Theater Students Get Better Grades” by Tom Jacobs
- “Reading, Writing And Roasting: Schools Bring Cooking Back Into The Classroom” by Allison Aubrey“
- Coding — It’s All Around Us” by Michael Signal
- “The Value of Taking Electives” by Ashleigh Lutz
- “Five Life Skills I Learned in Marching Band” by Donna Krache“
- Dinner at home is main ingredient for healthy eating” by Meredith Cohn“
- Computer Science helps students outperform in school, college, and workplace” by Code.Org

[IXL](#)

[Commonlit](#)

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS**

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Technology/Multimedia

- Audio/visual media analysis
- Google
- Media Literacy
- Educational tech applications

Visual/ Performing Arts/Science

- Working closely with their science and music teachers, students will explore the ins and outs of the curriculum, in order to create a persuasive piece of writing and presentation in order to “save” the elective.

- Mock trial/ debate
- Electronic media

## **ACCOMMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS FOR SUBGROUPS**

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See link to Accommodations & Modifications document in course folder.