

## **The Council of the Great City Schools**

**Presents:**

**Building a Shared Understanding of the Writing Demands of the  
Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and  
Literacy**

**Writing and the Common Core:**

**What Do We Need to Know to Support All Students?**

**Presenters: Joey Hawkins and Diana Leddy,**

**Vermont Writing Collaborative**

**March 21-22, 2013**

**Arlington, VA**

## Reflecting on *The Book Report*

<p>[LUCY]  <i>Peter Rabbit is this stupid book          About this stupid rabbit who steals          Vegetables from other peoples' gardens          [She counts the words so far]          Hmm. 83 to go...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe Lucy's approach to the assignment? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion.</li> <li>• What do Lucy's words show us about her understanding of the book?</li> <li>• Based on your experience as an educator, what may (or may not!) have happened in class to prompt this type of approach?</li> </ul>
<p>[SCHROEDER]  <i>The name of the book about which          This book report is about is          Peter Rabbit which is about this          Rabbit.          I found it very-          I liked the part where-          It was a-            It reminded me of "Robin Hood"          And the part where Little John jumped from the rock          To the Sheriff of Nottingham's back.          And then Robin and everyone swung from the trees          In a sudden surprise attack.          And they captured the sheriff and all of his goods          And they carried him back to their camp in the woods          And the sheriff was guest at their dinner and all          But he wriggled away and he sounded the call          And his men rushed in and the arrows flew-          Peter Rabbit did sort of that kind of thing too.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does Schroeder try the three sentence starters?</li> <li>• Why was he unsuccessful in using them?</li> <li>• Why does Schroeder say, "<i>Peter Rabbit did sort of that kind of thing too.</i>"?</li> <li>• Based on your experience as an educator, what may (or may not!) have happened in class to prompt this type of approach?</li> </ul>

**[LINUS]**

*In examining a book such as Peter Rabbit, it is important that the superficial characteristics of its deceptively simple plot should not be allowed to blind the reader to the more substantial fabric of its deeper motivations. In this report I plan to discuss the sociological implications of family pressures so great as to drive an otherwise moral rabbit to perform acts of thievery which he consciously knew were against the law. I also hope to explore the personality of Mr. MacGregor in his conflicting roles as farmer and humanitarian.*

- What is different about Linus's report?
- What has Linus learned? What, in the text, makes you think so?
- As an educator, what problems do you see with Linus' approach to the assignment?

**[CHARLIE BROWN (overlapping)]**

*If I start writing now  
When I'm not really rested  
It could upset my thinking  
Which is no good at all.  
I'll get a fresh start tomorrow  
And it's not due till Wednesday  
So I'll have all of Tuesday  
Unless something should happen.  
Why does this always happen,  
I should be outside playing  
Getting fresh air and sunshine,  
I work best under pressure,  
And there'll be lots of pressure  
If I wait till tomorrow  
I should start writing now.  
But I if I start writing now  
When I'm not really rested  
It could upset my thinking  
Which is... No good at all.*

- How would you describe Charlie Brown's reaction to the assignment? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion.
- What do Charlie Brown's words tell us about him as a student?
- Based on your experience as an educator, what do you think may have caused Charlie Brown's reaction to this assignment?



## Common Core Literacy Standards: What Are the BIG SHIFTS?

**Consistent emphasis on *increasingly complex texts* throughout the grades to prepare students for success in college and career**

*Implications for instruction*


***Evidence matters!* Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.**

*Implications for instruction*


***Integration of Literacy* across the content areas, with an emphasis on *building knowledge* through content-rich nonfiction**

*Implications for instruction*


## College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

The K-5 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

### 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.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### 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.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### 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.

\*These broad types of writing include many subgenres. See Appendix A for definitions of key writing types.

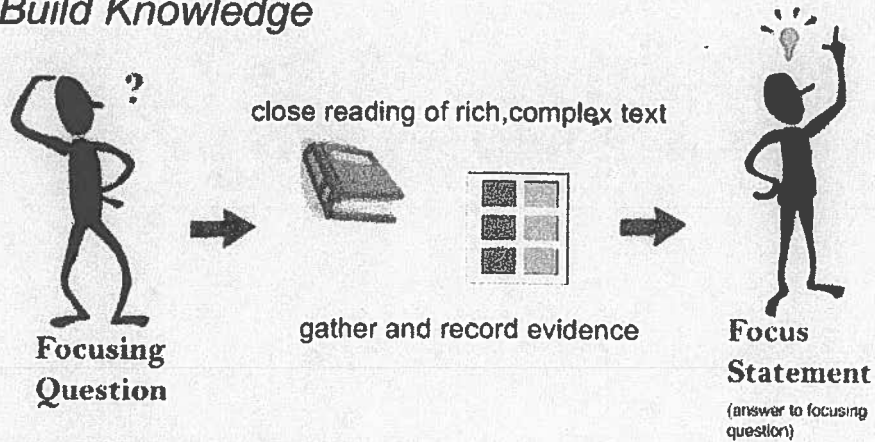
### Note on range and content of student writing

*To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. They develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year.*

# Addressing the Common Core Shifts

*through Content Focused Reading and Writing Instruction*

## *Build Knowledge*



## *Write for Understanding*



use listening, speaking and writing to deepen and express understanding



## **Developing Effective Text Dependent Questions**

Every piece of complex text presents many opportunities for teaching and learning. The broad categories below may be helpful in designing student explorations into a challenging text using thoughtful questioning. It is crucial to remember that the set of questions you develop should systematically guide students toward deeper understanding of an important idea or concept by closely examining the text itself.

Use the categories and questions below to facilitate discussion and generate ideas. All questions should push students back into the text and guide them toward a key understanding. Use only those types of questions that support your overall purpose for reading.

### **THEMES and CENTRAL IDEAS**

#### **– Content Knowledge /Themes/Central Ideas**

What is the focusing question?

What parts of the text will help students to answer the focusing question?

*(It may be helpful to underline these.)*

What question(s) can you ask to help students gain a deeper understanding of these parts of the text or their relationship to each other?

### **VOCABULARY**

#### **– Vocabulary**

What vocabulary is essential for understanding the text and addressing the focusing question?

Is there an opportunity to teach academic vocabulary that will be useful in other contexts?

What questions will help the students to use the text itself to deepen their understanding of important words or phrases?

*(Consider context, word families, prefixes/suffixes, parts of speech, etc.)*

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **– Syntax**

*Syntax is governed by rules that influence the various ways words are combined to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. In general, long sentences containing multiple phrases or clauses tend to be more challenging than simpler ones.*

What is unusual or challenging about the way the words are put together in this passage ?

What question(s) will help students to notice and understand word order or punctuation that may be new to them?

### **Text Features:**

*Text features include illustrations, bold print, continuous text, and paragraphing among additional features.*

What text features support student understanding of the text?

What question(s) will help students to pay close attention and interpret a particular text feature?

### **Structure**

*Text structure refers to the ways that authors organize information in text.*

How is this text organized?

What question(s) will help students notice how the author organized the text?

What questions(s) will prompt students to use the structure of the text to better understand what is being said?



# *Taking Notes*

- Create a graphic organizer specific to the writing task. Include a space for elaboration/reflection as well as evidence to prompt thinking.
- Take group notes to model the process.
- Teach students to take notes using key words and phrases. Orally practice expanding notes into full sentences.
- Record information as you uncover it, make note taking an ongoing process.
- Make the process of gathering and recording information thoughtful, active and engaging- consider using drawings, objects, photos, pantomime, oral practice.
- Use manipulatable notes to develop, deepen and assess concept development.

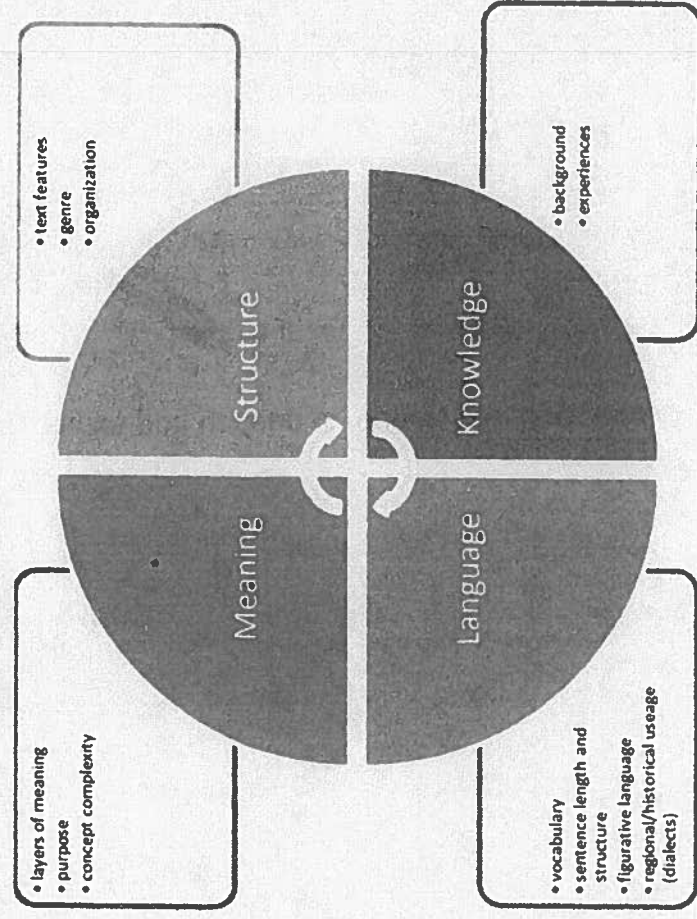
## **Teacher Tips**

**for content focused integrated reading/writing instruction**

- Provide a well crafted focusing question.
- Use text dependent questions to help students develop strategies for reading complex text.
- Take notes: use photos, drawings, objects.
- Model by writing together.
- Chunk the writing.
- Actively engage students with text and information.
- Model how to connect texts and parts of a text.
- Notes can be manipulatives.

1. Consistent emphasis on *increasingly complex texts* throughout the grades to prepare students for success in college and career.

## What Makes Text Complex?





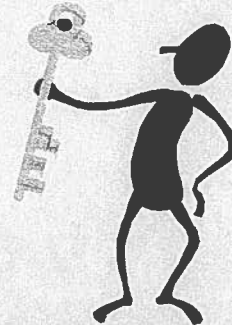
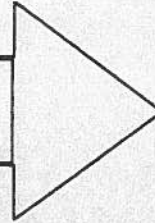
## Examples of Text Dependent Questions

Non Text Dependent Questions <i>Can be answered without reading or understanding the text</i>	Text Dependent Questions <i>Push students back into the text to explore meaning</i>
What are some of Charlie's electronic toys that are like yours?	<b>LANGUAGE</b> What does the author mean when she says Charlie has "likes and like-nots"? What kinds of activities does Charlie like to spend his time doing?
How might you react to a power outage?	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> An empire is a huge part of the world, where someone is in charge of everyone and everything in it. It is bigger than a country or a kingdom. Just as a kingdom is ruled by a king, an empire is ruled by an emperor. What does it mean that Charlie's tech empire came "tumbling" down? What caused Charlie's empire to tumble?
How do you feel when you don't have your favorite things?	<b>STRUCTURE</b> In the stanza where Charlie says, "Could <i>anything</i> be any duller..." what is he talking about? Why is the word <i>anything</i> in italics?
What are some fun things you might do besides play electronic games?	<b>MEANING</b> In the last stanza, Charlie had another thought. What was this thought, and why couldn't he explain it?

1. **Evidence matters!** Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.



Gather and organize information



**Focusing Question**

**Focus Statement**

*answer to focusing question*

How do sharks survive?

Sharks have physical and behavioral adaptations that help them survive.

How can we save water?

There are many ways that we can save water.

What is Horton like?

Horton is responsible and caring.

How did the environment  
effect the early Abenaki?

The land affected the Abenaki's  
food, housing and transportation.

What caused the American Revolution?

Actions taken by the English forced  
the colonists to revolt.

***Focusing questions are text dependent questions drawn from your instructional goal for the text or unit.***

***The answer to each focusing question becomes the focus of a written piece that expresses deep understanding of a text or topic. This focus statement should summarize the concept you want students to learn.***



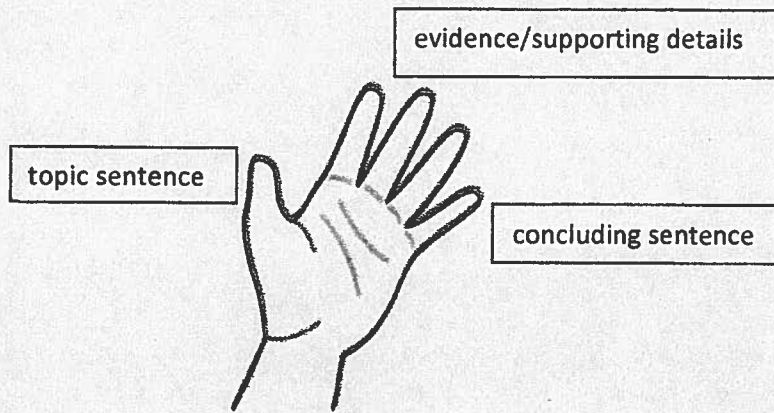
*How do Charlie's opinions about having fun change from the beginning to the end of the story?*

<i>Evidence</i>	
<i>What does Charlie think is fun?</i>	
<i>Examples from the beginning of the story</i>	
<i>Examples from the end of the story</i>	



## Teaching the Hand Paragraph\*

Basic Structure: Students use their fingers to remember the components and structure of a basic expository paragraph.



Remember that basic structures are a starting point and are meant to **describe, not prescribe**, effective writing. Students should be encouraged to show their understanding of writing concepts by successfully flexing and extending these structures. Model this flexibility when students are ready, and support your students' experimentation as they adapt these structures in their own pieces.

Some ideas for flexing and extending this structure:

- Create "alien hand" paragraphs with more than 3 details (draw in extra fingers!).
- Add a "ring" to a finger by adding a sentence of elaboration after the detail. Use plastic rings to teach this concept.
- Teach students the "thumb rule" - each "thumb sentence" should be indented the width of a thumb.
- Reinforce the relationship between the thumb and pinky finger by having students touch their thumbs to their pinkies while proofreading.

*\*adapted from The Five Finger Paragraph  
by Johnnie W. Lewis*

When Charlie McButton Loses Power, by Suzanne Collins, is a funny story with an important message. When the power goes out, Charlie McButton learns something about himself and what he likes to do. At the beginning of the poem, Charlie thought he could never have fun without his gadgets. By the end, Charlie realizes that he can have fun without electronics.

At the beginning of the story, Charlie thinks the only fun things are electronic. The poem tells us, "The things that he liked involved handsets and bots". He liked to play computer games and battle bad guys. He loved games where he could blow things up. Charlie thought he could only have fun with electronic toys.

Then the power goes out and Charlie finds out that he can have fun in other ways. Charlie finds he likes playing hide and go seek with his sister Isabel Jane. They also have a lot of fun building a big blanket fort together. They even play a great game where they pretend to be wizards and hunt dragons. Charlie learns he can have fun without his electronic toys.

At first, Charlie thought he could never have fun in a power outage, but then he found that there were lots of interesting things to do that don't require electricity. When the power went out, Charlie used his imagination and learned an important lesson. Charlie learned that playing with his sister, Isabel Jane, could be even more fun than playing computer games!



## Teacher Pages

### When Charlie McButton Lost Power

*Sample Graphic Organizer (additional evidence may be added by students)*

**How do Charlie's opinions about having fun change from the beginning to the end of the story?**

Evidence <i>What does Charlie think is fun?</i>	Used in your piece?
<i>Examples from the beginning of the story</i>	
Things "with handsets and bots"	
Computerized games with battles	
Games where he could blow things up	
Watching TV	
<i>Examples from the end of the story</i>	
Hide and go seek	
Blanket fort	
Dragons and Wizards	

**POSSIBLE FOCUS STATEMENT:** At the beginning of the poem, he thought he could never have fun without his gadgets. By the end, he realized that he can have fun without electronics.

### Sample Writing

*NOTE: this is for the teacher's use only, not for students. The purpose is to show the teacher what the final piece might look like when students have completed their work.*

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## Mohammed Yunus

*The monsoon season was coming and our house needed a roof badly, but we had no money because of those unscrupulous money lenders. There was no way we could pay our debt, much less our loans. We were surrounded by darkness and fear.*

Born June 28, 1940 in Bangladesh, Mohammed Yunus would change poverty to prosperity in his country. The article "Peace Prize to Pioneer of Loans to Poor No Bank Would Touch" tells us what he did. In creating the Grameen Bank and microcredit, the theory is simple but effective; give loans to poor people to start small businesses so they can repay the loans and live better lives.

Mohammed Yunus's work has given tiny loans to poor people, which in turn has helped give poor people, especially women, better lives.

Mohammed Yunus has given 6.5 million loans to people in poverty. Many of the loans are small. His first was \$27, but it went to 42 people. The other people helped remind everyone to pay back their part of the loan. He gives loans to destitute widows, abandoned wives, landless laborers, and rickshaw drivers. They help beggars by giving them things to sell at people's doors. They also help phone ladies by giving them loans for phones so people can communicate with their loved ones across the country. The tiny loans he gave have helped people in Bangladesh.

The loans Mohammed Yunus gave have helped improve people's lives. One way he helped improve lives with the loans they got was they could buy cows for milk, or get bamboo to make stools. Also they have made ways to cheaply transport money and store money. Now people can pay their school fees and go to school. 56% of borrowers have moved out of poverty. Now people in Bangladesh have more freedom and control of their lives.

Mohammed Yunus has given many tiny loans to poor people and helped improve their lives. So why has this movement worked so well when others have collapsed? Because he was inspiring enough to make people believe everything would work, and now Bangladesh is on the way to becoming poverty-free.

# The Painted Essay®

a tool for teaching basic essay form

## Introduction

catches the reader's attention

gives some background information

### FOCUS STATEMENT

point 1

point 2

## Proof Paragraph 1

gives evidence and reasons to support point 1

transition

## Proof Paragraph 2

gives evidence and reasons to support point 2

## Conclusion

what?

so what?



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so what?



*What impact did Jackie Robinson have on people's view of black Americans?*

## **Jackie Robinson: A Model for Others**

Teacher – written model

Baseball has always been America's national sport. Americans from all walks of life have played baseball as children, and rooted for their favorite major league teams as adults. For a long time major league baseball was closed to black Americans. In the late 1800's and early 1900's there had been Negro Leagues where black Americans could play. By the 1930's and 1940's these were still extraordinarily popular in the African-American world. Still, they were as far as a black baseball player could go. A black American boy might play baseball after school, he might even make it to the Negro Leagues, but no matter how good he was, there was no way he could aspire to the major leagues - they were closed to him because of his race.

In 1947, a black American named Jackie Robinson changed that. The article "A Major Leaguer" by Joy Hakim describes how Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball. He was recruited for the job of the first black baseball player by Branch Rickey, the manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. At first he endured terrible abuse by the other players and many fans, but he never lost his temper. Eventually he won people over and was even named Rookie of the Year.

Jackie Robinson had a big impact on how people viewed black Americans. He showed the rest of America that black Americans had dignity, and he showed them that black Americans could be great athletes.

First, Jackie Robinson showed the country that black Americans had dignity. When he first began playing, he encountered horrific abuse from other players. In the Dodgers' first game with the Phillies, Philly players shouted names at him from the dugout, and slid him into him on purpose so they could cut him with their spikes. Pitchers deliberately threw balls at his head. But Jackie Robinson

just "took a deep breath" and took the abuse. Branch Rickey had asked him to "have guts enough not fight back," and Jackie did have enough guts. He kept right on playing like a gentleman.

This was important because it showed the rest of America that black Americans could have great courage and dignity. They could begin to see black Americans as human beings whom they could admire. For black Americans, Jackie Robinson's dignified and calm behavior could become a role model. In a few short years, the civil rights movement would begin in America. Martin Luther King led protesters in calm, nonviolent protests - as calm as Jackie Robinson had been on the baseball fields.

Besides showing the dignity of black Americans, Jackie Robinson paved the way for other black athletes. When people saw what a good athlete he was, and how he helped his team, they began to realize that there were many talented black athletes. This made it possible for other black athletes to join major league baseball, and then other professional sports. As Hakim writes, "He made it easy for those who followed." Today there are many hundreds of black athletes on professional teams of all sorts.

This was important because professional sports are a huge part of American life. If black athletes never had a shot at those professional sports, they would never have the same opportunity as other good athletes - they would be shut out. In addition, other Americans would never see black athletes on the playing fields or basketball courts. What you don't see, you usually don't think about. Once black Americans were highly visible in professional sports, it must have made it harder for the rest of the country to ignore black Americans, both in sports and in other areas.

Overall, how did Jackie Robinson impact history? He showed all Americans what dignity black Americans were capable of, and he paved the way for black athletes in professional sports. In the great sweep of American history, he made us move a little closer to our most cherished ideal - equality for all. It is an equality that we have not yet completely achieved, but Jackie Robinson's story is a good reminder of a one important step in that direction.



## 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

## 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....



## “Dulce et Decorum Est ” by Wilfred Owen

**Learning Objective:** The goal of the exemplar is to give students practice in reading and writing habits that they have been working with throughout the curriculum, in this case using poetry. It was designed originally for use in a middle / high school Social Studies curriculum, where teaching students to go beneath a surface understanding of historical events, and to make connections among historical events, is at a premium. Although this exemplar was designed to be used within a Social Studies curriculum, it is appropriate for use in an ELA class as well.

By reading and re-reading the poem, closely combining paired and full classroom discussion about it, and writing about it, students come to an appreciation of the need to (a) re-read, paraphrase, and discuss ideas, (b) achieve an accurate basic understanding level of a text, (c) achieve an accurate interpretive understanding of a text, and (d) build a coherent piece of writing that both constructs and communicates solid understanding of text.

**Rationale:** It is critical that students grapple with rich text in the content areas. It is particularly important that students recognize that it is key that they understand what an author is actually saying in the text before they proceed to analysis of that text. The steps in this exemplar, from basic understanding to analytical/inferential understanding, are intended to help build this habit of mind in students.

The text in this exemplar is short. It is also designed to be used in a classroom that will have a large range of reading levels – typical of public middle and high schools. For these reasons, the students do not read the text independently before the teacher reads it aloud; rather, the first reading is a supported one. The purpose here is to include *all* students successfully on the initial read, strong and struggling readers alike. By middle school (and certainly by high school) struggling students are easily discouraged, so it is important to “hook them into success” from the very beginning.

However, throughout the steps of the sequence, students have ample opportunity to read independently and successfully.

**Reading Task:** Students will first read the text in a supported context, with the teacher reading aloud while they read/follow silently. They will work closely with text-dependent questions to build both basic understanding and then analytic / inferential understanding of the text. After that, using a Focusing Question provided by the teacher, students capture their analytical understanding in notes, before they write a short essay that relies heavily on text-based evidence, and explaining that evidence. This writing allows students to capture their understanding in a coherent whole.

**Discussion Task:** Throughout this exemplar, students are discussing: in pairs, in small groups, in full class discussions. There are two purposes of the “turn and talk” in pairs – first, to make sure all students are actually focusing and talking about the text (“speaking their thinking”); and second, to make sure students actually own the ideas they are working with. Students cannot write what they could not have spoken, and often what they actually did speak; if we want them to write coherently and thoughtfully about the text, they need frequent opportunity to speak those ideas.

The full class discussion allows the teacher to guide students to deeper thinking than they might have reached on their own.



**Writing Task:** The writing task is a short argument piece, responding to a Focusing Question, showing analytical understanding. This writing is NOT used as an assessment – rather, it is an essential part of the instruction, helping students both to crystallize their understanding of the text and to write clearly and coherently – this time, and next time.

**Common Core Standards Addressed in This Instructional Sequence:**

RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.6, RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2, RH.6-8.6, RH.6-8.10

W.8.1a, W.8.1b, W.8.1c, W.8.1d, W.8.1e, W.8.4, W.8.5, W.8.6

SL.8.1

L.8.1

## Student Notes "Dulce et Decorum Est"

**Focusing Question:** *Why do you think the poet ends the poem with the lines "the old Lie....dulce et decorum est pro patria mori"?*

**Focus Statement / thesis:**

Context / evidence from text	Explain the evidence – tie back to focus statement (irony)

## ***Dulce et Decorum Est* by Wilfred Owen**

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! - An ecstasy of fumbling  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime. -  
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.  
In all my dreams before my helpless sight  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs  
Bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*

Wilfred Owen



## When Poets Speak, Every Word Counts

### "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen

What do we already know about the Great War?


It has sometimes been said that poetry lies somewhere between prose and music. That being true, it's really important to read poetry aloud.

First, listen to the poem being read aloud. Just as you do when you hear a new piece of music, try to listen for the overall sense of the poem.

Now, listen to it being read aloud again, but this time read it in your head at the same time.

Finally, take turns with a partner reading the poem aloud. Each of you should read the whole poem – don't alternate by stanzas.

Now, by yourself, read the poem silently. Leave any tracks on the text that will help you to slow down, read carefully, and make meaning. You might:

- *note a particular word or phrase*
- *paraphrase a bit*
- *raise a question*
- *make a connection to some other text or bit of information*

### Stop and Discuss

1. What event is the poet describing in the first stanza? Whom is he describing?


2. What event is the poet describing in the second stanza?


Look at the phrase "dim through the misty panes and thick green light". What do you think the poet is referring to here?

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In the boxes below, draw as carefully and with as much detail as you can the events that are occurring in the first two stanzas of the poem (NOT the third stanza yet!)

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So, how does the poet want us readers to feel about the events he is describing in these first two stanzas?

How the poet wants us to feel	Evidence from the poem

Now, we're ready for the third and final stanza of the poem.

1) Re-read the third stanza aloud. Where does the first sentence of the stanza end?

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2) What scene is the poet describing in the first eight lines of this stanza?

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3) Whom is the poet describing when he uses the words "innocent" and "children"?

Why do you think he chooses these words?

4) The final words of the poem, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" are Latin for "It is a sweet and proper thing to die for one's country."

Now that you know this, try paraphrasing the last stanza of the poem.

Go back now and draw the third stanza of the poem, so it is complete.

5) Notice that the poet speaks to the reader here as "you" for the first time. How many times does he use the word "you"? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think the poet has switched from description (in the first two stanzas) to direct address (in the third stanza)?

6) Finally, look again at the title of the poem. The poet is using *irony* here – this is an *ironic* title. What do you think "irony" might mean?



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Why does it make sense to call the use of this phrase “*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” ironic?

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**Time to Write!**

Here’s the Focusing Question:

*Why do you think the poet ends the poem with the lines “the old Lie....*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*”?*

Now that you know the poem so well, try with your partner to come up with a thoughtful answer to this question.

Remember, your answer to this question will be your **thesis / focus statement** for your piece of writing.

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Think about the evidence from the text that you will use to support / develop your thesis. Then draft your essay.

Remember, a good essay will:

- *give a short introduction that names the title and author, and gives a brief summary of what the poem is about*
- *clearly state a thesis / focus that answers the question*
- *give specific evidence from the text, and explains that evidence thoughtfully*
- *conclude by reminding the reader of the thesis, and reflect in some broader way*

**File Name: I1 Water Use**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Independent Writing**

**Water Use**

**What can you do to save water?**

we need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. if  
your fawsit is leaking turn it off. if we didnt save water we woldent have  
any.



**File Name: I4 Conserving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Independent Writing**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more naturail. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinklers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resorce of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**File Name: I6 Effects of The Great Depression**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Independent Writing**

### **Effects of The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected the people that lived through it in many ways. The things that I am going to explain are some of the things that affected the people who lived through the Great Depression. Having barely any money was one of the things that affected them. Also having less supplies affected them too. Having to take care of kids too also might have affected the people during the Great Depression.

First, I am going to talk about how having almost no money affected the people. It affected them because they were getting their money by working. Then their jobs were shutting down so their amount of money was shrinking and shrinking. They would do neighborhood favors and jobs but the amount of money they would get was five dollars. They also had to pay a bill for electricity every month. They had to pay for gas if you had a car and their house. That is why having almost no money affected them a lot.

Another reason the Great Depression affected the people was they were having less of the supplies they had. Like some of the people stopped delivery for several things such as milk and ice. They were also using less



electricity and selling their cars. Those are some of supplies they had a shortage or had to not use as much.

Also if they had kids they would need to do extra work and be able to care for them. They also had to pay more money if they had kids because they have to feed them too. They also had to take care of them. The parents have to care for them. If they are sick they can not just leave them at home they have to take care of them. They also might worry about them. If you had kids during the Great Depression not only would you worry about your kids and family. That is why if you had kids during the Great Depression it might be more difficult.

Now you can see how living through the Great Depression was very difficult and affected many people who lived through it. It affected people in many ways like having no money or having a very little amount of it. Also if you had kids it might have been a little more difficult. They also had to live with less supplies. That is why I think the Great Depression affected the people who lived through it.

**File Name: I8 Effects of The Great Depression**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Independent Writing**

### **Effects of The Great Depression**

"I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." - Franklin D. Roosevelt. This quote depicts the condition of our country during The Great Depression. This oppressive time changed the people who had to live through it. They lost numerous belongings, and because of this, learned to appreciate that which they do have.

During The Great Depression, many people had to give up their possessions. The book "Digging In" by Robert J. Hastings is a story about growing up during The Great Depression. He says that they "Stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months." The common pleasures that most people take for granted were taken away from them. They and countless others had to get rid of their assets. In the poem, "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the daughter of a farmer living in Great Depression, she talked about how "the winter crop has spindled out and died" from lack of rain. This crop was sometimes all the farmers had to depend on, and when it died, they had nothing. This is one of the reasons that so many lost their homes and job.



When The New Deal came around, they had to "relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.....The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy." - The New Deal, from Public Broadcasting Service. This shows just how much people had lost during the Great Depression. They were in poverty, unemployed, and bankrupt. The Great Depression was a time when people lost almost all they had.

Losing so much of their belongings caused people to become aware of what they do have, and taught them to conserve it. In "Digging In", the author said they "took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper." He also talked about a book that he had, and he accidentally dropped it one day after school. His mom made him retrace his steps all the way back to school, in the snow, to find it. This shows just how much they cared about and took care of what they had. Without all the possessions that they previously had, they learned to take account of what they do have and use sparingly.

The Great Depression had a great impact on the people that lived through it. They lost almost all of their belongings, and learned to be thankful for and conserve the things that they were left with. They went through an incredibly difficult time, and everyone who experienced it was changed in one way or another.



**File Name: N11/12 Hope During The Great Depression**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 11/12**

**Independent Writing**

### **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

***Assignment Planner -Teacher Worksheet***

**Grade(s):**

**Title of Text:**

**Genre:**

**FOCUSING QUESTION:**

**POSSIBLE FOCUS STATEMENT:**

<i>Evidence</i>	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Page</i>

**Additional notes about this piece:**



Test Drive: Title \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

FOCUSING QUESTION:

POSSIBLE FOCUS STATEMENT:

Evidence

Explanation

### Notes/Observations

Anticipated student need	Instructional support
Additional notes about this piece:	

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Anticipated student need	Instructional support



## Glossary

**Focusing Question:** A question which focuses the writing task. The Focusing Question drives close reading and inquiry which lead to a deeper understanding of the whole text or some aspect of the text.

**Focus Statement:** The main idea of a written piece, stated succinctly. The Focus Statement, when supported with evidence from the text and some explanation, answers the Focusing Question.

**Writing Draft Sheet:** A sheet of lined paper for students to write on. Lined paper from the classroom or a page in the student's writing journal may be substituted for this sheet.

**Evidence:** specific details from the text that support a point or inference.

**Evidence Chart:** A graphic organizer for recording evidence. The format of the chart will vary based on the focus of the writing. Evidence Charts can be completed together as a class, kept individually or done using some combination of the two.

**Concluding Statement/Section:** A statement that "wraps up" a writing piece. The Concluding Statement will always restate the focus of the piece in some way, and may also provide some reflection on the information presented .

**Revise:** To reread and change a piece in order to improve the content or wording of a piece of writing.

**Edit:** To reread and change a piece in order to improve the grammar, usage, and mechanics (conventions) of a piece of writing.