



The LeafLIT

A Literacy Publication



in the Common Core

Part 1

by Pamela Norton

The Common Core State Standards Writing expectations focus on the following main writing capacities for K-12: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives that convey real or imagined experience. In addition to these three main types, students will be expected to perform research and create texts in various media forms.

The K-5 writing standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. The writing standards correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards (see below). The anchor standards and grade-specific standards are necessary complements. The anchor standards provide broad standards, and the grade-specific standards provide specificity. Together, they define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Writing in the Common Core Standards contains 10 Overarching College and Career Ready Anchor Writing Standards. They are broken down into 4 areas:

- ◆ Text Types and Purposes (1-3)
- ◆ Production and Distribution of Writing (4-6)
- ◆ Research to Build and Present Knowledge (7-9)
- ◆ Range of Writing (10)

Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness Writing Anchor Standards

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.



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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.

Increasing Focus on Argument and Informative Writing

While narrative writing is given prominence in early grades, as students progress through the grades the Common Core State Standards increasingly ask students to write arguments or informational reports from sources. As a consequence, less classroom time should be spent in later grades on personal writing in response to decontextualized prompts that ask students to detail personal experiences or opinions. The Common Core State Standards require that the balance of writing students are asked to do parallel the balance assessed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):

- ◆ In elementary school, 30 percent of student writing should be to argue, 35 percent should be to explain/inform, and 35 percent should be narrative.
- ◆ In middle school, 35 percent of student writing should be to write arguments, 35 percent should be to explain/inform, and 30 percent should be narrative.
- ◆ In high school, 40 percent of student writing should be to write arguments, 40 percent should be to explain/inform, and 20 percent should be narrative.

These forms of writing are not strictly independent; for example, arguments and explanations often include narrative elements, and both informing and arguing rely on using information or evidence drawn from texts.

Source: *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3–12* by David Coleman and Susan Pimente

Common Core Writing Definitions

Argument

Arguments are used for many purposes—to change the reader’s point of view, to bring about some action on the reader’s part, or to ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem. An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer’s position, belief, or conclusion is valid. In English language arts, students make claims about the worth or meaning of a literary work or works. They defend their interpretations or judgments with evidence from the text(s) they are writing about. In history/social studies, students analyze evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources to advance a claim that is best supported by the evidence, and they argue for a historically or empirically situated interpretation. In science, students make claims in the form of statements or conclusions that answer questions or address problems. Using data in a scientifically acceptable form, students marshal evidence and draw on their understanding of scientific concepts to argue in support of their claims. Although young children are not able to produce fully developed logical arguments, they develop a variety of methods to extend and elaborate their work by providing examples, offering reasons for their assertions, and explaining cause and effect. These kinds of expository structures are steps on the road to argument. **In grades K–5, the term “opinion” is used to refer to this developing form of argument.**

Source: www.commoncorestandards.org

Argument - K-12 Progression

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| K | Compose opinion pieces; state an opinion or preference |
| 1 – 2 | Write opinion pieces <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Introduce topic, opinion, reason, closure |
| 3 – 5 | Write opinion pieces on topics <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Support point of view with reasons and information |
| 6 – 8 | Write arguments to support claims <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Clear reasons and relevant evidence |
| 9 – 12 | Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Valid reasoning, relevant and sufficient evidence |

Informational/Explanatory Writing

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes: to increase readers' knowledge of a subject, to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept. Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types (What are the different types of poetry?) and components (What are the parts of a motor?); size, function, or behavior (How big is the United States? What is an X-ray used for? How do penguins find food?); how things work (How does the legislative branch of government function?); and why things happen (Why do some authors blend genres?). To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea and a coherent focus on a topic and more skilled at selecting and incorporating relevant examples, facts, and details into their writing. They are also able to use a variety of techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point. Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumé. As students advance through the grades, they expand their repertoire of informational/explanatory genres and use them effectively in a variety of disciplines and domains.

Although information is provided in both arguments and explanations, the two types of writing have different aims. Arguments seek to make people believe that something is true or to persuade people to change their beliefs or behavior. Explanations, on the other hand, start with the assumption of truthfulness and answer questions about why or how. Their aim is to make the reader understand rather than to persuade him or her to accept a certain point of view. In short, arguments are used for persuasion and explanations for clarification.

Like arguments, explanations provide information about causes, contexts, and consequences of processes, phenomena, states of affairs, objects, terminology, and so on. However, in an argument, the writer not only gives information but also presents a case with the “pros” (supporting ideas) and “cons” (opposing ideas) on a debatable issue. Because an argument deals with whether the main claim is true, it demands empirical descriptive evidence, statistics, or definitions for support. When writing an argument, the writer supports his or her claim(s) with sound reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Source: www.commoncorestandards.org

Writing to Sources — a Key Task

The Common Core State Standards require students not only to show that they can analyze and synthesize sources, but also to present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information through their writing. Several of the Writing Standards, including most explicitly Standard 9, require students to draw evidence from a text or texts to support analysis, reflection, or research.

Source: *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3–12* by David Coleman and Susan Pimente

Visit <http://www.rpd.net/teachers.html> for Literacy Resources

Extensive Practice with Short, Focused Research Projects

Writing Standard 7 emphasizes that students should conduct several short research projects in addition to more sustained research efforts. Instruction should include several of these short research projects annually to enable students to repeat the research process many times and develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently. A progression of shorter research projects also encourages students to develop expertise in one area by confronting and analyzing different aspects of the same topic as well as other texts and source materials on that topic.

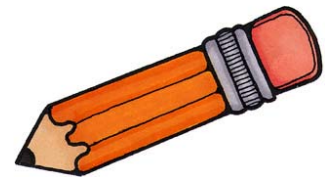
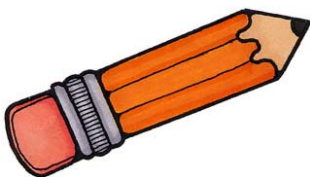
Source: *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3–12* by David Coleman and Susan Pimente

Narrative Writing

Narrative writing conveys experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure. It can be used for many purposes, such as to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. In English language arts, students produce narratives that take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. Over time, they learn to provide visual details of scenes, objects, or people; to depict specific actions (for example, movements, gestures, postures, and expressions); to use dialogue and interior monologue that provide insight into the narrator's and characters' personalities and motives; and to manipulate pace to highlight the significance of events and create tension and suspense. In history/social studies, students write narrative accounts about individuals. They also construct event models of what happened, selecting from their sources only the most relevant information. In science, students write narrative descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they follow in their investigations so that others can replicate their procedures and (perhaps) reach the same results. With practice, students expand their repertoire and control of different narrative strategies.

Source: www.commoncorestandards.org

We know that the Common Core State Standards contain a level of rigor that we must maintain. We can begin doing this by ensuring that we focus on effective writing instruction. **The next edition of LeafLIT will concentrate on classroom application in writing. Stay tuned!**



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Common Core State Standards **WRITING**

Useful Common Core Websites

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Nevada's CCSS Website:

<https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/CommonCore/ccss/default.aspx>

The Standards:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

RPDP:

<http://rpdp.net/>

CCSD Curriculum Engine:

<http://curriculum.wiki-teacher.com>

References:

<https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/CommonCore/default.aspx>

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

<http://educationnorthwest.org/>



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