



## AREA V REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

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*Instructional Implications of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.*

### Writing to Sources, Grades K – 5

#### Session Description

Participants will analyze the CCSS Writing Standards in *Text Types & Purposes* at their grade levels and compare them to current practice; and examine the standards in *Research to Build & Present Knowledge*, identify CCSS Reading Standards appropriate for application to Writing Standard 9, and write text-specific prompts for current curriculum materials.

#### Expected Outcomes

- Become familiar with the shift toward writing from sources.
- Become familiar with the three writing types/purposes included in the standards and the quality descriptors at their own grade level.
- Write text-specific prompts at their grade level for Writing Standard 9.

#### Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
- Text Types and Purposes ( 15 minutes)
  - Partner activity – Analyze CCSS Writing Standards 1 – 3 and compare with current practice.
- Research to Build & Present Knowledge (15 minutes)
  - Partner activity – Generate text-specific prompts for Writing Standard 9 from current curricular materials.
- Reflection (10 minutes)
  - Partner activity – How did we do?
  - Suggested follow-up activities
  - Reflection

#### Time

- 45 minutes

#### Audience

- Designed to be used with groups of K-5 leaders and teachers working with grade level or cross-grade level partners.

#### Materials

- Access to subject and grade-level CCSS Reading and Writing Standards
- Handout copy of PowerPoint slides
- Handout Grade Level Look at Text Types & Purposes K – 5
  - Teachers need only the page(s) relating to their grade level(s).
- Handout Reflections

#### Resources/References

- Appendix A, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf)

- Appendix C, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_C.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_C.pdf)
- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_ELA%20Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

### **Slide 1**

**Welcome** participants, and introduce the subject for today.

**Suggest** that participants sit in small groups with others who teach the same grade level(s).

**Check** to see that everyone has the handouts.

**Explain** that one of the instructional implications of implementing the CCSS will be an increased emphasis on writing in response to sources and writing from multiple sources.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

The emphasis in the CCSS on writing from sources, both in the analysis of individual works as well as in writing from multiple sources during research. As we will see, these are phased in over the grades, but begin in the elementary grades.”

### **Slide 2**

**Go over** the expected outcomes for this session.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Some of the highest priorities of the Common Core State Standards are that students be able to read closely, gain knowledge from texts, and support that knowledge with evidence from the text, both orally and in writing. Today we will look at the standards associated with writing from sources, an important aspect of college and career readiness.

This includes both argument and informative writing from single or multiple sources, beginning in the primary level.”

### **Slide 3**

**Explain** that one of the instructional shifts required by the Common Core State Standards will be a shift in later grades toward more class time and student writing being devoted to argument and informative writing that derives its content from texts, both in ELA as well as the content areas. This includes analyses of individual texts as well as research projects.

This is balanced by a corresponding decrease in later grades in the class time and student writing being devoted to narrative writing, especially the personal narrative, as well as writing in response to decontextualized prompts.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“One of the significant shifts in implementing the CCSS will be in the proportion of class time and student writing being devoted to various types of writing in ELA as well as the content areas. The CCSS increasingly emphasizes argument and informative writing over narrative writing as students progress through the grades. Further, it emphasizes the type of argument and informative writing that is tied closely to texts, deriving its content from the texts. Logical arguments are supported with evidence from texts; explanations are developed with evidence from texts.

This is balanced by a decrease, as students progress through the grades, in the amount of time spent writing narratives, especially personal narratives – such as the familiar “Write about a time you

experienced ....' It also de-emphasizes the use of decontextualized prompts that require no reference to texts – prompts such as ‘What is your favorite time of the year?’”

#### **Slide 4**

**Explain** that “writing from sources” includes familiar writing tasks such as literary analysis and research projects.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Writing from sources is, in general, analytical writing in response to literary and informational texts. This might be writing an opinion about a book, an analysis of a story’s characters, or writing an informational piece from social studies or science texts.

So, in addition to asking students questions they can answer from their prior knowledge or experience, beginning even in kindergarten the standards expect students to begin (with guidance and support from adults) gathering information from sources to answer questions.”

#### **Slide 5**

**Explain** that the Writing Anchor Standards and corresponding grade-specific standards are divided into four sections, and that we will be looking at the first section (Text Types and Purposes) and the third section (Research to Build and Present Knowledge) today.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The Writing Anchor Standards and corresponding grade-specific are organized into four sections. We will look at the first section, which sets out the three purposes or types of writing asked of students, and the third section, which sets out the ways students are asked to use source material.”

#### **Slide 6**

**Explain** that this first category of Writing Anchor Standards describes the three types of writing students in which students need to demonstrate proficiency. Acknowledge that there are other types of writing (poetry, for instance) that teachers may include as part of their writing lessons, but that these are the three types for which all students are expected to meet the standard.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Here are the anchor standards for the three writing types and purposes included in the CCSS Standards. In grades K through 5, the term “opinion pieces” is used.

Argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer’s position, belief, or conclusion is valid. Arguments may have many purposes: to change the reader’s point of view, propel the reader to some action, or ask the reader to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation.

Informational/explanatory writing includes literary analyses, science and history reports, and summaries as well as functional writing such as letters.

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.”

#### **Slide 7**

**Explain** that the Common Core State Standards require that the balance of writing students are asked to do parallels the balance assessed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The Common Core State Standards ask students to write an increasing proportion of arguments and informational reports from sources as they progress through the grades. Consequently, less classroom time is spent in later grades on personal writing that asks students to detail personal experiences or opinions. The balance of types of writing students are asked to do should parallel the balance assessed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

So, by the time students are in high school, analytical writing (writing to argue and explain) has increased from 65% to 80% of their writing experience. We recognize, of course, that 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.”

**Slide 8**

**Explain** that there is a fine but important distinction between logical argument and persuasive writing, even though persuasion is the goal of each. The distinction lies in the appeal each makes: Persuasion may rely on persuasive techniques such as appealing to self interest or emotion. Argument, on the other hand, always relies on a logical case that persuades by convincing the reader of the merits of the claims and proofs.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

For instance, when asked to write a short paper “persuading a parent” to do something, we have all seen instances when one or more students will resort to flattery, bargaining, even pleading – which may in fact be very persuasive at home, but certainly does not represent progress toward -- or understanding of -- the ability to write a reasoned, logical argument.”

**Slide 9**

**Explain** that at the K-5 level, the term *opinion* is used to refer to this developing form of argument. Note the progression of difficulty highlighted in these excerpts from the grade-specific standards.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

Here are excerpts from the language in the CCSS grade-level standards for Writing Standard 1 (writing argument). In grades K-5, the term *opinion* is used to refer to this developing form of argument.

Beginning in kindergarten students express an opinion, and beginning in grade 1 students supply reasons for the opinion; by grades 4 students support those reasons with facts and details, and by grade 5 a logical presentation is expected.

Note that beginning in grade 2, students are expected to begin making the logical case with words that establish a logical connection between the opinion and the reasons supporting it. As the opinions, reasons, and supporting facts become more complex, students must master increasingly complex vocabulary and sentence constructions to convey them clearly.”

**Slide 10**

**Invite** participants to look at the handout *Grade Level Look at Text Types & Purposes K-5* with a partner or two.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Slide 6 contains the Writing Anchor Standards that represent the college and career readiness level. Let’s take a look at how those are reflected in the various grade-level Standards. With a partner or two, take a few minutes to read and think about Writing Standards 1, 2, and 3 at your grade level. How do they compare with current practice? What do you see that is familiar? What differences or additions?”

*Allow a few minutes to work, then invite participants to share their findings.*

### **Slide 11**

**Explain** that the third group of Writing Anchor Standards (#7, 8, and 9 Research to Build & Present Knowledge) specifically set expectations for students to write from sources.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“We have looked at the first group of Writing Anchor Standards (#1, 2, and 3) which define the types and purposes of writing. The third group (Writing Anchor Standards #7, 8, and 9 – Research to Build & Present Knowledge) specifically sets expectations for students to write from sources.

Let’s look at Writing Standard 7 first. Remember that the Anchor Standards describe the college and career readiness level. Let’s look at how these Anchor Standards are articulated in the corresponding grade-specific standards K-5).”

### **Slide 12**

**Explain** that the standards are slightly different at each grade level, with a ‘step’ of difficulty added at each stage of the progression. However, they have these elements in common at the two grade bands. By grade five, the standard specifies “several sources.”

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Writing Standard 7, like all the other CCSS, gradually ‘ramps up’ the level of difficulty at each subsequent grade or grade band. However, for our purposes today, we want to focus on the shift to writing several short, focused research projects each year, rather than just one or two larger ones. This allows students to repeat the research process many times and develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently. In addition, a progression of shorter research projects encourages students to build knowledge and expertise in a content area by confronting and analyzing different aspects of the same topic as well as other texts and source materials on that topic.

Short research projects are defined in the Standards as investigations intended to address a narrowly tailored query in a brief period of time, as in a few class periods or a week of instructional time.

More sustained research projects are introduced at the higher grade levels, but even then, the emphasis remains on many shorter, focused experiences.”

### **Slide 13**

**Explain** that these grade-specific examples from the CCSS Writing Standard 8 have been chosen to emphasize the requirement to write from multiple sources. The full texts of the standards include references to note-taking and lists of sources.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“In CCSS Writing Standard 8 at the various grade levels, we see the centrality of writing from sources. (The full texts of these standards include references to note-taking and lists of sources, and increase the expectations at each grade level.) The excerpts displayed here emphasize the expectation that students will use multiple sources to inform their writing.”

### **Slide 14**

**Explain** that Writing Anchor Standard 9 specifically addresses writing *about* sources. Its corresponding grade-specific standards require application of *Reading* Standards to literature and informational text.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Writing Anchor Standard 9 specifically calls for analytical writing *about* texts.

The CCSS *Writing* Standard 9 in grades 4 and 5 asks students to apply the grade-specific *Reading* standards to literary and informational text in order to support analysis, reflection and research included in their *writing*. In other words, it specifies a written response – either argument or explanation -- to the reading standard.

One caveat, of course, is that for students to successfully write *about* sources, they must be able to read the texts with understanding.

### **Slide 15**

**Explain** that these are a sampling of the grade-specific reading standards appropriate for written responses to Writing Standard 9.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Here are a few examples of grade-specific Reading Standards requiring argument or explanation.

In writing argument, for example, students make claims about the worth or meaning of a literary work, and defend their interpretations or judgments with evidence from the text they are writing about

Or, the writing may be in the form of informative writing, where the explanations are similarly developed and supported with evidence from the text.”

### **Slide 16**

**Invite** participants to work with a partner or two to identify CCSS Reading Standards at their grade level which would be appropriate for fulfilling CCSS Writing Standard 9. Then, suggest they think of prompts specific to texts currently in their curriculum. Allow time to work. Invite participants to share a few of the prompts they generated. Primary level teachers may wish to join intermediate teachers for this activity.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Working with a partner or two, look at the CCSS Reading Standards for your grade level and identify the ones that Writing Standard 9 could be applied to. Remember, that standard asks students to ‘Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.’

Next, select a couple of these grade-level Reading Standards and write prompts specific to some of the texts you currently use with students. After completing this task, we will take a few minutes to share our examples with one another.”

### **Slide 17**

**Invite** participants to turn to partners to answer the questions.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Take a few minutes to reflect on today’s topic by discussing these questions with a partner.”

### **Slide 18**

**Suggest** the activities listed as possible follow-ups to this session.

**Invite** participants to fill out the Reflections page.