

The Longest WAR!!!!

The longest war was also known as the Vietnam War. Was it a good idea for the U.S.A. to help Southern Vietnam to keep their freedom? Yes, because we fight for freedom not letting people take over people. Two main topics involving this war are freedom and the fact that it was the longest war.

The reason I picked freedom is because I believe in freedom and they should have their own rights, own laws and be two different countries. They did succeed in this task as there is a North Vietnam and a South Vietnam today.

The Vietnam War was the longest war known to history. It started in 1957 and ended in 1975. It ended over two decades ago. There was a lot of blood shed and lives lost in this very long war. Because of the length of this war it is one that is still very much thought of in the minds of many adult Americans. The North and the South fought against each other and we helped South Vietnam.

What I learned about this war, which to me can for any war, is that war can mean you may or may not have a winner, but no matter what we always help and support the troops. I think war is scary and I don't really like the fact that people just can't be nice and treat one another as everyone should be treated.

What do we notice about this piece of writing?	
Strengths	Needs / weaknesses

7th grade ELL, WIDA level 3-4 composite
On-demand with realia experience, verbal processing, and structural component check-
list utilized prior to writing

Prompt: What do you want our world and school to be like? Use details from class so far this year, and remember to include all parts of a good paragraph!

My Beautiful World

I want my world and school to be like same because I want everybody study hard and find good job. I will like to introduce to you to my beautiful world it is made of hearts. In my world there is lots of things that is different from other world. First, thing is that in my heart world there can be happiness all around. Next, thing is school can be same because there can be hearts all around and also teacher. Then, I want hospital will be free because some people poor who cannot pay bill but people who are rich they have to pay the bill. Also, In my world there can be stores like flowers store, fairies store, halloween store and also clothes store. Finally, there can be all around the world beautiful things to see like beaches, lakes, rainforest and Zoo. As a result, for all old people there can be different and new things and also there can be servant that can help all old people. In conclusion all people can be happy and also helpful.

Writing Standards K-5

The following standards for K-5 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collection of annotated student writing samples in Appendix C.

Kindergartners:

Text Types and Purposes

1. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., *My favorite book is...*).
2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. (Begins in grade 3)
5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
6. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
9. (Begins in grade 4)

Range of Writing

10. (Begins in grade 3)

Grade 1 students:

1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
3. Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

4. (Begins in grade 3)

5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

9. (Begins in grade 4)

10. (Begins in grade 3)

Grade 2 students:

1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because, and, also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

3. Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

4. (Begins in grade 3)

5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

9. (Begins in grade 4)

10. (Begins in grade 3)

Writing Standards K-5

W

Grade 3 students:

Grade 4 students:

Grade 5 students:

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
 - Provide reasons that support the opinion.
 - Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *because*, *therefore*, *since*, *for example*) to connect opinion and reasons.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
 - Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, *but*) to connect ideas within categories of information.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
 - Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
 - Provide a sense of closure.
1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
 - Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently*, *specifically*).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
 - Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast*, *especially*).
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
 - Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
 - Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Writing Standards K-5

W

Grade 3 students:

Grade 4 students:

Grade 5 students:

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 3 on pages 28 and 29.)
6. With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 5 on pages 28 and 29.)
6. With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
9. (Begins in grade 4)
7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions]").
 - b. Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to informational texts (e.g., "Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text").
7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grade 5 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or a drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., how characters interact]").
 - b. Apply *grade 5 Reading standards* to informational texts (e.g., "Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point[s]").

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
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Writing Standards 6–12

The following standards for grades 6–12 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collection of annotated student writing samples in Appendix C.

Grade 6 students:

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
 - b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
 - d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

Grade 7 students:

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
 - d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Grade 8 students:

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Writing Standards 6-12

Grade 6 students:

Text Types and Purposes (continued)

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Grade 7 students:

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Grade 8 students:

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6 on page 52.)
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 7 on page 52.)
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.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 8 on page 52.)
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Writing Standards 6-12

Grade 6 students:

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grade 6 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics").
 - b. Apply *grade 6 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not").

Grade 7 students:

7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
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.
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").

Grade 8 students:

7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
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.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new").
 - b. Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced").
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Writing Standards 6–12

The CCR anchor standards and high school grade-specific standards work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity.

W

Grades 9–10 students:

Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
 - a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and 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.
 - d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Grades 11–12 students:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
 - 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.
 - b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly 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.
 - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax 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.
 - d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
 - a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
 - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
 - e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
 - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Writing Standards 6–12

W

Grades 9–10 students:

Grades 11–12 students:

Text Types and Purposes (continued)

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 on page 54.)
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12 on page 54.)
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

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.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

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.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

Writing Standards 6–12

Grades 9–10 students:

Research to Build and Present Knowledge (continued)

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grades 9–10 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare)”).
 - b. Apply *grades 9–10 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Grades 11–12 students:

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - a. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).
 - b. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses]”).
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

File name: O2R Chocolate Milk

Grade 2

Opinion

Range of Writing

Persuasive Essay

Our class is learning about nutrition and what is in our food that our body needs. We've also been looking at nutrition labels to help us make healthy food choices. Our school lunchroom offers students the choice of chocolate milk or white milk.

Using what you have learned to support your opinion, should Edmunds Elementary School serve chocolate milk? Write a letter to Mr. Davis, the head of Food Service, to explain your position.

Dear Mr. Davis,

you should serve chocolate milk because. It has 0% fat just like 0% fat

white milk. Another reason is some kids will only drink chocolate Milk

Another reason is. they Both have the same amount of protein (8 grams) and

calcium. protein Gives you energy calcium makes your bones stronger.

chocolate Milk is still really healthy even though it has chocolate in it.

File Name: I6R Lyddie's Choices

Informative/ Explanatory

Grade 6

Range of Writing

Lyddie's Choices

Lyddie Worthen is the main character in Katherine Patterson's *Lyddie*. Lyddie is a young girl living on a Vermont farm in the 1840's. This is the time of the Industrial Revolution. Lyddie's father has abandoned the family and Lyddie's mother leaves her and her brother behind thinking that the world is coming to an end. The only thing Lyddie has left is her farm which she desperately wants to hold on to. In order to keep her farm Lyddie has to work off the debts on her farm, but the job she has isn't paying enough, so she leaves to begin a new life as a factory girl at the newly developed textile mills in Lowell Massachusetts. Because of working in the Lowell mills Lyddie gets a broader sense of herself. She is able to make some choices about who she wants to be in her life.

Lyddie is working at a place called Cutlers Tavern for very low wages. If she keeps working like this she will never be able to pay off her debts, so she decides to go to Lowell and work in the mills so that she can make more money.

She is told by a customer who works in the mills "you'd do well in the mill you know. You'd clear at least two dollars a week. And' she paused 'you'd be independent.'" (p. 25)

Lyddie then makes the choice to go to the mill. She realizes that at the mill she will be able to pay off the farm debts faster. This is a hard choice for Lyddie, if she stays at the tavern she knows that she will continue to make money and eventually pay off the debt. If she goes to the mill she has a chance of not getting the job at all but if she does get the job she will be able to pay off the farm debts much faster. This is when Lyddie begins to take her life into her own hand and makes the choice to take a chance at the mill.

When Lyddie begins working at the mill, she starts making much more and with that money she is able to buy a book. Lyddie does not have a good education and people at the mills by her roommate Betsy she becomes passionate about reading so she goes to buy a book.

“I-I come to purchase at book...” “what book do you have in mind...”
“uh-uh *Oliver Twist* if you please sir” (p.83-84) she then pays with two silver dollars.

By making the choice to purchase that book she opens the doors to education and becomes a smarter person who loves to learn. She also changes from a thrifty penny pincher to someone who realizes that money isn't always the most important thing in life.

Because of Lyddie's love for reading she makes the choice to leave the farm that she has just returned to, and leave Luke, the man who loves her to go to Oberlin College in Ohio.

“I'm off” she said “to Ohio, there's a college there that will that will take a women just like a man”. (p.181)

By making the choice to go to college Lyddie is showing that she won't give up on her education and won't give up on an adventurous life. Even though things haven't been great for her she is still ready to start another chapter in her life.

What does the author want us to understand about the power of the Industrial Revolution? I think that in Lyddie it is showing that the Industrial Revolution gave people many opportunities in their lives. The Industrial Revolution also had lots of hard moments where people would get sick, break a bone, or even die. The Industrial Revolution seemed to rule a lot of people's lives and ruin their families. Lyddie took advantage of the Industrial Revolution well and through the choices she made was able to pull past just being a factory girl and take different paths in life.

File Name: A8R We Need the League

Argument

Grade 8

Range of Writing

We Need the League

Great people of North Dakota,

I, Senator McCumber, [an actual Senator from 1919 in the League of Nations debate], have just participated in a debate regarding whether or not America should sign the Treaty of Versailles, and in doing so, join the League of Nations. The League of Nations is a unified group of nations dedicated to the preservation of peace. The League is designed to deal with international issues, adjudicating differences between countries instead of them going directly to combat.

Now, in the interests of the great state of North Dakota, I voted in favor of the treaty with no reservations. We need a fair treaty to prevent future wars as horrible as the Great War was. After the war, the central powers composed the Treaty of Versailles to create the League of Nations in an attempt to ward off future conflicts. We cannot have another war as horrible as this one. I believe, because of that, that we need a fair treaty, equal to all its members, that will restrict the use of new weapons, and prevent future wars from breaking out.

First, the Treaty and the League will control the use of new weapons. As stated in Article VII, "One of its (the League's) jobs will be to come up with a plan for reducing the number of weapons around the world (arms reduction)." This means that the League will be in charge of weapons issues. This will cause heavily armed countries to demilitarize and make it less possible for war to break out. This is good because heavily armed countries generally end up using those arms in some way.

Another reason why I believe we need to sign the Treaty with no reservations is we need a treaty that is fair to all its members. Reservations [proposed by the League's opponents] would give America too much power within the league, thus allowing America to bend the rules of the League to suit its own will. This would cause unrest in the League, possibly causing America to make enemies. This could lead to another war. The treaty should be as fair as possible.

Yet another reason why I voted for America to sign the treaty is the fact it would prevent future wars from breaking out. The way the League is designed, it would give plenty of time for the League to settle the countries' differences with a fair and equal compromise. If war were to break out, the council members in the League would all help in defending each other, thus ending the war as quickly as possible with as few deaths as possible. The treaty would prevent war from happening or end the fighting as quickly as possible.

Some people say that we shouldn't join the League because we would be intervening in foreign affairs, that it would cause another war. How can you not intervene when 8 million people died in the last war? How can you stand there with a clear conscience when you know you could have prevented all that carnage from ever happening? The League will help countries settle their differences with plenty of time to talk it over. Six months for the countries to listen to the council's advice, and after that another three months before they can mobilize. If we join the League, we will keep anything like the Great War from happening again.

In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles needs to be signed so the League will be put into affect. The League of Nations will prevent war from breaking out, restrict weapons development and militarism, and keep us from the horrors of another Great War.

Thank you.

File Name: I 11/12P Hope During The Great Depression

Informative / Explanatory

Grades 11-12

On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Hope During The Great Depression

Life is difficult. Sometimes, it is devastatingly so. Yet the human race can be defined by the dual characteristics of perseverance and hope. We, the human race, are the infamous turtle of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, we take each obstacle in stride and keep on going on. The Great Depression is one of the best examples of humankind's tendency towards both perseverance and hope. The fact that so many people managed to live through the terrible poverty of the Great Depression is a testament to the tenacity of hope and optimism in humans, and Americans in particular.

The texts provided for this analysis all discuss the Great Depression and its effects on the people who lived through it. On the whole, the theme translated from the texts is that the people who survived the Great Depression developed, as a direct result of the Depression, a curiously strong sense of optimism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his Second Inaugural Address, attributes this sense of optimism to democracy, and its "...innate capacity to protect its people against disasters

once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable." Roosevelt is, of course, making a blunt reference to his popular and effective programs under the New Deal. It is true that the New Deal had come at just the right moment, and that millions of people were helped through the New Deal, particularly the WPA, or Works Progress Administration, which was, as put in the fourth source from PBS, a "major work relief program...[employing] more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports." 8.5 million people is a lot of people to employ, and based upon these facts alone it would seem that the New Deal was indeed reason to hope.

Yet the other sources, and indeed even later on in Roosevelt's speech, indicate that such hope was perhaps misplaced, at least in the extent that the hope was placed upon Roosevelt. In "Digging In", the second source written by Robert J. Hastings, the narrator reflects on her father's efforts to get money: "it was a day's work here and a day's work there...a few days on the WPA..." Thus, it seems that although the WPA may have employed 8.5 million people, it was not by any means a source of income, if people were only able to work for a few days at a time. However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself. More than anything, the lengths to which the narrator's family went in order to save money exemplifies, once again, an incredible amount of perseverance. From the selling of the car, to the renouncement of milk and


ice, the family maintains their perseverance and their hope. Towards the end of the passage, the narrator's mother speaks of this imperative hope: "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..." Whether or not this was true, it certainly seems to be a sentiment that enabled the family to maintain their sanity


In Roosevelt's speech, there is a section in which he employs anaphora to give emphasis to the negative effects of the Depression by repeating, for several lines, "I see..." followed by a sad image, thought, or idea. He finishes the anaphora with "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." While this rhetorical emphasis is used mainly to lead into his positive images to follow, in order to be more convincing towards his audience, the negative scenes which he describes were not only rhetorical, but quite real. People were homeless and clotheless and foodless during the Great Depression, millions of them. That is why it is so incredible that the primary effect of such a tragedy was to create a generation of hopeful people. Such hope is characterized in the first source, a poem by Karen Hesse entitled "Debts". In this poem, the narrator describes that "Daddy is thinking/ of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men..." This connection to the New Deal emphasizes that the government, through President Roosevelt, helped instigate the massive flood of hope in the American people. The dad in the poem wants to buy wheat even though such an idea is completely impractical; the dad is a naively hopeful character.

As the "Ma" says in the last phrase of the poem, "well, it rains enough...to keep a person hoping./But even if it didn't/your daddy would have to believe." This quote defines succinctly the mind-set amongst Americans living in the Depression that hope will lead to greatness. Perhaps this was because Americans could do nothing else but hope, and work, and trust in the leaders of their country. It is human nature, after all, to do everything one can to keep oneself going. Thus, the Depression imprinted a sense of hope on the people that lived through it. It is a sense of hope that has not been witnessed to the same extent in our time, yet hope continues to persevere in humans.

Writing for Understanding and Common Core Teacher Plan DRAFT

Teacher Armstrong Grade 5-8: Intermediate/Advanced ELLs

Topic / Subject / Text <u>Silent Music</u> by James Rumford
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;">  CENTRAL IDEAS </div> <p>Content: Survival: Politics—War and Peace affect the people and they have to find ways survive the situation. We can build empathy for those experiences.</p> <p>Reading CC Standards: RI.5-8.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. RI.5-8.2 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.</p> <p>Writing CC Standards: W.5-8.2 (all criteria) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content. Relay information using appropriate strategies, develop topic with examples, use transitions and precise language, write in a formal style, conclude in a supportive and related section.</p> <p>Other CC Standards: SL.5-8.1 (all criteria) Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Come prepared and draw on evidence, follow conversational rules, pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond appropriately to others, even changing their opinions. L.5-8.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.</p>

 Focusing Question	Focus (answer to focusing question)
What did Ali do to survive in Baghdad?	Ali wrote calligraphy/played soccer/made people laugh/found joy to survive in Baghdad.

8th grade ELL, Instructional Writing Sequence
Independently produced draft of final constructed response

In the book we read, Silent Music, we learned about Ali and his family and how he survived in Baghdad. Ali survived through the war in Baghdad in 2003 by doing calligraphy and playing soccer with his friends. First, doing calligraphy helped Ali get through the war because it cleared his mind and filled it with peace and happiness. Second, Ali played soccer with his friends in the dusty streets of Baghdad. This helped Ali survive by spending time with his friends and being happy and friends are very supportive. In conclusion, although there was a war going on, Ali was happy because he was with his loved ones and doing calligraphy. This is important because by doing this, it helped Ali get through the war and be happy. I learned that by being around the people you love and doing something you love, can help you get through anything.

NB. Edits made with teacher direction not included in transcript above.

In the book we read, Seven
~~Ali~~ Ali ~~earned~~ earned about 10 and his
 family and he survived in Baghdad.
 Ali survived through the war
 because in 2003 by doing calligraphy
 and playing soccer with his friends.
 Around calligraphy helped him get
 through the war because it cleared
 his mind and filled it with peace
 and happiness. Also, Ali played soccer
 with his friends in the quiet streets of Baghdad
 his friends in the quiet streets.
 This ~~also~~ helped Ali survive by
 spending a time with his friends
 and being happy, and friends
 are ^{very} supportive. In conclusion, although
 there was a war going on, Ali was happy because
 he was with his loved ones doing it. This is
 important because by doing this it
 helped him get through the war
 and be happy. I learned that by
 being around the people you love
 and doing something you love, you can
 get through anything.

Surviving: Finding a Way to be Happy in a Difficult Place

Focusing Question: What did Ali do to survive in Baghdad?

FOCUS: Ali survived in Baghdad by doing calligraphy and he played soccer with his friends

Evidence #1 (what he did to survive)

Ali survived by doing calligraphy most of the time.

This helped him survive because

This helped him survive because it cleared his mind and filled it with peace and happiness.

Evidence #2 (what he did to survive)

He also played soccer outside in the dusty streets with his friends to survive.

This helped him survive because

This also helped him survive by spending time with his friends, and being happy and supportive.

Student _____ Team _____ Date _____

Silent Music

Now that you have read the book, Silent Music, it is time to reread it closely to build our understanding.

Focus Question: What did Ali do to survive in Baghdad?

1. Let's read the back flap about the author. Then make a connection. **Talk with a partner about how the author, James Rumford, is like Ali. Write 2 similarities here.**

The author is similar to Ali because they both _____
_____ *and* _____
_____.

2. Looking at the same flap, **answer these questions.**

a. When was the book "born"? _____

b. What was happening in Baghdad at that time? _____

c. Where might this information be used in your constructed response?

Decide with a partner and then circle one: hook, introduction, details, elaboration, transition words, conclusion

3. Brainstorm. Look at the title page. **Name what you see on this page with your partner. Write a list here.**

*
*
*

4. Infer. Look at the dedication page. **From the picture, what can we tell about the setting of the book? Write an idea here, then share with a partner and record what your partner says.**

My Idea: _____

My Partner's Idea: _____

5. Analyze. The pictures are made of collaged paper. **What feeling or tone does this give the story, right from the first page ("My name is Ali...")? Write an idea, then share your thoughts with two people.**

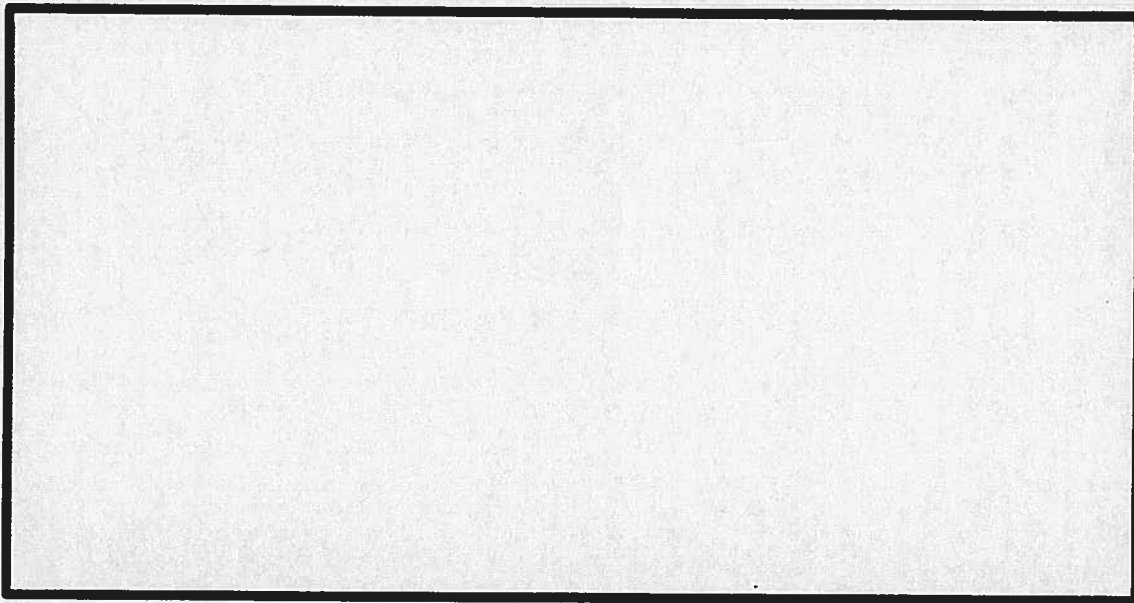
I think the pictures give the feeling of _____
because _____
_____.

Student _____ Team _____ Date _____

6. Find details. Reread page 4. **What word describes the streets?**
_____. **Use a Thesaurus and find two synonyms**
for this word. _____ + _____

7. Notice specific language. Reread the first paragraph on page 6. **What phrase tells you that calligraphy is Ali's favorite activity?**

8. Visualize. Reread the second paragraph on page 6. **Draw and label a picture of what Ali loves to make the ink do. Share your picture with a friend.**



9. Compare. Reread pages 7 and look at the calligraphy. **To what does the author compare this kind of writing?**

A long sentence=

What word says the sentence is a comparison? _____

What type of comparison is made when you use this word? Circle one.

Simile

Metaphor

Student _____ Team _____ Date _____

10. Describe. With a partner, talk about how Ali feels about writing the words "Yasmin" and "Mustafa". **Describe his feelings here.**

11. Infer. Reread page 14. Tell a partner *why* you think Ali writes on newspapers, envelopes, magazines and receipts. **What does this tell us about his life and his calligraphy? Record your discussion here.**

12. Restate in your own words. Reread page 14. **Rewrite the sentences about what Ali does to make his father laugh in your own words.**

13. Apply knowledge. Look up the word "survive" in the dictionary. **Write the definition here.**

Now reread Yakut's story on pages 15-18. **Discuss *how* this is a story of survival with a small group and write your ideas here.**

Student _____ Team _____ Date _____

14. On page 19, we learn about the war in Baghdad. **Show you understand by completing the equation below.**

War= _____ + _____
+ _____ + _____

15. **Analyze and connect.** On page 19, *how* does Ali's mind change when he does calligraphy? **Complete the sentences.**

Ali's mind _____

_____ *when he does calligraphy.*

I _____ *to make my mind the same way.*

16. **Evaluate.** Look at pages 20-21. **What do you think the pictures tell us about Ali? Decide with a partner and then write your answer.**

17. **Analyze.** *Compare and contrast* the words, images and messages on pages 22-23. Look closely at the black designs, and talk about what you see. **What is the author showing us on these pages?**

Student _____ Team _____ Date _____

18. Put it together. So, think back to the Focus Question. **Rewrite it here.**

Focus Question:

We need two ideas from the story to describe in the constructed response. One is easy to find. Look back at the questions above. **What is the main idea that we thought about most often?**

1. *One thing Ali does to survive is* _____

The other idea is harder to find. **Look back through the book. Decide what his second favorite thing to do is, based on the pictures.**

2. *Another thing Ali does to survive is* _____

Get ready to write!!!

Now we have the information we need to write a good constructed response. Be thinking of the parts of a good paragraph and all these details you have analyzed.

PS. Keep this paper safe—we will need it as we write! ☺

Wangari Maathai

As Wangari Maathai stared at the river in front of her house slowly disappearing, she remembered how it had been their water source for a long time. In the beginning it was a small stream that provided a steady supply of water for her family, but now as the last drop rolled down the dry riverbed she knew she must fix the problem that had plagued her stream for years, the deforestation of Kenya.

Wangari Maathai, born April 1, 1940, had a dream to bring back forests in her country which in the struggle for fuel had been largely chopped down for firewood. To accomplish her goal she created the Green Belt movement, an organization devoted to planting trees across Kenya. Before the mid 1970's only nine trees were being planted for every hundred cut down. Since it began in 1977 the Green Belt Movement has planted 40 million trees to prevent erosion and water pollution. It also helps prevent poverty because it pays the women a little money to plant the tree seeds.

The Green Belt Movement helps Kenyan women "bring back the green" in Kenya and empowers them in many other ways.

One way the Green Belt Movement helps is they speak out against environmental degradation and corrupt politicians trying to steal public land (parks, reserves, etc) for their personal use. This helped Kenya be greener by keeping parks there. The Green Belt Movement also plants trees in rural Kenya where they have been cut down for firewood and buildings. This is where the Green Belt Movement got its name; the trees looked like a green belt across the land. Now where there was once treeless plain, there is forest yet again. Her planting trees has made a big impact on sustainable development. The Green Belt Movement is self-sustaining, which means it doesn't need charity to run and will keep going for the next generation. The Green Belt Movement is helping Kenyan women plant trees for fuel and to prevent poverty.

Now that Kenya is green again, the women of Kenya are empowered in many other ways. The money they get gives them food, water, shelter, and hope. They also don't need charity to support them. When Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize,

the women of Kenya gained power yet again and the Green Belt Movement got some recognition for their work. It also gave the women of the Green Belt pride because she was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. After Wangari's Green Belt Movement had such success, other countries started to do the same. In 1986 the pan-African Green Belt Movement Network was founded. Wangari's Green Belt Movement has empowered not only the women of Kenya, but also women across Africa.

The Green Belt Movement has helped transform Kenya from a desert to a lush forest and the forest has helped empower Kenyans. A little education went a long way to improve Kenya, the Green Belt Movement started as a seed in Wangari's head which grew to be a forest. Wangari's holistic approach to saving the environment and preventing poverty has and will continue to inspire people around the world. Now listen to Wangari's message to the world:

We are aware that our children and future generations have a right to a world which will also need energy, should be free of pollution, should be rich with biological diversity and should have a climate which will sustain all forms of life.

Wangari Maathai, 1991

The Painted Essay

Title _____

Handwriting practice area with a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. A diagonal line is drawn across the bottom right corner.

Handwriting practice area with a solid top line and a dashed middle line.

Handwriting practice area with a solid top line and a dashed middle line.

Handwriting practice area with a solid top line and a dashed middle line.

Adapted from
Diana Leddy

Wangari Maathai and Human Rights

Student Notes

Focusing Question: How has Wangari Maathai affected the lives of poor people in Kenya?

FOCUS: Wangari Maathai's work helped give poor Kenyans trees again, which in turn has helped empower poor Kenyan women.

Maathai's work helped give poor Kenyans trees again	In turn, the trees have helped empower poor Kenyan women
This is important because....	This is important because....

"Long Night of the Little Boats"

What do we already know about the forces of history?

You are about to work with a remarkable text about a remarkable event in the world's history. To begin to get a good sense of the event itself, you are going to read the text in your head as the teacher reads aloud.

Stop and Discuss

As you work with the following questions, sometimes you will work with a partner, occasionally by yourself. As a class, we will stop very frequently to discuss and sometimes revise our thinking about the text.

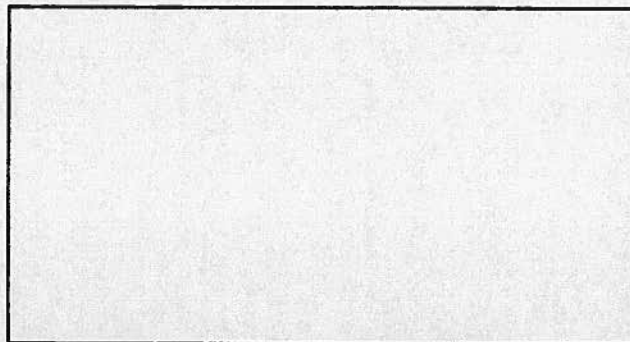
1. With a partner, have a brief conversation about the gist of this text – what it seems to be mainly about. If you have any questions, jot those down too.

Let's think about this together. What does the word "miracle" mean?

Definition	Expanded definition / descriptors / qualifiers
Examples	Non-examples (what this word does not mean; misconceptions)

3. Now, re-read P's # 1-3 out loud with a partner.

Then, using a student atlas, find the English Channel and draw what you see (England, the Channel, coast of France).



4. Now that you have a good sense of the geography here, discuss with your partner what is going on in the first three paragraphs of the text.

5. In these paragraphs, the author establishes a sense of how **desperate** the situation is. How does he do that? Find the words and phrases that help give this sense of desperation.

6. Finally, look at the phrase "and that was when the miracle began." Why does the author use the word "miracle" to describe the events that happened that night?

7. Now, with a partner, re-read P's #4-8.

Notice how many different types of boats and different types of people are described in these paragraphs. What are the ways they differ? Why does the author spend so much time on these descriptions? What does he want us to understand about this 'strange navy'?

8. What is the author referring to as the "best part of the miracle"? Why?

9. Now comes a long read! With a partner (or independently), read P's #9-26 aloud. Think about the gist of this section as you read.

Now, together, we'll write a summary of the text. This won't be very long – perhaps 5-6 sentences. We'll use the "Magnet Summary" form, found at the back of this packet, to do this.

Let's begin with the sentence, *"The little boats' rescue of the soldiers at Dunkirk in 1940 was a miracle."*

Copy that sentence onto the top bubble of the "Magnet Summary" sheet.

Now, with your teacher, decide on the 5-6 key ideas that you'll need to write a clear summary of the article. Remember, a summary needs to give the main point of the text, and just a few details – but the important ones! – so that even people who have not read the text can get the gist of it.

Finally, decide on a "so what" conclusion: restate the main point, then reflect for just a bit on *"Why was this miracle so important to the war?"*

10. Now that we understand the miracle that happened here at Dunkirk in this text, we need to do some interpretive thinking and see if we can figure out *why* it happened.

So the next question is,

"How did shared human values, both on the part of the little boats pilots and the soldiers, play a part in the outcome of this event?"

First, let's think a bit about the concept of "values". What do you think the word "values" means? (Hint: think about helping a hurt puppy....working at the Special Olympics...being polite to your grandparent...how do these show "values"?)

NOTE: values are not always positive. However, the values we are going to be working with in this text are!

11. We're now going to do some close reading of parts of the text to figure out what values, on the part of the little boats pilots and on the part of the soldiers, drove the events that happened that night in Dunkirk in 1940.

Go to the back of this packet and find the "Close Reading Appendix". Working with a partner, and also your teacher, think about the values you are seeing in these chunks of the text – and capture that knowledge on the sheet.

NOTE: this will take some time, but you'll find that it's worth it. You're doing some heavy lifting analytical thinking here!

12. The next step is **taking notes**. Use the graphic organizer at the end of the packet to take notes about the values – and about why those values are so important in the events described in this text.

You'll work with your partner and with your teacher to capture this good thinking.

13. Now, let's think about another factor in the events that night at Dunkirk -*technology*. The next question is,

"How did technology play a part in the outcome of this event?"

First, let's think a bit about the concept of technology. What kinds of things do we think of as technology?

With a partner, go back to the text and see what evidence you can find of *technology* and the part it played in this event. With your partner, add the evidence to your notes sheet.

14. Finally, think about *geography*. What kinds of things do we consider when we talk about geography?

With a partner, go back to the text and see what evidence you can find of *geography* and the part it played in this event. With your partner, add the evidence to your notes sheet.

15. At this point, you're almost ready to write!

Take another look at the **model** you've already worked with. Even though this model is not written about the little boats (that will be your job!), it will help you to see what it can look like to write about concepts like "values" and "technology" and "geography."

16. Time to write!

Plan first – remember, an effective, thoughtful piece of informative / explanatory writing

- *has a clear introduction*
- *states a focus / thesis statement clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *uses specific evidence from the text (s) to support and develop the focus / thesis, and explains that evidence*
- *concludes effectively*
- *uses precise language*
- *shows control over conventions*

Appendix F: Very Close Read of "Values" Paragraphs

5 They poured out of the rivers and harbors and down toward the coast. Some were frowzy and hung with old automobile tires for fenders, others white and gleaming with polished chromium and flying yacht pennants. There were fishing boats, shrimp catchers, ancient car ferries that had never known the touch of salt water. Some had been built before the Boer War. There were Thames fire floats, Belgian drifters, and lifeboats from sunken ships. There were bright blue French fishing boats and stumpy little Dutch schouts. There were paddle steamers and tugs pushing barges, and flatboats with ancient kerosene engines. Large and small, wide and narrow, fast and slow, they moved in a motley flood down to the shore. Some had registered with the navy and were under navy command. Others had simply come by themselves, tubby little craft used for Sunday picnics on the Thames and laid up for years, somehow gotten underway by elderly gentlemen who had left their armchairs and rocking chairs. Down they came, clogging the estuaries, going off to war.

6 There were bankers and dentists, taxi drivers and yachtsmen, old longshoremen and very young boys, engineers, fishermen, and civil servants. There were fresh-faced young Sea Scouts and old men with white hair blowing in the wind. Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great estates. A few had machine guns, some had rifles and old fowling pieces, but most had nothing but their own brave hearts.

a) What do you think the word "poured" means in line 1?

b) How many different types of boats does the author name here?

What do you think he is trying to show with such a variety?

c) In paragraph 6 about the pilots of the little boats, how many different types of people does the author name?

d) Paraphrase the sentence that reads, "Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great estates."

e) Paraphrase the last sentence in paragraph 6.

THINK!! What does the author want us to understand about the *values* of the little boat pilots from these two paragraphs?

19 All through the long hours, the work went on. The old men and boys who piloted the boats were sagging with exhaustion. There was an endless repetition in what they were doing: pull the men aboard, make the wounded as comfortable as possible, take them out to the larger ships, then return for more. No matter how many times they made the trip, there were still more men, **apparently** endless files of weary, stumbling, silent men moving down across the beaches into the water, waiting for rescue.

20 Sometimes the little boats ran out of gas. And sometimes the engine of a boat that had been laid up for years in a boatyard or quiet backwater simply broke down and quit. When that happened, small individual miracles were performed by grease-stained, sweating, cursing old gentlemen who whacked away in the dark with pliers and screwdrivers at the stubborn metal until some **obstruction** gave and the **asthmatic** engines ground back into life.

21

22 At last the ranks of men on the beach grew thinner. The flood that had once seemed endless was reduced to a trickle. Already the sky was growing light, and soon the little boats would have to scuttle away. None abandoned their position. Steadily they went on with the work. Although every minute lost might mean another life lost, the men on the beach did not panic. Slowly, steadily, silently, responding only to the orders of their officers, the long lines shuffled forward and out into the water toward the helping hands that waited for them on the little boats.

f) In paragraph 19, underline the words and phrases that show you how hard these little pilots were willing to work to rescue the soldiers.

Why do you think the author goes into such detail about this hard work?

g) In paragraph 20, what do you think the phrase "small individual miracles" means?

What does this show about the little boat pilots?

h) Paragraph 22 talks about both the little boat pilots and the soldiers. Underline the words and phrases that describe more about what the *little boats pilots* are doing.

i) What do you think the word "abandoned" means?

THINK!! What does the author want us to understand about the *values* of the little boat pilots from these two paragraphs?

13 The amazing thing was the lack of panic. There was no mad scramble for boats. The men moved slowly forward, neck deep in the water, with their officers guiding them. As the front ranks were dragged aboard the boats, the rear ranks moved up, first ankle deep and then knee deep and finally shoulder deep until at last it was their turn to be pulled up over the side.

22 At last the ranks of men on the beach grew thinner. The flood that had once seemed endless was reduced to a trickle. Already the sky was growing light, and soon the little boats would have to scuttle away. None abandoned their position. Steadily they went on with the work. Although every minute lost might mean another life lost, the men on the beach did not panic. Slowly, steadily, silently, responding only to the orders of their officers, the long lines shuffled forward and out into the water toward the helping hands that waited for them on the little boats.

j) Underline the sentence "The amazing thing was the lack of panic." Paraphrase this sentence.

k) The sentence you just underlined and paraphrased is the author's topic sentence. In your own words, what details does the author give to show "lack of panic"?

THINK! What *value* of the soldiers is the author trying to show us here?

l) in paragraph 22, underline the words and phrases that tell us about how the soldiers behaved.

m) What do you think the word "shuffled" means?

THINK! What *value* of the soldiers is the author trying to show us here?

NOTE: this is a **model** that the teacher might use with the class as a way of using familiar information to show the interplay of the forces of history, and to show students what the structure of their paper will look like.

The Great Breakdown of 1995

Human history can be complicated. When we look at any big historical event, we know that it has many causes. Great forces are at work, often all at the same time. The same can be true even of small, more personal events.

It was the fall of 1995. Sarah, aged 23, had just moved to Long Island, New York to go to graduate school. Graduate classes are often held at night so that students can work during the day, so on this particular fall date Sarah was returning to her apartment by way of the Long Island Expressway around ten o'clock at night. The Long Island Expressway is always a busy place. No matter what time of day or night one drives on it, there is always heavy traffic, and it is always speeding right along. As Sarah was whizzing down the highway, she suddenly heard a loud CLUNKETY-CLUNK-CLUNK. At the same time, she felt the car lurch to the side. When she pulled over and got out to look at the car, she realized she had a flat tire. It was a frightening moment for her, to say the least. As it happened, however, luck was with her. Even before a police car could stop to help, a motorist stopped to help.

The motorist could not speak English, but he could see what was wrong with the car. Within moments he had the flat tire off; within ten minutes, the spare tire was on and the car was ready. When Sarah tried to pay him, he simply smiled and waved, then got in his car and drove off.

In this seemingly simple event, we can see that broad forces of human history came together to make it happen. Three of the most striking are technology, economics, and ideas/values.

First, technology played a large part in Sarah's flat tire experience. She, like all other drivers, was completely dependent on the tires of her car. Tires are an amazing technological invention. Scientists have learned, in the last 150 years or so, to make better and better tires out of rubber and other materials. Tires can take an amazing amount of abuse. Sarah had already driven 30,000 miles on her car's tires, and they had never failed her. However, they failed her that night. She discovered later that at some point that evening she had driven over a piece of glass. Even though this had happened

before and the tires resisted puncture, this time the glass had gone in at just the wrong angle. The tires were old, the technology of the tire failed, and the tire went flat.

Technology was not the only force at work here. Even though it's a little harder to see, economics also played an important part in this event. Economics has to do with money, and tires cost money. In fact, new tires can often cost quite a lot of money - say, \$75 dollars apiece. Sarah was in graduate school at the time, which also cost a lot of money. She had taken out a loan to pay for school, so she was trying to save as much money as she could in other ways. Getting new tires for her car, even though the old ones had 30,000 miles on them, was an expense she was trying to put off as long as possible. As it happened, Sarah waited too long to buy the new tires, and on that night in July of 1995 her tires failed. Her economic decision resulted in her being stranded on a busy Long Island highway late at night.

Finally, the breakdown event that night was influenced by human ideas and values. Values reflect what people care about, what people believe in. Those values often drive what people do. In this case, the stranger who stopped to help held values that made a big difference for Sarah! He did not know who she was; he did not even speak English; yet he stopped and fixed her flat tire. Perhaps she reminded him of his daughter. Perhaps he had been taught as a child to try to help people in trouble. Perhaps he was a generous-hearted soul who enjoyed assisting people. Sarah never knew, because they could not speak the same language - at least, not in words. But his smile as he refused her offers of payment said everything. And his values, what he cared about, turned her car breaking down from a frightening event to one which warmed her heart.

Having a flat tire on the Long Island Expressway may not seem like a significant moment in human history. Yet even in this tiny personal event, we can see large forces at work - technology, economics, and human values/beliefs. It just goes to show that nothing is as simple as it may seem!

Knowing, Thinking, and Writing

Using Writing for Understanding to Help All Students

Joey Hawkins 2006

(article in *Educational Leadership*, ASCD, October 2006 was adapted from this)

It was a beautiful spring afternoon in 2002 in Vermont, and my teaching colleague, Julie, and I had just finished assessing our seventh and eighth grade students' research papers. We should have been delighted. The 45 papers were completed ; our red pen work was done; we were ready to listen to the students' culminating projects - their posters showing what they had learned about their topic.

We were not, however, delighted; in fact, we were dismayed. True, the papers did show that students knew how to use and cite multiple sources, how to use their own words, how to write a bibliography.

Unfortunately, they did not show much understanding of their subject.

What had gone wrong? we asked ourselves. As teachers, we thought we had done everything right. We had selected an area of high interest for the students: ways in which black Americans had struggled after the Civil War to create a nation of equals. Thought-provoking! we had thought. Opportunity for students to do real critical thinking! we had congratulated ourselves.

Besides that, we had differentiated among students so that all students could choose a topic that would be challenging but not frustrating, and had resources that were accessible to them at their reading levels. We had bought many index cards, large envelopes and rubber bands, and had distributed them liberally. We had showed students how to cite sources and had reminded them (constantly) to do so.

Finally, we had written a model to give students a sense of what a good paper would look like. We had set up times for students to confer with each other on the first drafts and made ourselves available for questions during that time.

Yet, with all that, the conclusion was inescapable - the students' papers were not

very good. Even the best ones were not consistently thoughtful. The least successful were not even focused.

"Well," Julie and I told ourselves, philosophically, "let's get through these posters, and when we come back from vacation we'll think about what went wrong."

The next morning, the students began their poster presentations. One strong student described the impact of the black church in America on the civil rights movement. Another student, more of a struggler, described Madame CJ Walker and her success as a businesswoman.

Middle school students love posters, and these showed evidence of lots of time put in (to say nothing of lots of glue and glitter). The student who had tackled Madame CJ Walker had made a colorful poster featuring quotes from Madame Walker about her business success and about hair products (Walker was a highly successful entrepreneur at the turn of the century in hair products for African-Americans). Besides glitter, there wasn't much else there.

As the student presented, we asked her very concrete questions about Walker: how did she go about making all that money? What did she actually do with it? The student explored these ideas, sometimes going back to her material, sometimes recalling material she already knew. Madame Walker had shown other African-Americans that business success was possible. Even more, she had organized her businesswomen to become active in political causes like anti-lynching. She had helped bring awareness of lynching to the national stage and modeled the idea that business had a role in helping others.

Finally, we asked the student, "So, how do you think you'd describe the impact Madame Walker had in creating a nation of equals?" And, finally, speaking haltingly but aloud, with help as needed, the student was able to synthesize what she knew, to connect it to the Big Idea of equality.

As each student talked, we asked questions, some very specific and concrete, some more probing and thought-provoking. Students warmed to their subjects,

speaking more and more fluently about them. Other students, catching the flow and the pattern from the classroom conversation around them, joined in. The presentations/conversations were energetic, fascinating, inclusive.

At the end of that class period, Julie said, "Too bad we didn't have them do these presentations *before* they wrote the papers. Seems like they understand their subjects a lot better now than they did when they wrote."

It was one of those moments of epiphany that come to teachers every now and then, when for some reason we stumble on a truth that seems suddenly very obvious and clear.

Students need to know what they are talking about when they write.

We had always heard the axiom that one needs to write about what one knows. Here we were seeing the corollary: one needs to know about what one writes.

To make a long story short, we had our students rewrite their research papers after their presentations. They were vastly better than their first attempts. And we have never taught quite the same way since.

Writing can be thought of as construction and communication of meaning about content that matters. Whether that content is personal or academic, writing is a powerful, synthesizing experience that allows, even forces the thinker/writer to make connections among ideas, to sort and develop, and to finally create a coherent chunk of meaning out of a body of ideas and/or experiences.






This experience of writing is what all teachers want all their students to have. Sometimes, however, with the best of intentions, we have made it difficult for all but our strongest students to have that experience. (In our case, with our research papers, we originally made it difficult for *even* our strongest students to have that experience!) We ask them to write from insufficient knowledge. We ask them to write before they know what they are talking about.

Of course, some students figure it out themselves. They know enough, or they

read well enough, or they have enough determination (or helpful parents), to figure out how to make coherent meaning out of a subject in writing.

Many, however, don't. They settle for partial meaning, partial understanding, that-will-do-for-now kind of writing, the kind of writing that shows "sort of " getting it. Eventually, perhaps, they come to expect that this is as good as understanding ever gets. Meanwhile, the students who struggle the most, who have the most limited vocabulary and the most limited reading abilities, often simply "write off" writing. This is for other people; it's not for them.

Since that fateful research paper experience, we have developed in our classroom an approach to content writing that we call Writing for Understanding. To implement this, we go through a kind of "backwards design" process very similar to the Understanding by Design model of McTighe and Wiggins (McTighe and Wiggins, 1999). Graphically, the steps could look like this:

Enduring Understanding / BIG IDEA	
What understanding about the content will this writing show? What understanding about the craft of writing should it show?	
 Essential Focusing Question	What question will I pose so that students can see how to approach this work in a specific, appropriate, manageable way?
 Building Working Knowledge	How will students gain the content knowledge they need to be able to work with this?
 Processing the Knowledge	How will students select from and analyze the knowledge through the lens of the Essential Focusing Question, then capture it in notes so that they can use the ideas in their writing?
 Structure	How will students know how to construct this piece of writing so that their thinking is clear, both to them as writers and to the readers of their work?
 Writing Process	How will students use the writing process (draft, confer, revise) so that their final writing is clearly focused, organized, and developed to show understanding of the Big Idea?

**What Writing for Understanding Instruction could look like:
A middle school Social Studies unit**

Enduring Understandings / Big Ideas. This unit begins with our identifying an Enduring Understanding, or Big Idea. In the world history year of our school's two-year social studies curriculum, the Enduring Understanding / Big Idea is: History is complex. Any given event can be seen as a result of a complex variety of forces, and the same event will have a complex variety of effects. This is a concept that will permeate the curriculum for the entire year.

In addition, we want our students to continue to use/learn a Big Idea about writing, that they need to support a controlling idea thoughtfully with specific information/evidence and explanations, within a coherent, well-organized structure. We want them to have a tool that can be applied to other writing next week, or next month, or after they leave us.

Posing the Essential Focusing Question. In this unit, we begin by looking at a very particular event: the rescue of the British army, stranded on the beaches of Dunkirk during World War II, by thousands of little boats whose civilian captains risked everything to bring those soldiers off the beaches. At this point, we articulate the Essential Focusing Question. This is:

"How can we see the forces of technology, geography, desire for power, economics, and values/ideas coming together in the little boats' rescue of the British soldiers at Dunkirk in World War II?"

This Essential Focusing Question is on the wall for everyone to see. This is where we're headed. This is what the final piece of writing will explain.

Building working knowledge. Now that we (and the students) know the direction in which we're going, it's time to begin gathering knowledge.

What does this stage of building working knowledge include? One thing it

includes is specific vocabulary work. Much has been written recently about the importance of vocabulary in understanding any field of knowledge (Beck, 2002; Hirsch, 2003; Marzano, 2005). Hirsch, Marzano, Beck and others have written about the fundamental necessity of precise vocabulary in making sense of reading and indeed of the world. Its importance, therefore, in writing, is self-evident. Students need to know, really *know*, the language, at the word and concept level, that they are going to be using when they write.

So we work with the concepts. We work with the terms technology, geography, desire for power, economics, values/ideas, in a variety of ways. What do those look like in our own lives? What are some examples?

Students also need some background on World War II. What was going on in Europe in 1940? What was driving Germany to try to take over the world? Why were so many British soldiers stranded on the Dunkirk beaches that night?

Building working knowledge also includes paying specific attention to reading. (In this case, all students are using the same text, "The Long Night of the Little Boats" by Basil Heatter.) This is a great text, but the best resource material in the world is of little help to students if they have not understood it well, and do not have the skills to do so on their own. As much of the research on reading comprehension points out, gaining deep knowledge of text, especially informational text, is not a quick process for many students (Allington, 2001).

We spend several class periods on the reading. Mindful of the idea that reading comprehension strategies are best taught in the process of acquiring real content knowledge (Snow, 2002), the teacher reads the text aloud to the students first, using her voice to give students a sense of the text. Students read the same text to each other. We discuss, we reread; we paraphrase, we identify text structure; we draw pictures; finally, we summarize, in writing.

Above all (or perhaps underneath all?), building this working knowledge of the content includes frequent, intentional use of oral language. We are deeply indebted to

Vygotsky's work and its emphasis on the importance of social learning, mediated by language (in Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Middle school students, like the rest of us, are language-driven beings. We make meaning through use of experience and language: shared and discussed, exchanged and refined.

Further, we find that this frequent and intentional use of oral language becomes part of a sort of conversation-infused curriculum (Applebee, 1996). When we are working on the story of the little boats, students are talking about information that is common to them all. They get the opportunity to orally work with the ideas in a variety of ways. This is more than exposure-level knowledge. Because the planning is intentional and directed towards the final piece of writing, because the knowledge is constantly being mediated by oral language, students will know what they are talking about when they - finally - sit down to write a full, focused paper.

Processing the knowledge / capturing the knowledge.

At this point, students have a good sense of the event itself and the relevant background. They also have a working sense of the concepts of geography, technology, desire for power, economics, and values/ideas. However, for "working knowledge" to be useful to our students, especially to those who struggle the most with language, it must be processed (synthesized) and "captured" in some way.

We find we need to be very intentional about notes. We give our students a note-taking template which directs them very specifically to the Essential Focusing Question. Working in a highly guided setting (these are hard concepts for students on their own), we re-read the text. This time, we stop and discuss evidence of geography being a factor - and write it down in notes. We note that the values of patriotism and a "we can do this" mental picture of the world were essential in making the captains of those little boats set out that night in 1940. We note that dire economic straits in Germany in the 1930's were a huge force in the ascendance of Hitler to power. In the presence of guided conversation, students take notes, using their own words, to synthesize the concepts and the particulars of the event.

They are, quite literally, making meaning. By the time students sit down to write, they will be coming from a position of...well, of knowing what they are talking about.

Structures. Our last step before writing is addressing structures. We know that most of our students have experience with expository writing structures, but we also know that some are more experienced than others, and that none of them have written using these concepts of history before. Therefore, we write a model (in our case, a paper analyzing a local, familiar event through the lens of the same Essential Focusing Question that our students used for their notes and will use for their paper). For a few students who struggle more than most, we provide a frame as well.

The writing process.

A word about the writing process is in order here. All teachers at all grade levels are indebted to the writing process. Its fundamental premises that 1) thoughtful writing does not spring full-blown from the writer's head, but reflects an evolving process, and 2) writing with meaning is an experience available to all, not just a select few, have made an enormous impact on the world of writing instruction. The writing process has stressed the deep importance of conversation in the development of good writing, particularly in the revision process.

What it has not stressed so much, however, is the importance of gaining the knowledge about the subject in the first place. At least as the writing process has been used in many content classrooms, that knowledge has often been to some degree assumed. In the case of personal / expressive writing, the knowledge has been assumed to have come from the writer's own experience. In the case of academic / content writing, the knowledge has been assumed to have come from classroom content, or individual research, or reading.

Our experience with our black experience research paper was a revelation about knowledge. Knowledge cannot be assumed. For a variety of reasons, our students had information but not real knowledge about what they were attempting to write.

Because of that, the writing process, by itself, was not enough to be of real help to most of them.

At this point in our "little boats" sequence, however, the writing process is a great help. Armed with deep knowledge, good notes, and a clear sense of structure, students are ready to draft and confer thoughtfully. By the time they are writing their final drafts, students have papers that truly represent understanding.

What are the results? How well does the Writing for Understanding approach to content writing work in a heterogeneous middle school classroom? First, let's be clear about what it does *not* do. It does not ensure that all students magically reach uniformly high standards in writing or in the content knowledge shown in the writing. It does not mean that the student writing never shows misunderstanding, or that all students show equal insight or depth of comprehension in their writing.

What we have found, however (and seen replicated in other classrooms in other schools), is that this approach to writing keeps all students firmly in the game. For some, the process does indeed sometimes seem miraculous. Watching reluctant seventh and eighth graders blossom when they realize they do, in fact, "get it" is one of teaching's finer moments. With Writing for Understanding, the strongest students frequently show levels of insight and depth of understanding that amaze us. And even the students who struggle the most in school are producing writing that shows solid understanding - in a word, meaning.

Last fall, I was visiting an area high school and ran into one of our former middle school students, now a ninth grader. Of course, I asked her about her writing.

"Well," she said, "I just had to write a history paper that was hard. At first I couldn't really do it."

My heart sank. "Why not?" I asked her. "What didn't you know how to do?"

"Oh, I knew *how*," she replied without hesitation. "I just didn't know *enough*. I didn't, like, understand the stuff. So I had to do that first. Then I could write it okay."

"Good," I said. "Good for you." I could not have asked for more.

March 27th, 2013

The GMO Dichotomy

"All men by nature desire knowledge."

-Aristotle, 384 BC to 322 BC

Passion for science has existed in the minds of humans for a length of time spanning thousands of years; it is probably an inborn and innate characteristic of ours. As long as the sciences have existed, however, they have been the source of heated conflicts and debates; consider the persecution of Galileo, the extensive discussions on nuclear weaponry, the space race, etc. A recent disagreement that can be attributed to the advancement of the sciences is the heavily contested debate taking place in Vermont about legislation that would, if passed, require all food products containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to be labeled accordingly. GMOs are organisms (mostly plants) that have had their genetic codes altered to increase herbicide tolerance, yields, or insect resistance. GM foods are simply food products created with ingredients that were once part of a living genetically modified organism ("Genetically Modified Organisms" 1-2). Participants in the debate on the labeling of these foods tend to hold very strong beliefs and fall into one of two broad categories: GMOs are good, labeling is bad; or, GMOs are bad, labeling is good. Neither of these two large belief systems tells the whole story. Science, information, and the growth and improvement of human knowledge are the cornerstones of human power and improvement. Genetic engineering is a powerful and crucial tool in our quest to feed the ever-growing human population; but, in the name of information and informed decision-making, products containing genetically engineered ingredients should be labeled as such.

Let's begin with a look at the first category of beliefs, the GMOs good/labeling bad contingent. It is seriously doubtful that anyone in this group would legitimately take issue with a few unobtrusive labels appearing on supermarket products; the real issue lies in their belief that labeling would severely discourage consumers from purchasing GMO-products and thus cripple the GMO industry. This is a reasonable objection, but under closer inspection it doesn't hold water. For insight into the present, let us look to the past.

A lot of good things could be said about a law that mandates a labeling system, but unprecedented is not among them; consider the food products labeled as organic that you have undoubtedly encountered on store shelves, if not consumed yourself. Well into the early twentieth century, all food was essentially organic; pesticides and other chemical processes had not yet been invented (just as GE technology was developed relatively recently.) In due time, however, the public started to become aware of the health-related and environmental risks of inorganic foods (thanks in large part to a man named Rudolf Steiner) and before long it was easy enough to tell if a food product was organic or not (Paul Callaghan 1). Can you see the connections between the organic food movement and the GMO-food labeling movement? If inorganic products can be easily identified as such and customers continue to consume them at prolific rates, why would people stop buying and eating genetically modified foods? After all, pesticides have a much worse (and better documented) impact on human health and the environment than do GMOs. Birth defects, nerve damage, and cancer (among others) have been linked to consumption of foods containing pesticides ("Pesticides and Food" 1). Regardless of the pros and cons of GMOs themselves, foods containing them should be labeled accurately. A labeling law would not be much of a blow to the genetic engineering industry, and thus the issues of GMOs and GMO labeling should be debated as the entirely separate issues they are.

If a labeling law of this sort were to be passed by Vermont, it would most certainly not go uncontested. Monsanto, the GMO-giant, has threatened to file a lawsuit against Vermont on the grounds that a labeling law is unconstitutional in that it violates the right to free speech. Critics of the push to pass the bill assert that even if the law were to be passed successfully, Monsanto would crush it back into oblivion. Even if the lawsuit were to be decided in Vermont's favor, it would assuredly cost enormous sums of money, although the Organics Consumer Association has started a legal defense fund for any sued state (Terri Hallenbeck 5-6). But if Vermont isn't brave enough to stand up to the threat of a Monsanto suit, who will be? Why should we opt out and hope for another state to step in and take the initiative? Even if Vermont is unsuccessful in defending its law, the suit would surely draw attention to the issue nationally, if not lead directly to a Supreme Court case. Alternatively, if Vermont were to succeed in protecting its law, it would help to set a precedent for further lawsuits and lead the way for other states or

even the US government to pass similar legislation. While defense of a labeling law would undoubtedly cost large sums of money, GMO labeling is a cause worthy of such excessive expenditures.

Another often heard argument against labeling is the recited fact that the FDA has concluded that products containing GMOs are safe (substantially equivalent to non-GMO foods). It's a handy catch phrase to throw out there, but it is by no means the end of the story. The FDA conducted a narrow and incomprehensive range of studies, made a blanket statement on GMOs, and moved on. Other independently funded researchers have cast doubts on the FDA's conclusion. Studies have found possible correlations in animals between GMO consumption and reproductive problems, and herbicide resistant canola plants have been found growing alongside highways in North Dakota ("Genetically Modified Organisms" 6). GMOs can by no means be conclusively declared safe, and until that time comes they ought to be labeled. Customers have the right to know what they are eating and make their own informed decisions about its safety; to offer them anything less is an insult.

Science and technology goes hand in hand with information and the pursuit of knowledge; foods that have been genetically modified should be properly labeled with this information. That GMOs are "bad" does not logically follow from this, as many seem to erroneously (and presumably unthinkingly) conclude. Break up the dichotomy of badly thought out beliefs on GMOs. This is an important and imminent issue of our times, and more people should form well thought out opinions about GMOs and GMO-labeling. Poorly formed opinions stemming from incomplete or faulty research and illogically thought out or prematurely drawn conclusions are all too common in today's information and debate saturated society. Everyone can help change this, simply by engaging in a little critical thinking and information gathering. So do your own research on GMO labeling. This will not be easy; credible sources and factual and unbiased information can be surprisingly hard to come by these days. Once you have informed yourself, make use of your newfound understanding. Persuade others to agree with your viewpoint, write a letter to an organization, start a petition, or make a more educated choice when voting. Knowledge is power.

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Persuasion As the Cure For Incivility

John Jenkins

1 Several decades ago, my predecessor as the president of the University of Notre Dame, the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, was presented with a dilemma. A Jewish student, after repeated hazing by some kids in his dorm, had left campus and gone home. After thinking it over, Father Hesburgh summoned the perpetrators. "Pack your bags," he told them. "Go find your friend. Either you persuade him to come back to Notre Dame, or you don't come back."

2 The approach worked for everyone concerned, and it may offer an idea for easing the incivility that marks much public discourse and leads to political stalemate. We need to try harder to persuade one another—to try to get people to change their minds.

3 There isn't nearly enough persuasion going on in America today, and there was too little, in the view of many citizens, in the past presidential campaign. A postelection Pew poll found that the 2012 campaign was a "frustrating experience" for many voters: 68% said there was more "negative campaigning and mudslinging," with less discussion of issues.

4 The recent fiscal-cliff negotiations might have ended in a budget deal, but the rhetoric during the wrangling was hardly of the persuasive variety.

5 That is likely because much of the election campaigning and much of the budget discussion wasn't designed to change anyone's mind, but instead to encourage people to believe more deeply what they already believed—not about policies, for the most part, but about the villainy of the other side.

6 In the presidential campaign, the negative ads and speeches may have been unfortunately effective. A Washington Post-ABC News poll from last summer reported that 70% of Republicans saw President

1. Now that you have read the whole article once, what do you think the title of this article means?

2. Look carefully at the incident described in P#1. What actually happened here? What is the author implying about the purpose of persuasion by beginning with this anecdote?

3. In P#2, what do you think the term "public discourse" means?

In the game of chess, a "stalemate" happens when neither side can make a move – so nobody can win. What do you think the term "political stalemate" might mean?

4. In P#3, what does "frustrating experience" mean?

According to P#3, what made the 2012 presidential campaign a "frustrating experience" for many voters?

5. In P#4, the author refers to "recent fiscal-cliff negotiations". What were these? Discuss with your teacher and summarize in one sentence below.

6. In P#5, the little word "but" is very important. What contrast is the author setting up with the use of this word?

THINK! How does what you have read so far help you to define "incivility"?

7. In P#7, the author quotes James Madison, one of the most highly respected members of the group of Founding Fathers who wrote the US Constitution.

a) re-read this paragraph twice with your partner. What do you think the term "mutual animosity" means?

How about "common good"?

b) So, what is Madison actually saying here? Paraphrase below.

c) Why might Jenkins have chosen to quote Madison here?

8. In P#8, what does Jenkins mean by "a deep and candid dialogue, marked by many acts of courtesy and gestures of respect"?

9. Still in P#8, Jenkins uses the word "angry". What does he imply about the role of anger in today's political conversation? How might this relate to the concept of "incivility"?

10. In P#10, the author shows us what he means by "persuade" in public conversation. What does he name as these elements?

THINK! Why do you think the author begins all of these statements with the word "I"?

Obama in a strongly unfavorable light, and 57% of Democrats had a very unfavorable view of Gov. Romney. These were historically very high numbers for two presidential contenders.

7 As a country, we seem to have become the factions James Madison warned against in 1787, when he wrote: "A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points . . . have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good." A more earnest effort to persuade one another could help remedy many of the problems we face.

8 I confess that I am deeply biased. I am a university president with a strong belief in the power and importance of a liberal arts education. I believe that deep and candid dialogue, marked by many acts of courtesy and gestures of respect, is a discipline that brings us nearer the truth about ourselves, about our opponents, about human nature, and about the subject under debate. To shut down this source of wisdom because we are too angry to hear the other side is a tragic setback in our quest for knowledge and our hope for a healthy society.

9 What if, instead of dealing with opponents by demonizing them and distorting their views, we were to take some steps to persuade them? I don't mean to suggest that one could persuade a stalwart partisan to switch parties, but perhaps one could persuade another that a particular policy or a position is "not as bad as you think."

10 If I am trying to persuade others, I first have to understand their position, which means I have to listen to them. I have to appeal to their values, which means I have to show them respect. I have to find the best arguments for my position, which means I have to think about my values in the context of their concerns. I have to answer their objections, which means I have to work honestly with their ideas. I have to ask them to listen to me, which means I can't insult them.

11 If we earnestly try to persuade, civility takes care of itself.

12 Civility is sometimes derided in the modern world, where bluntness and even coarseness have somehow come to be celebrated in many quarters. But civility is not a minor virtue. It is not an attempt to impose someone's notion of courtesy, and it is certainly not an attempt to suppress speech. Civility is what allows speech to be heard. It is an appeal to citizens never to express or incite hatred, which is more dangerous to the country than any external enemy.

13 A more sincere effort to persuade one another would remind us why the Founders believed this country could improve on history: We were the first society in many centuries with the chance to use free speech and sound argument to debate our way toward a better future.

14 That path is still open, and as promising as ever.

Father Jenkins is president of the University of Notre Dame. His book "Conviction: The Power and Peril of Our Passionate Beliefs" will be published by Random House later this year.

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11. In P#12, what do you think the word "derided" means?

12. In P#12, the author reminds us what he sees as the importance of "civility". Why is civility so necessary, in his view?

13. In P#13, what point does the author make about what our Founders believed about how this country could "improve on history"?

What does the author mean by his last line?

Why do you think he has chosen to end his essay with this single sentence?

THINK!! What implications might this essay have for students engaged in argument writing?

