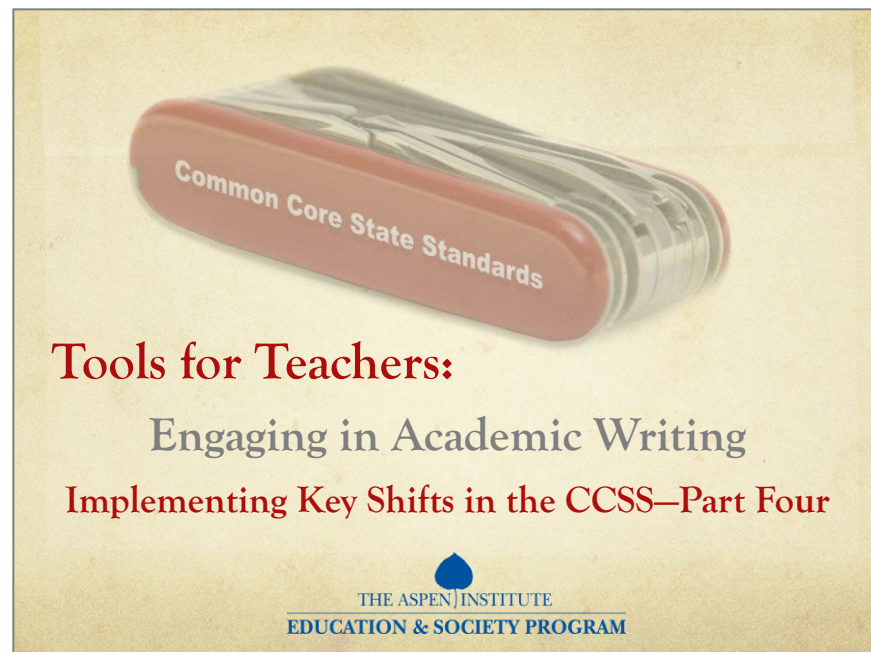


# Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing

Implementing Key Shifts in the CCSS—Part Four

Facilitator's Guide  
September 2013



## **Acknowledgements**

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The design of these facilitation notes is based on a format developed by The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

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This Facilitator’s Guide, as well as all supporting materials, can be downloaded from the Aspen Digital Resource Library: [www.AspenDRL.org](http://www.AspenDRL.org)

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# How to Use this Facilitator's Guide

## **“Train the Trainer”**

This Facilitator's Guide to “Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing” takes a “train the trainer” perspective and is intended for K-12 English language arts coaches, professional developers, department chairs, administrators and any educator in a position to train and support classroom teachers in all grades and across the curriculum around the key shifts in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS) related to academic writing. Facilitators using this Guide should be well versed in the CCSS, as the facilitator's notes, terminology used, and embedded learning activities assume the facilitator's deep familiarity with the CCSS.

The anticipated audience for this professional learning experience is K-12 English Language Arts teachers as well as teachers of other subject areas, **especially history/social studies, science, and technical subjects**, who are also expected to implement the CCSS. Given the CCSS' expectation that the standards are implemented as part of a cross-disciplinary, school-wide approach to literacy development, any educator can benefit from training and practice in the key CCSS shifts related to academic writing.

## **A Self-Paced Professional Learning Experience**

Another feature of “Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing” is that this resource can be adapted to meet a district or school's unique professional development needs. This presentation can be delivered to teachers in a single, five to six-hour session, depending on the knowledge base of participants and how many of the embedded activities and opportunities for reflection are employed (see the sample agenda below). Alternatively, “Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing” can be used to ground a multi-day or multi-week “course of study.” The developers of all the “Tools for Teachers” modules worked to make these professional learning experiences as user-friendly and adaptable as possible.

## **Your Feedback is Needed!**

After using this module with educators, the Aspen Institute Education and Society Program encourages your feedback so that these resources can be improved. Send feedback to Joaquin Tamayo at [joaquin.tamayo@aspeninst.org](mailto:joaquin.tamayo@aspeninst.org). Thanks in advance for providing feedback to make future versions of this professional learning experience more effective for more educators.

# Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing

## Implementing Key Shifts in the CCSS—Part Four

### Goal

Participants will understand the key shifts related to academic writing in the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

### Learning Expectations

Participants will...

- Understand the implications of the CCSS' Key Design Considerations for writing instruction and research in all grades and across the curriculum.
- Explore the three types of academic writing required by the CCSS: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative.
- Explore the role of evidence in the CCSS for writing.

### Posters to Make Ahead of Time

- Session Agenda
- “Parking lot” poster for collecting participant questions throughout the session

### Supplies

- LCD projection device
- Poster paper & colored markers
- Sufficient copies of the following documents for all participants (See Appendix beginning on page 41):
  - *Student Writing Sample*
  - *Argument and the CCSS*
  - *Informative/Explanatory Writing and the CCSS*
  - *Narrative Writing and the CCSS*
  - *CCSS Writing Standards Grades 9-12*
  - *The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart*
  - *Evidence and the CCSS*
  - *Learned Hand, “I Am an American Day Address”*
  - *Evidence in Argumentative Writing*
  - *Evidence in Informative/Explanatory Writing*
  - *Evidence in Narrative Writing*
  - *The Preamble to the US Constitution & Monk’s The Words We Live By*

## Sample One-Day Session Agenda

Section	Suggested Time	Facilitator's Guide
Welcome & Norm-Setting	5 minutes	Session opening should be planned in accordance with district/school norms
Setting the Stage: Key Design Considerations of the CCSS	35 minutes	Pages 6-14
CCSS Writing Types	1.5 hours	Pages 15-25
Engaging with Evidence	3 hours	Pages 26-39
Closing & Evaluation (not included)	20 minutes	Page 40

**Total Time: 5.5 hours**

# Setting the Stage: Key Design Considerations of the CCSS

## Notes on Slides 2-8

Faithful implementation of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS) requires not only individual educators to be well-versed in the demands and expectations of the CCSS but also that whole curricula and schools are aligned to the CCSS effectively. This section of the module focuses on three of the Key Design Considerations of the CCSS (CCSS, p. 4) to which educators and schools must attend in order to implement the CCSS for writing appropriately and effectively:

1. *A school-wide approach to writing instruction **integrates the CCSS** for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language **in all grades**.*
2. *Daily writing instruction is a **shared responsibility across the curriculum** to ensure students can communicate understanding effectively across a **variety of subjects** and for a **variety of purposes**.*
3. ***Research is woven through the CCSS** to ensure that students develop the abilities “to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas” that are essential for “college, workforce training, and life in a technological society.”*

The opening section of this professional learning experience — slides 2-8 — goes into greater depth with regard to these intentional design considerations as they relate to helping all students meet the demands and expectations of the CCSS for writing, or “academic writing.” For the many history/social studies, science, and technical subject educators to whom the CCSS also apply, it is critical that they are as engaged in understanding and operationalizing the key design considerations of the CCSS as are teachers of English language arts. Indeed, as the CCSS make clear, students will build strong content knowledge and demonstrate understanding only when they are engaged in disciplinary literacy, with one teacher’s instruction building on and reinforcing the next. In this way, the CCSS support a truly holistic approach to literacy instruction that is foundational to the college and career readiness of all students, including English learners and students with special needs.

Session Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will...

- Understand the implications of the CCSS' **Key Design Considerations** for writing instruction and research in all grades and across the curriculum.
- Explore the **three types of academic writing** required by the CCSS: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative.
- Explore the **role of evidence** in the CCSS for writing.

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**Critical Point**

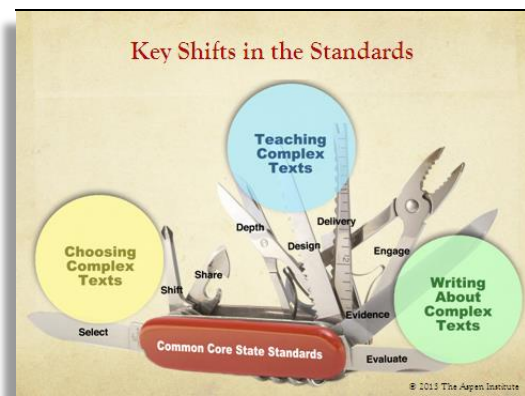
This professional learning experience will focus on issues related to the importance of academic writing as part of rigorous, CCSS-aligned literacy instruction in all grades and across the curriculum.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

- Open the session by explaining to participants that this professional learning experience is focused on the demands and expectations of the CCSS for writing, or “academic writing,” and may include discussion of terms, concepts, and processes that are new and unfamiliar. Assure participants that you, as facilitator, will take great care to define new terms and concepts and will provide time for discussion and reflection on particularly important topics.
- Review with participants the three session objectives point by point, and take time to answer questions as they arise.
- If questions arise among the group regarding the definition of “academic writing,” this module defines it as writing for academic purposes, often for school assignments, in which a student explores their understanding of a substantive topic or issue. The CCSS suggests that academic writing is also the primary type of writing students will most often be required to produce in college and careers.
- Alert participants to the presence of a “Parking Lot” poster where they can log questions that will be answered as this professional learning experience unfolds. As facilitator, be sure that you check the “Parking Lot” periodically and do not leave any participant’s questions or concerns unaddressed.
- Explain to participants that these session objectives will be revisited at the end of the session in order to check that each objective has been successfully met.
- Before moving on, ask if there are any questions.

**Words of Wisdom**

It is sometimes easy to give session objectives only a cursory review. However, depending on how new and unfamiliar the terms and concepts in this session may be for participants, do not sacrifice a deep understanding of what will be learned in order to move quickly through this slide. A thorough review of session objectives is key to setting the stage for learning and putting participants at ease as the session begins.



### Critical Point

“Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing” builds upon the Aspen Institute’s series of professional learning modules focused on implementing the key shifts in the CCSS related to choosing, teaching, and writing about complex texts.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that this professional learning experience follows the Aspen Institute’s three previous “Tools for Teachers” modules and will draw heavily on knowledge and understanding of key CCSS shifts related to text complexity, close reading, and text-dependent questions. “Tools for Teachers” can be found online

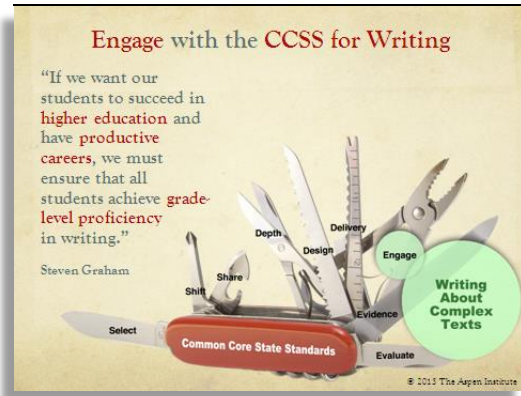
here: [www.AspenDRL.org](http://www.AspenDRL.org). This module is the first of three new modules that focus on how to use writing to assess students’ understanding of complex texts.

- In order to continue orienting participants to the Swiss Army knife metaphor that runs throughout this session, explain that understanding the “key shifts” in the CCSS will serve as a useful *toolkit* in the effort to align teaching and learning with the demands and expectations of the CCSS.
- If helpful, you might ask participants to articulate what they already know about the key shifts in the CCSS, especially with respect to choosing and teaching complex texts. Doing this will help participants make critical connections in their thinking throughout this professional learning experience. Moreover, as facilitator, knowing what your participants know will help you craft a more thoughtful presentation as well as anticipate likely misunderstandings as the session develops.
- Record participants’ answers so you can refer to them as their thinking and understanding develop over the course of the session. Highlighting the evolution of participants’ understanding will be key to ensuring deep learning on their part.
- Further explain that today’s experience will involve concrete tools that educators can use to align literacy instruction related to academic writing within and across disciplines as required by the CCSS.

### Words of Wisdom

If participants are unfamiliar with the previous “Tools for Teachers” modules and/or have not yet received training in the key CCSS shifts related to choosing and teaching complex texts, facilitators are strongly encouraged to employ all appropriate scaffolds to support professional learning. Do not assume your participants understand the shifts related to complex text, as their ability to engage with this module may be severely limited. For more information on the key shifts in the CCSS, visit <http://www.engageny.org/resource/common-core-shifts>.





### Critical Point

Effective academic writing skills—the skills students will develop as they engage with the CCSS for writing—are key to our students’ readiness for college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that a faithful implementation of the CCSS includes frequent opportunities for all students to engage in the kind of academic writing that will ready them for the demands of college and careers.
- Ask participants to reflect on the quote on the slide by Steven Graham, renowned literacy expert at Arizona State University, as you read it aloud:
  - *“If we want our student to succeed in higher education and have productive careers, we must ensure that all students achieve grade-level proficiency in writing.”*
- Explain that this quote is taken from a recent white paper by Graham entitled, “It All Starts Here: Fixing Our National Writing Crisis From the Foundation,” which can be accessed online here: [http://www.zaner-bloser.com/media/zb/zaner-bloser/pdf/C3316\\_It\\_All\\_Starts\\_Here.pdf](http://www.zaner-bloser.com/media/zb/zaner-bloser/pdf/C3316_It_All_Starts_Here.pdf).
- Inform participants that if they are interested in learning more about the substantial research literature supporting the importance of effective writing skills to our students’ college and career success, Graham’s paper is an excellent and accessible resource for teachers in any discipline.
- Spend about three minutes engaging participants to share their reflections on the Graham quote, and even about their own experience with academic writing in college and in their careers, before explaining that the group will now examine a student writing sample to support critical thinking about how school can support students in achieving grade-level proficiency in writing.
- Ask if there are any questions before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

Encourage your participants to dig into the research literature establishing a case for grade-level reading and writing and their connection to college and career readiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You may want to have copies of Graham’s white paper available for participants’ follow-up study.

## Investigating One Student's Writing Experience (Slide 5)

**Investigating One Student's Writing Experience**

What can we **infer** about this student's writing abilities?

- ✓ Understands how to use **evidence** from text sources
- ✓ Understands how to **introduce and develop a topic** in a compelling fashion
- ✓ Understands how to **link ideas across texts**
- ✓ Understands how to use **precise language** and employ **conventions of Standard English**

Student Writing Sample

How do we make it possible for all our students to demonstrate sophisticated, grade-level writing skills?

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### Critical Point

Close examination of a student writing sample from Appendix C of the CCSS reveals that students can be supported to employ sophisticated, grade-level writing skills.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute the handout entitled “Student Writing Sample.” Before participants begin reading, inform participants that this 5<sup>th</sup>-grade writing sample is drawn from Appendix C of the CCSS, which includes a number of additional student writing samples that may inform and support instructional planning.
- Direct participants to take three to five minutes to conduct a close reading (see Words of Wisdom below) of this piece and facilitate the following activity:

- When participants are done reading, engage them in an analysis of the student writing sample. Ask them: “What can we infer about this student's writing abilities?”

- In small groups of two or three, ask participants to spend five minutes to identify some specific writing skills this student demonstrates in his or her writing.
  - Next, engage participants in a three-minute group conversation so they can share their analyses of the student writing sample. Record the various responses on chart paper and affirm or clarify thinking when appropriate.
  - Follow up the group conversation by clicking through the slide to reveal the four bullets, which identify specific CCSS writing skills. (You don't need to identify the specific standards yet; there will be opportunities during this module for explicit identification of the CCSS in action.) If participants have not already identified some of the CCSS-specific skills, refer back to the text to help participants make the connection between the slide and the text.
  - Compare and contrast these bullets with the points participants made during the previous group discussion. Leverage any spontaneous “ah ha” moments that may come from this activity in order to strengthen participants' understanding.
- Click to reveal the last section of slide text and ask this question rhetorically: “So, the question is: how do we make it possible for all our students to demonstrate sophisticated, grade-level writing skills?” Ask participants to reflect silently on that question; give them 30 seconds of quiet time.
  - Explain that the group will now investigate the implications of the CCSS for writing instruction that can make it possible for all students to demonstrate proficient grade-level academic writing skill.

### Words of Wisdom

If participants are unfamiliar with the term “close reading,” explain that it is an activity explicitly required by Anchor Reading Standard 1 and is discussed at length in Aspen’s “Tools for Teachers: Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions” module and “A Primer on Close Reading of Text”, both of which can be accessed at [www.AspenDRL.org](http://www.AspenDRL.org).

### Why Key Design Considerations Matter

Key design considerations of the CCSS have important implications for **writing instruction** that can contribute to the development of all students' **grade-level writing proficiency**:

1. A school-wide approach to writing instruction **integrates the CCSS** for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language **in all grades**.
2. Daily writing instruction is a **shared responsibility across the curriculum** to ensure students can communicate understanding effectively across a **variety of subjects** and for a **variety of purposes**.
3. **Research is woven through the CCSS** to ensure that students develop the abilities "to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas" that are essential for "college, workforce training, and life in a technological society." (CCSS, p. 4)

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### Critical Point

Key design considerations of the CCSS have important implications for writing instruction that can contribute to the development of all students' grade-level writing proficiency.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the writers of the CCSS intentionally designed the standards to ensure that all students are engaged in frequent opportunities to develop grade-level writing proficiency. The Key Design Considerations of the CCSS, which can be found on page 4 the introduction to the standards, lay out three specific considerations with important implications for teachers' writing instruction:

1. *A school-wide approach to writing instruction **integrates the CCSS** for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language **in all grades**.*
  2. *Daily writing instruction is a **shared responsibility across the curriculum** to ensure students can communicate understanding effectively across a **variety of subjects** and for a **variety of purposes**.*
  3. ***Research is woven through the CCSS** to ensure that students develop the abilities "to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas" that are essential for "college, workforce training, and life in a technological society" (CCSS, p. 4).*
- As facilitator, you might choose to have participants read page 4 from the CCSS that lists the Key Design Considerations. The three considerations discussed on this slide implicate writing instruction most directly and should be deeply understood by all educators. Review and clarify the slide as necessary to ensure that participants' understanding is clear.
  - In small groups, ask participants to take four minutes to discuss the three key design considerations and the extent to which they compare and contrast with typical writing instruction in their own classroom and at their school. Ask participants to chart their reflections so they can reference the current state of their writing instruction throughout the rest of the session. The point here is to help participants begin to appreciate the magnitude of the shift in instruction that is likely to be required in their context as the CCSS for writing are implemented.
  - Summarize the conversation and pose clarifying questions to check for understanding.

### Words of Wisdom

Structure facilitation of this slide to generate as much interest in and excitement as possible around the notion of CCSS-aligned writing instruction, which might be quite foreign to any number of educators. Speak with clarity, authority, and passion about the need for academic writing at each grade level and the shared nature of an effective approach to CCSS writing instruction.

## Why Research and Research Projects Matter (Slide 7)

### Why Research and Research Projects Matter

Reading and writing are explicitly **integrated** in the CCSS. (CCSS, p. 18). As such, **students in all grades K-12** are expected to read and comprehend grade-level complex texts and then draw upon those texts to support **writing** in the context of **research projects to build and present knowledge**:

- ✓ *Conduct short and sustained research projects* (Anchor Writing Standard 7)
- ✓ *Gather and use relevant information from multiple print and digital sources and assess their credibility* (Anchor Writing Standard 8)
- ✓ *Draw relevant evidence from literary and informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research* (Anchor Writing Standard 9)

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### Critical Point

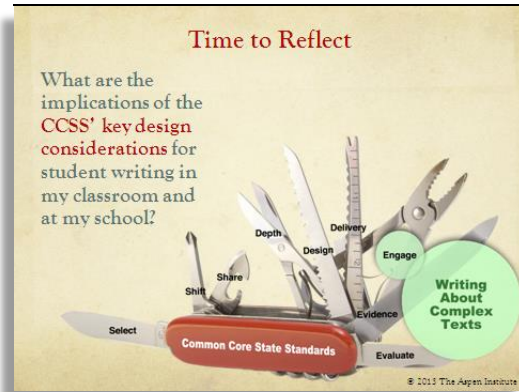
Reading and writing are explicitly integrated in the CCSS. As such, students in all grades K-12 are expected to read and comprehend grade-level complex texts and then draw upon those texts, as well as other relevant sources, to support writing in the context of research projects to build and present knowledge.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that CCSS expectations for reading and writing are explicitly integrated. In order to meet the demands and expectations of the CCSS for writing, students are required to write about what they read, especially in the context of both short and sustained research projects. Remind participants that research is one of the CCSS' key design considerations to ensure that students are frequently writing about what they read in all grades and across the curriculum.
- Stress that all teachers are therefore expected to teach research and support student learning through regular research projects because the CCSS envision that students will build deep content knowledge across a variety of subjects and develop the capacity to present what they know and understand by engaging in research and research projects.
- Engage participants in a brief review of Anchor Writing Standards 7-9 (CCSS, p. 18), which focus on research to build and present knowledge, in order to show how the standards are integrated to support research. Quickly read the paraphrased language for each standard as you click through the slide:
  - *Conduct short and sustained research projects* (Anchor Writing Standard 7)
  - *Gather and use relevant information from multiple print and digital sources and assess their credibility* (Anchor Writing Standard 8)
  - *Draw relevant evidence from literary and informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research* (Anchor Writing Standard 9)
- Ask participants to pay particular attention to Anchor Reading Standard 9, where the connection between reading and writing is most explicit in the standards. Follow up as necessary if participants are challenged to make the link between CCSS reading demands and expectations related to writing.
- Direct participants to spend four minutes in small groups to compare and contrast how they think Anchor Writing Standards 7-9 might affect their instruction.
- Solicit two or three volunteers from small groups to share their group's reflections on the instructional implications of the CCSS research standards.
- Pose clarifying questions to check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

Before moving to the next slide, be sure that participants have grasped the importance of research and research projects to CCSS-aligned writing instruction in every classroom, in all grades, and across the curriculum.



## Critical Point

Educators have the power to ensure that all students experience truly CCSS-aligned writing instruction—and have the opportunity to develop their grade-level academic writing skills—when they attend to the key design considerations of the CCSS.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that at the end of each portion of the session, they will have an opportunity to reflect on what they've learned. It's now time to reflect on the implications for participants' classroom writing instruction of the CCSS' key design considerations.
- Ask participants to discuss in small groups or pairs what they have learned about the key design considerations, and particularly about the importance of research and research projects in all grades and across the curriculum. Questions for participants to consider include:
  - *What are the implications of the CCSS' key design considerations for student writing in my classroom and at my school?*
  - *What are some specific actions I can take to ensure that writing instruction in my class aligns to the demands and expectations of CCSS? What might be some barriers to taking such action? How will I overcome them?*
  - *What kind of school-based leadership and extra supports will I need to align my writing instruction to the demands and expectations of the CCSS?*
- Close this portion of the module by engaging the whole group in a modified "Final Word" protocol:
  - Ask each small group to summarize its major takeaways in three sentences or less.
  - Small groups should chart their takeaways and choose a volunteer to share their "final word."
  - Facilitators should record participants' answers to refer back to them as necessary in order to help them make critical connections throughout this professional learning experience.
- Solicit a couple volunteers to synthesize the discussion and bring the reflection to a close.

## Words of Wisdom

Reflection time is critically important to consolidating new learning. Be sure to provide participants sufficient time to reflect on their learning, including reflection on their hopes, fears, and thoughts about engaging in this important work. Moreover, participants' responses are valuable data. Be sure to track their learning over the course of the session to help participants make important connections and seize on critical "ah ha" moments.

# CCSS Writing Types

## Notes on Slides 9-19

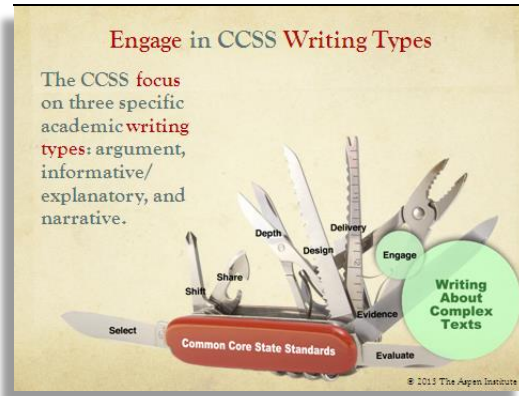
As stated in the introduction to the CCSS:

*The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives (p. 8).*

This section of the module introduces participants to the three CCSS “academic” writing types: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing. For each writing type, resources are provided to support participants’ exploration and analysis. Attention is paid to what distinguishes each writing type and what Anchor Writing Standards 1-3 require of students in terms of the scope, purpose, and style of their writing.

It’s important to stress that the three CCSS writing types do not exist in isolation and each has many overlapping objectives in order to support the integration of multiple writing types within student writing. During their exploration of writing types, participants will come to understand that as students move across grades, the level of complexity and sophistication of their writing will increase, as will opportunities to integrate writing types, such that they discover through their writing a personal voice, style, and approach to demonstrating their knowledge and skill.

Finally, be sure to note for participants as appropriate that **the three CCSS writing types do not apply to all forms of creative writing that students may produce**, “such as many types of poetry” (CCSS Appendix A, p. 23). As such, all students’ writing, whether of the academic or creative type, should nonetheless be developed and supported in the context of a comprehensive, school-wide approach to literacy development.



### Critical Point

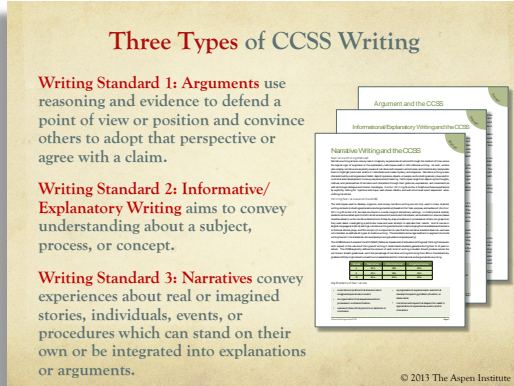
The CCSS focus on three specific academic writing types: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain that the session now turns to an exploration of three academic writing types defined by the CCSS—argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative—as essential for college and career readiness.
- Stress for participants that **the three CCSS writing types do not apply to all forms of creative writing that students may produce**, such as many types of poetry (see Notes above). As such, all students’ writing, whether of the academic or creative type, should nonetheless be supported in the context of a comprehensive, school-wide approach to literacy development; indeed, instruction related to creative writing should be as intentionally planned and designed as that related to academic writing. This module, however, focuses exclusively on the three CCSS academic writing types.
- Before moving on, acknowledge that there is great diversity in how educators define and talk about writing, including notions of types, genres, and modes. Inform participants that for clarity, the “Tools for Teachers” modules adopt the precise language of the CCSS and speak to “writing types.”
- Ensure any participant’s questions are answered before advancing to the next slide.

### Words of Wisdom

There may be some controversy among educators regarding the terminology the CCSS employ to define writing related to the standards. Encourage participants to employ the language of the CCSS—and to read and study the standards and related appendices—in order to help create a shared understanding of the demands and expectations therein.



**Three Types of CCSS Writing**

**Writing Standard 1: Arguments** use reasoning and evidence to defend a point of view or position and convince others to adopt that perspective or agree with a claim.

**Writing Standard 2: Informative/Explanatory Writing** aims to convey understanding about a subject, process, or concept.

**Writing Standard 3: Narratives** convey experiences about real or imagined stories, individuals, events, or procedures which can stand on their own or be integrated into explanations or arguments.

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The slide also features three overlapping document thumbnails: 'Argument and the CCSS', 'Informative/Explanatory Writing and the CCSS', and 'Narrative Writing and the CCSS'.

### Critical Point

Students are expected to engage in three types of writing per the CCSS: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing. Each are defined in the context of Anchor Writing Standards 1-3.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain that the CCSS require students to engage in three specific writing types: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing, which are defined by Anchor Writing Standards 1-3 and their related sub-standards. Remind participants that all Anchor Writing Standards 1-10 apply to students in all grades K-12.
- Review each Anchor Writing Standard 1-3 with participants as stated on the slide. Explain that each writing type implies a specific purpose; it's critical that educators understand the distinct purposes implied by each writing type in order to design effective instruction.
- Be sure to stress the final point made relative to narrative writing: that narrative can stand on its own or can also be integrated with the other two writing types. It's important that participants understand that the writing types do not exist in isolation and can be integrated according to task and purpose, including arguments and informative/explanatory writing.
- Should questions arise as to whether the three CCSS writing types encompass the totality of the academic writing that students are expected to produce, explain that the CCSS identify the writing types that are foundational to college and career readiness. When engaging in academic writing, students should be supported to meet writing expectations as defined by the CCSS.
- Before moving on, ask if there are any questions, or pose some questions to help participants synthesize their thoughts.

### Words of Wisdom


There may be a need to spend additional time helping participants think through the shifts in understanding that may be prompted by their exploration of the three CCSS writing types. It's important that participants have time and space to process new terms and definitions and how might they apply to their instructional process.



**Why “Argument” Matters**

**Argument** is the ability to support a claim using valid reasoning based on relevant and sufficient evidence. Well-crafted argumentative writing is an expression of rigorous analysis and critical thinking. To support a claim effectively, a writer must:

- identify and extract relevant and sufficient evidence from credible primary and secondary sources;
- develop a logical and reasoned analysis based on evidence;
- acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of counterclaims (7-12).



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**Critical Point**

Through argumentative writing, students develop the ability to support a claim using valid reasoning based on relevant and sufficient evidence drawn from text.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Argument and the CCSS”. Explain that this handout, as well as all other resources shared throughout this session, is a tool that they can use to support their study and use of the CCSS to plan and deliver well-aligned instruction.
- Ask participants to take about seven minutes to read the handout. Answer any and all questions that arise about the content of the handout.

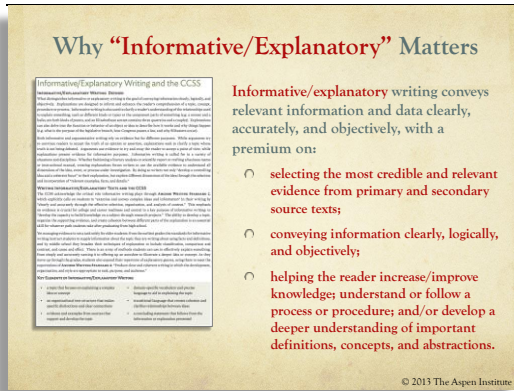
● Explain that argument (Anchor Writing Standard 1) is the ability to support a claim using valid reasoning based on relevant and sufficient evidence drawn from text. Participants should also understand that well-crafted argumentative writing can be understood as an expression of rigorous analysis and critical thinking, including the ability to:

- *Identify and extract relevant and sufficient evidence from credible primary and secondary sources;*
- *Develop a logical and reasoned analysis based on evidence; and*
- *Acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of counterclaims.*
- Highlight for participants that in grades 7 and 8, Anchor Writing Standard 1 requires students to acknowledge “alternate or opposing claims,” which is, for all intents and purposes, a synonym to “counterclaims” as used in Anchor Writing Standard 1 in grade 9-12. Expectations related to counterclaims do not play a role in CCSS writing in grades K-6.
- In small groups, ask participants to take 10 minutes to write about and then discuss what differentiates argument, as defined by the CCSS, from persuasive writing. Guide their small group work with the following questions:
  - *How is argumentative writing different from persuasive writing as defined by the CCSS?*
  - *How is argumentative writing related to college and career readiness?*
- Engage participants in a brief, whole-group discussion allowing them to share their writing and reflections on argumentative writing, how it’s different from persuasive writing, and how argumentation is related to college and career readiness.
- Solicit two volunteers to synthesize the group’s learning before advancing to the next slide.

**Words of Wisdom**

Be sure to spend sufficient time over the next two slides for participants to appreciate what distinguishes each of the three CCSS writing types as well as their connection to college and career readiness.

# Why “Informative/Explanatory” Matters (Slide 12)



## Critical Point

Through informative/explanatory writing, students learn to convey relevant information and data clearly, logically, and objectively.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Informative/Explanatory Writing and the CCSS”.
- Ask participants to take about five minutes to read the handout. Answer any and all questions that arise

about the content of the handout.

- Reinforce participants’ understanding of Anchor Writing Standard 2 by explaining that through informative/explanatory writing, students learn how to:
  - *select the most credible and relevant evidence from primary and secondary source texts;*
  - *convey information clearly, logically; and objectively; and*
  - *help the reader increase/improve knowledge; understand or follow a process or procedure; and/or develop a deeper understanding of important definitions, concepts, and abstractions.*
- Stress the role that logic and objectivity play in informative/explanatory writing. Help participants make the link between college and career readiness and the ability to write logically and objectively.
- Engage participants in an eight-minute “quick write” and whole-group discussion on the role and informative/explanatory writing already play in their instruction. Ask them write their reflections on the following questions:
  - *How is logical and objective informative/explanatory writing related to college and career readiness?*
  - *What percentage of the writing you require of students do you estimate could be called informative/explanatory?*
- Record participants’ various answers to the second question on chart paper and explain that you’ll pick that conversation back up in just a few minutes.
- Solicit a couple volunteers to synthesize learning related to Anchor Writing Standard 2 before moving on.


## Words of Wisdom

Remind participants that they can use the various handouts that will be distributed in the course of this module to support CCSS implementation and for informative/explanatory purposes when explaining the CCSS to parents, students, and other community members.

**Why “Narrative” Matters**

**Narrative** writing – storytelling – conveys emotion and experience, either real or imaginary, in the form of creative stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies, among other genres, providing:

- evocative details of scenes, places, people, objects, and actions;
- insight into character, personality, and motive through dialogue or monologue;
- models of events through deliberate pacing to convey significance.



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## Critical Point

Through narrative writing – storytelling – students learn to convey emotion and experience, either real or imaginary, in the form of creative stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies, among other genres.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Narrative Writing and the CCSS”.
- Ask participants to take about five minutes to read the handout. Answer any and all questions that arise about the content of the handout.
- Reinforce participants’ understanding of Anchor Writing Standard 3 by explaining that through narrative writing, students learn how to convey:
  - *evocative details of scenes, places, people, objects, and actions;*
  - *insight into character, personality, and motive through dialogue or monologue; and*
  - *models of events through deliberate pacing to convey significance.*
- Draw participants’ attention to the table on the handout referring to the balance of writing across grade levels.
- Be sure to highlight how the CCSS acknowledge the importance of narrative writing at every grade level, along with the other two writing types, as part and parcel of faithful implementation of the CCSS.
- Remind participants of the point made in the handout that the CCSS are not designed to encompass all types of creative writing, and schools, districts, and states are responsible for augmenting curricula when appropriate to support different writing products (i.e. poetry).
- Ask participants to take five minutes for a small group discussion in which they compare and contrast the balance of writing required by the CCSS and that typically experienced by students in their classroom and at their school. (Connect this discussion to the second question you posed when working with the previous slide.)
- Close this piece by giving participants four minutes to summarize in writing their learning relative to “narrative.”

## Words of Wisdom

Ensure participants understand that Anchor Writing Standard 3 related to narrative writing does not encompass all forms of creative writing that may be produced by students.

## The Special Place of Argument in the CCSS (Slide 14)

### The Special Place of Argument in the CCSS

“While all three text types are important, the Standards put particular emphasis on students’ ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness.”

CCSS Appendix A, p. 24

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### Critical Point

“While all three text types are important, the Standards put particular emphasis on students’ ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness.” (CCSS Appendix A, p. 24)

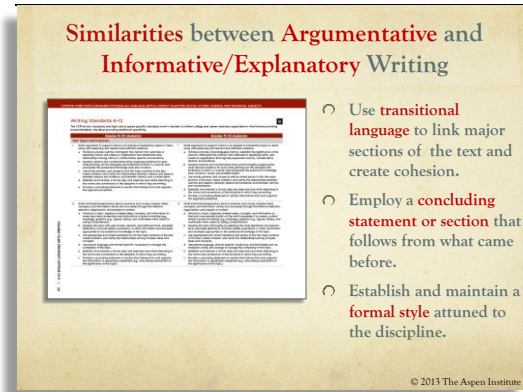
### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that now that they’ve had an opportunity to explore the three CCSS writing types, it’s important to consider another significant design consideration of the writing standards, and that is the special place of argument in the CCSS.
- Read aloud the quote from page 24 of CCSS Appendix A:
  - *“While all three text types are important, the Standards put particular emphasis on students’ ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness.”*
- Explain that in creating the CCSS, the standards writers were very deliberate in their construction of the argumentative writing standard because of the role that argument plays in post-secondary success. Research supports the notion that argumentative writing is a primary writing activity in college, as students must often make claims and then demonstrate in writing their reasoning through the judicious use of evidence, which justifies its prominent placement in the CCSS.
- You may want to encourage participants to read pages 24-25 in CCSS Appendix A to explore further the treatment that argument receives in the CCSS and the research undergirding that design consideration.
- Now explain that given argument’s importance in the CCSS for writing, the group will engage in a deeper exploration of Anchor Writing Standard 1 through a series of activities that can also provide a model for subsequent exploration of informative/explanatory and/or narrative writing.
- Check for understanding and solicit two or three volunteers to share their reflections on this slide before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

For participants who are new to deep study of the CCSS, facilitators are strongly encouraged to have copies for participants of pages 24-25 of CCSS Appendix A on the special place of argument. Indeed, it is critical that educators are familiar with both the language of the standards and the related appendices as well as the research that undergirds key design considerations of the CCSS. Facilitators and participants are also encouraged to read George Hillocks’ helpful book, *Teaching Argument Writing, Grade 6-12: Supporting Claims with Relevant Evidence and Clear Reasoning* (Heinemann, 2011).

## Similarities between Argumentative and Informative/Explanatory Writing (Slide 15)



### Critical Point

Understanding the similarities between argumentative and informative/explanatory writing is helpful to appreciating the distinctions between the two writing types as described by the CCSS.

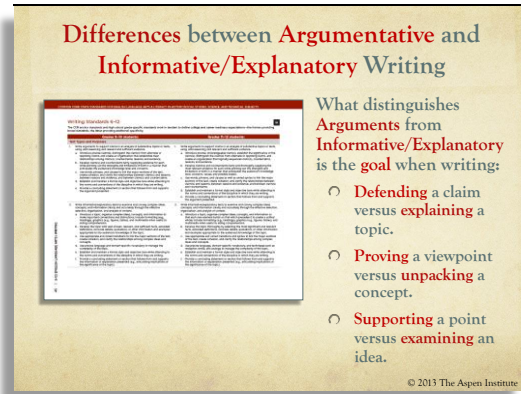
### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that in order to really dig into argumentation, it is helpful to understand the similarities between argumentative and informative/explanatory writing in order to appreciate the distinctions between the two writing types as described by the CCSS.
- Distribute to participants the copy of page 45 of the CCSS that include the high school standards for argumentative and informative/explanatory writing.
- In small groups, ask participants to spend four minutes reading through the standards and identify the various similarities in expectations between the two writing types. Circulate the room to support participants as necessary.
- Bring the group together and solicit responses from the group. Require volunteers to draw the group back to the CCSS to justify their claim. Highlight for participants the three key similarities between the argumentative and informative/explanatory writing as necessary:
  - *Use transitional language to link major sections of the text and create cohesion. (W1c & W2c)*
  - *Employ a concluding statement or section that follows from what came before. (W1e & W2f)*
  - *Establish and maintain a formal style attuned to the discipline. (W1d & W2e)*
- Ensure that there is clarity about how the writing types are similar, particularly for non-ELA teachers who may be inexperienced in academic writing instruction.
- Solicit a couple volunteers to synthesize learning related to the similarities between argumentative and informative/explanatory writing before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

If working with educators who are less familiar with the CCSS, facilitators are encouraged to have full copies of the CCSS available for review and investigation. Do not assume that participants know more than they know about the CCSS and provide all appropriate scaffolds to support professional learning.

## Differences between Argumentative and Informative/Explanatory Writing (Slide 16)



### Critical Point

What distinguishes argumentative from informative/explanatory writing is the goal when writing.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Ask participants to return now to page 45 of the CCSS that include the high school expectations for argumentative and informative/explanatory writing.
- In small groups, ask participants to spend four minutes reading through the standards and identify the primary differences between the two writing types. Circulate the room to support participants as necessary.
- Bring the group together and solicit responses from the group. Require volunteers to draw the larger group back to the CCSS in order to justify their claim.
- If clarification is necessary, explain to participants that beyond the similarities between argumentative and informative/explanatory writing, what distinguishes the two writing types is the goal when writing, for instance:
  - Defending a claim versus explaining a topic.
  - Proving a viewpoint versus unpacking a concept.
  - Supporting a point versus examining an idea.
- After participants have a chance to read the slide, ask them to discuss in small groups how the goal of writing is what distinguishes argumentative from informative/explanatory (referred back to the red-highlighted verbs on the slide if necessary). Allow three minutes for discussion.
- Solicit several volunteers to share takeaways from their small groups and clarifying any misunderstandings before moving on.

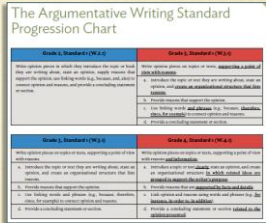
### Words of Wisdom

Helping participants understand what distinguished argumentative and informative/explanatory writing will help them explain the CCSS effectively to their students and design CCSS-aligned instructional experiences.

## Argumentative Writing and the CCSS: Progression Chart Grades 2-12 (Slide 17)

Argumentative Writing and the CCSS:  
Progression Chart Grades 2-12

Looking at the evolution of the expectations for argumentative writing across the grade levels reveals crucial insights into how the expectations change regarding framing and supporting a position.



The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart is a table showing the progression of writing standards from Grade 2 to Grade 12. It is organized into four quadrants: Grade 2 (top-left), Grade 4 (top-right), Grade 6 (bottom-left), and Grade 8 (bottom-right). Each quadrant contains a list of standards and their descriptions, showing how the requirements for argumentative writing become more complex and rigorous as the grade level increases.

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### Critical Point

Looking at the evolution of the expectations for argumentative writing across the grade levels reveals crucial insights into how the expectations change regarding framing and supporting a position.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart.”
- Introduce the handout by explaining that a key feature of the argumentative writing standard is how expectations evolve across grade levels regarding how argumentation is framed and how students are expected to support their arguments. Analyzing Anchor Writing Standard 1 across the grades can help educators appreciate where key shifts occur in terms of CCSS expectations.
- Ask participants to spend 10 minutes reviewing and discussing the progression chart in small groups. Guide their discussions with the following questions:
  - *In which grade levels are opinions required of students versus claims and counterclaims?*
  - *What is a formal writing style and when are students required to transition from an informal to a formal writing style?*
  - *What are the implications for instruction of the shifts from opinion to claims and an informal to formal writing style?*
- Engage participants in a brief discussion, either as a whole group or in small groups, during which they share their answers to the prompts above. As participants share out, be sure to draw them back to the text of Anchor Writing Standard 1 in order to confirm or disconfirm assertions as appropriate.
- Advance to slide 17.

### Words of Wisdom

Instead of asking small groups to analyze the progression of Anchor Writing Standard 1 at every grade level, facilitators may divide groups by grade or grade band in order to support a deeper analysis of the evolution of the standard. Note that this activity can also be carried out for both Anchor Writing Standards 2 and 3. The essential point of such an exploration of the standards is to help educators appreciate the dramatic progression of the standards across grade levels and the increasing complexity students are expected to understand and demonstrate through their writing.

**Argumentative Writing: Kinds of Positions**

Argument and the CCSS

**Anchor Writing Standard 1**

Three different kinds of **positions** emerge from the CCSS:

**K-5: Opinions** (“I think Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president of all time.”)

**6-12: Claims** (“Lincoln’s views on slavery evolved over time.”)

**7-8 & 9-12: Claims and counterclaims** (“Though Lincoln eventually freed the slaves, debate continues as to whether he believed freeing every slave was a necessary outcome of the Civil War.”)

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## Critical Point

Three different kinds of positions emerge from the CCSS: **opinions** in grades K-5, **claims** in grades 6-12, and **counterclaims** in grades 7-12.

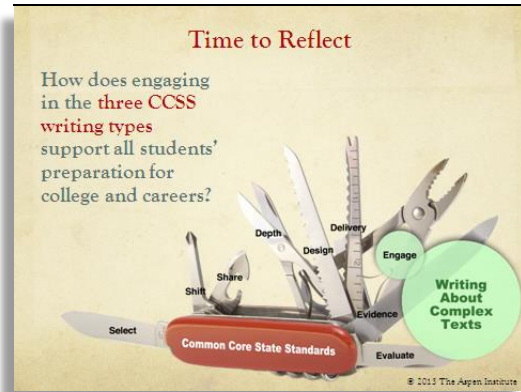
## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Following participants’ analysis of the evolution of the argumentative writing standard, acknowledge that three kinds of positions have emerged from Anchor Writing Standard 1. Solicit three participants to identify one of the three positions.
- In a whole-group discussion, ask participants to share reflections and reactions to each of the following sample positions:
  - **K-5: Opinions:** “I think Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president of all time.”
  - **6-12: Claims:** “Lincoln’s views on slavery evolved over time.”
  - **7-12: Claims and counterclaims:** “Though Lincoln eventually freed the slaves, debate continues as to whether he believed freeing every slave was a necessary outcome of the Civil War.”
- Remind participants that in grades 7 and 8, Anchor Writing Standard 1 requires students to acknowledge “alternate or opposing claims,” which is, for all intents and purposes, a synonym to “counterclaims” as used in Anchor Writing Standard 1 in grade 9-12.
- Help participants understand the relationship between claim-making and establishing a formal style with the shift from opinions to claims between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades by following up with these questions:
  - *What is the relationship between claim-making at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and establishing a formal writing style?*
  - *What are the implications for literacy instruction across the curriculum of the evolution from opinion to claim and a formal writing style?*
- Solicit several volunteers to synthesize the conversation before moving on.

## Words of Wisdom

Help participants draw connections between the kinds of positions that emerge from Anchor Writing Standard 1 and expectations related to style.





## Critical Point

Engaging in the three CCSS writing types at every grade level and across the curriculum can ensure that all students are prepared for the demands and expectations of college and careers.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Ask participants to discuss in small groups what they have learned about the purposes behind each of the three CCSS writing types and their relationship to the demands of the CCSS and prepare for college and careers. Questions for participants to consider include:
  - *How does engaging in the three CCSS writing types support all students' preparation for college and careers?*
  - *What are the implications of the three CCSS writing types for your instructional planning and design process?*
  - *What kind of school-based leadership and extra supports will be necessary to ensure all students engage with the three CCSS writing types across the curriculum in the proportions required by the CCSS?*
- In order to model the kind of critical thinking and discourse that are hallmarks of CCSS-aligned instruction, close this portion of the module by engaging the whole group in a modified “Final Word” protocol:
  - Ask each participant to summarize in writing their major takeaways in three sentences or less.
  - Participants should rejoin their small groups to share out their individual takeaways, after which each small group should synthesize the various takeaways into the group’s “Final Word.”
  - A volunteer from each small group should share his/her group’s “Final Word” with the larger group.
  - Facilitators should record participants’ answers to refer back to them as necessary in order to help them make critical connections throughout this professional learning experience.
- Solicit a couple volunteers to synthesize the discussion and bring the reflection to a close.

## Words of Wisdom

Reflection time is critically important to consolidating new learning. Be sure to provide participants sufficient time to reflect on their learning, including reflection on their hopes, fears, and thoughts about engaging in this important work.

# Engaging with Evidence

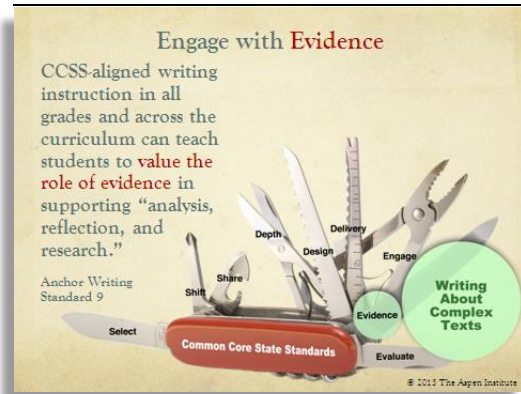
## Notes on Slides 20-32

The role of evidence is a key feature of CCSS reading and writing expectations. Indeed, as noted in the introduction to the CCSS, when students engage effectively with the standards, they come to value evidence:

*Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others' use of evidence (p. 7).*

Engaging effectively with evidence from complex texts is a key college and career readiness skill. This section of the module takes participants on an exploration of the relationship between each CCSS writing type and the role of evidence. Facilitators will lead participants, workshop-style, through multiple sample texts drawn from Appendix B of the CCSS along with aligned sample writing tasks. By exploring text samples and writing tasks, participants will come to appreciate the critical role of evidence in CCSS reading and writing expectations. Moreover, they will appreciate how Anchor Standards 7-9 relating to research and research projects are the explicit bridge between the reading and writing standards.

Finally, facilitators should help participants make the link between the role of evidence and the CCSS' research and research projects expectations and how they reflect the integrated nature of the CCSS. By examining the various texts and sample writing tasks, participants will come to appreciate the role of evidence and its relationship to CCSS-aligned writing instruction both within and across disciplines.



### Critical Point

Routine reading and writing across the curriculum enables students to value the role of evidence in supporting “analysis, reflection, and research.” (Anchor Writing Standard 9)

### Step-by-Step Instructions


- Begin this final section of the module by asking participants on what they’ve gleaned thus far about the role of evidence as it relates to the three CCSS writing types. Encourage them to peruse the textual resources they’ve received during the module to extract evidence about evidence, and follow up with the following questions:
  - *What role does evidence play in supporting the three CCSS writing types?*
  - *What role does evidence play in your literacy-related instruction?*
- Engage participants in a brief, whole-group discussion on their answers to the prompts above.
- Follow up by explaining that when writing instruction is aligned to the CCSS in all grades and across the curriculum, students’ routine use of evidence to justify, explain, and communicate their knowledge and understanding will help them develop a deep appreciation for evidence in what they read and write; indeed, they will come to value the role of evidence in their analyses, reflections, and research. Using evidence, in other words, is essential to meeting the demands and expectations of the CCSS.
- Remind participants of the demands and expectations of Anchor Writing Standards 7-9 on research and research projects, which link reading and writing through the reliance on evidence.
- Summarize the conversation and pose clarifying questions to check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

As participants engage with the handouts they’ve received to extract evidence about evidence, help them see the connection between how the CCSS structure their demands and expectations to how activities have been structured throughout this professional learning experience. Indeed, participants should understand that the best way to learn about CCSS reading and writing expectations is to engage with text in ways the CCSS demand.

**Why Evidence Matters**

- Extracting evidence is the primary activity undergirding all the Anchor Reading Standards.
- Evidence is prioritized in both Argumentative and Informative/Explanatory writing.
- Citing evidence is explicitly cited as the bridge between the reading and writing standards in the CCSS (Anchor Writing Standard 9).



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### Critical Point

Extracting evidence is the primary activity undergirding all the Anchor Reading Standards, is prioritized in argumentative and informative/explanatory writing, and is explicitly cited as the bridge between the reading and writing standards.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Evidence and the CCSS”.
- Ask participants to take five minutes to read the handout. Answer any and all questions that arise about the content of the handout.
- Begin a brief, whole-group discussion by explaining there are three key reasons why evidence matters to meeting CCSS expectations for reading and writing:
  1. *Extracting evidence is the primary activity undergirding all the Anchor Reading Standards.*
  2. *Evidence is prioritized in both argumentative and informative/explanatory writing.*
  3. *Citing evidence is explicitly cited as the bridge between the reading and writing standards in the CCSS (Anchor Writing Standard 9).*
- In small groups, ask participants to consider the implications of the role of evidence in the CCSS by answering the following questions:
  - *What does it mean to say that evidence is the “bridge” between the reading and writing standards?*
  - *What shifts in your instruction will be necessary to ensure that all students engage with evidence in the manner envisioned by the CCSS?*
  - *What implications does the role of evidence have for your school’s approach to implementing CCSS-aligned writing instruction?*
- Ask volunteers from the small groups to share their responses to the prompts above and reflections from the handout.
- Summarize the conversation and pose clarifying questions to check for understanding.

### Words of Wisdom

To reinforce the integrated design of the CCSS, highlight Anchor Speaking & Listening Standard 4: “Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.” Here again, evidence plays an important role that directly relates to the research and research projects required by Anchor Writing Standards 7-9.

# Text-Dependent Questions and Evidence (Slide 22)

**Text-Dependent Questions and Evidence**

Well-crafted and carefully sequenced text-dependent questions can draw the reader back to the text to discover what it claims. By identifying evidence through text-dependent questions, a reader can generate concrete and explicit ideas about claims rooted in the text to support writing.

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## Critical Point

Well-crafted and carefully sequenced text-dependent questions can draw the reader back to the text to discover what it claims as well as help the reader generate concrete and explicit ideas about claims rooted in the text.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Learned Hand, ‘I Am an American Day Address,’” which is identified in Appendix B as within the 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade-band level of text complexity.
- Explain to participants that **in terms of regular classroom instruction**, using well-crafted and carefully sequenced text-dependent questions to support close reading of complex text can help students learn to identify

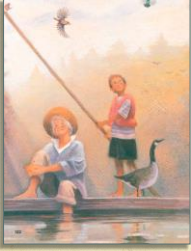
and extract relevant evidence from text. Further explain that text-dependent questions can serve as helpful scaffolds to any number of students, especially when complex texts are especially challenging and/or the content covered is new and unfamiliar.

- For participants unfamiliar with the “Tools for Teacher” series, refer them to Part 2: “Tools for Teachers: Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions,” which supports professional learning on how to craft and use text-dependent questions and questioning techniques to support student comprehension.
- In small groups, ask participants to spend 10 minutes to read the handout and explore the various text-dependent questions on the reserve side. Participants should attempt to answer the questions using evidence from the text. Follow up their discussion with the following questions:
  - *What makes the questions “text-dependent”?*
  - *How do text-dependent questions help student focus on relevant evidence rooted in complex text?*
  - *How do text-dependent questions support student thinking about key ideas derived from complex text?*
  - *What challenges might students encounter in the absence of useful text-dependent questions to support their close reading and research?*
  - *How can you use the model represented by this resource to consider the role and use of text-dependent questions in your own instructional planning and design process?*
- Close discussion of this slide by reminding participants that students reading below grade-level must be especially supported during instruction by well-crafted and carefully sequenced text-dependent questions, which provide effective scaffolds as they develop their disciplinary literacy skills.
- Solicit two volunteers to summarize and synthesize the discussion before moving on.

## Words of Wisdom

Encourage participants to study “Tools for Teachers: Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions” (part two of the series) for additional support related to close reading instruction and the design and use of effective text-dependent questions. All “Tools for Teachers” module can be found here: [www.AspenDRL.org](http://www.AspenDRL.org).

**Argumentative Writing and Evidence**



Argumentative writing requires students to support their position after analyses of claims using **valid reasoning** based on **relevant and sufficient evidence** drawn from the text.

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### Critical Point

Argumentative writing requires students to support their position after analyses of claims using valid reasoning based on relevant and sufficient evidence drawn from complex text.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

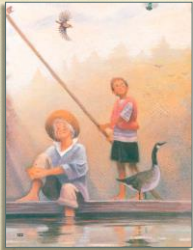
- Explain to participants that the group will now dive into Anchor Writing Standards 1-3 in progression and explore the relationship between each writing type and evidence from text. Further explain that the vehicle for the group's exploration of the role of evidence in CCSS writing will be to examine sample texts and writing tasks aligned to the CCSS. These samples are offered as a starting point for discussion about how to align reading **and** writing expectations in all grades and across the curriculum.
- Recall the earlier discussion related to argument and remind participants that argumentative writing is foundational to college and career readiness and requires students to support their claims using valid reasoning based on relevant and sufficient evidence drawn from text.
- Stress that in terms of argumentative writing, because students are supporting a particular position, they must understand what is meant by "relevant and sufficient evidence" in order to meet the demands of the CCSS. Indeed, students develop their reasoning skills by having to consider what qualifies as relevant and sufficient evidence in order to support their position effectively. Connect this learning to the previous slide and remind participants that through the strategic use of well-crafted and carefully-sequenced text-dependent questions over time, students will come to learn how to identify the evidence that is relevant and sufficient to the task at hand.
- Explain that the group will now consider a sample argumentative writing task in order to see how Anchor Writing Standard 1 might play out during instruction; how task design determines the definition of "relevant and sufficient evidence"; and how the task might be used to assess the level of student understanding.
- Check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

Before delving into the sample argumentative writing task, participants should have the handout entitled "The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart" ready in case additional support is necessary.

## Argumentative Writing and Evidence: Sample Task (Slide 24)

### Argumentative Writing and Evidence: Sample Task



**2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>-grade sample task:**  
While reading LaMarche's *The Raft*, students should note key events and details within the story about what Nicky's grandmother did that made her a "river rat" and how Nicky came to appreciate her world. After introducing their topic, students should share an **opinion** about Nicky and/or his grandmother and support it using **details** they have selected from the text. Successful essays will include **linking words** that connect **reasons** and **evidence** to the opinion as well as convey a sense of **closure**.  
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### Critical Point

This sample argumentative writing task requires students to support an opinion using evidence extracted from the text.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore a literary text sample and an aligned sample argumentative writing **instructional** task—a teaching task as it might appear in a CCSS-aligned lesson plan or unit.
  - Distribute the handout entitled "Evidence in Argumentative Writing," which includes an excerpt from *The Raft* by Jim LaMarche. Appendix B of the CCSS identifies *The Raft* as within the 2-3rd grade-band level of text complexity.
- Ask participants to take 12 minutes to read the sample text.
  - When all participants have completed their reading, read aloud the sample argumentative writing instructional task on Page 4 of the handout or on this slide.
  - In small groups, participants should analyze the sample instructional task and answer the following questions (with suggested responses):
    - *What role does evidence play in the completion of this task and what standard relates to the task?* (Task is related to W.2.2.)
    - *Why are students asked to share an opinion as opposed to a claim? What distinguishes the two positions? In what style can the student's opinion be written?* (No specific style required at this grade band.)
    - *What is the role of "relevant and sufficient evidence"?* (Students must provide "details"; in other words, at least two.)
    - *How does this task's focus on evidence reinforce the CCSS' expectations related to reading?* (Students must extract evidence in order to meet Anchor Writing Standard 1.)
    - Conclude the discussion with this final question: *"How is your understanding of CCSS writing expectations related to argument likely to influence your instructional planning and task development?"*
  - Ask participants to draw evidence from "The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart" handout to support their answers.
  - Conduct a quick whip-around of participants to synthesize and summarize the group's discussion. Check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

As often as possible, have participants refer either to the CCSS directly or to the various resources that have been distributed throughout the course of this module. Doing so will reinforce the role of evidence in CCSS implementation and will help participants make the link between how educators come to appreciate CCSS expectations and the work their students will be expected to do.

## Informative/Explanatory Writing and Evidence: Sample Task

### Evidence in Informative/Explanatory Writing



Plates of geology are connected with the processes occurring on or below the surface of Earth and the materials on which they operate. These processes include volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes, and floods. Materials include rocks, air, water, soils, and sediments. Physical geology further divides into more specific branches, each of which deals with its own part of Earth's materials, including, and processes. Historical and scientific geologists investigate the composition and origin of minerals and rocks. This subdiscipline study how rocks and gases in the atmosphere, and other resources. Some geologists use computers to examine and predict earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

### 6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-grade sample task:

Using the information contained in the encyclopedia entry for geology, **explain** each of the two categories of geology and how they **connect** to create the field of geology. **Use evidence** and **make inferences** based on the passage to **support** your answer.

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## Critical Point

Informative/explanatory writing requires students to extract evidence from text to support and convey a clear, logical, and objective examination of complex ideas and information.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore the role of evidence in informative/explanatory writing.
- Revisit the handout entitled “Informative/Explanatory Writing and the CCSS” and explain that informative/explanatory writing requires students to extract evidence from text to support and convey a clear, logical, and objective examination of complex ideas and information.
- Stress the key importance of logic and objectivity in the context of informative/explanatory writing, especially when students are asked to base inferences, not just information, from evidence in the text.
- Explain that the group will now consider a sample informative/explanatory writing task.
- Check for understanding before moving on.

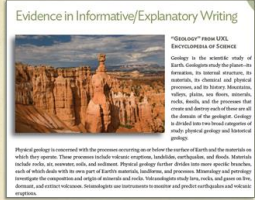
## Words of Wisdom

This section of the module is especially important for any of your participants who hail from non-ELA disciplines like history, social studies, science, and the technical subjects. Encourage them to come prepared with sample writing tasks from their existing instructional units, which they may compare and contrast with the sample tasks provided by this module.



# Informative/Explanatory Writing and Evidence: Sample Task (Slide 26)

**Informative/Explanatory Writing and Evidence: Sample Task**



**6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade sample task:**

Using the information contained in the encyclopedia entry for geology, **explain** each of the two categories of geology and how they **connect** to create the field of geology. Use **evidence** and **make inferences** based on the passage to **support** your answer.

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## Critical Point

This sample informative/explanatory writing task requires students to extract evidence from complex text in order to explain and make inferences that support their answer.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore an informative/explanatory text and an aligned sample writing task. Distribute the handout entitled “Evidence in Informative/Explanatory Writing,” which includes an excerpt from “Geology” from UXL Encyclopedia of Science. Appendix B of the CCSS identifies “Geology” as within the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade-band level of text complexity.
- Ask participants to spend seven minutes reading the sample text.
- When all participants have completed their reading, read aloud the sample informative/explanatory writing task on the handout or on this slide.
- In small groups, ask participants to analyze the sample task, using the following questions as guide:
  - *What role does evidence play in the completion of this task?*
  - *How should students use evidence in order to make inferences, as required by the task and CCSS?*
  - *How does this task compare to informative/explanatory writing tasks you’ve written for students?*
  - *How does this task’s focus on evidence reinforce the CCSS’ expectations related to reading?*
- Click to reveal the red-highlighted words and revisit the earlier discussion about the differences between informative/explanatory and argumentative writing, helping participants to see the clear distinction implied by this task (e.g. “explain” versus “defend”). Have participants refer routinely to the standards to support their discussion points with evidence.
- Solicit volunteers from the small groups to explain their group’s reflections. Check for understanding before moving on.

## Words of Wisdom

Encourage interested participants to explore the informative/explanatory writing standards for additional detail and information on how the complexity of the standards develops over grade levels. This activity may be especially important for teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

### Narrative Writing and Evidence

Narrative writing may involve the **creation of original stories** or call on students to **insert or continue a narrative** that stems from original and authentic sources.

The latter type of narrative writing calls on students to continue a text using **evidence** extracted from and **inferences** based on their reading to create a logical sense of continuity.



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### Critical Point

Narrative writing may involve the creation of original stories or call on students to insert or continue a narrative that stems from original and authentic sources.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore how evidence relates to narrative writing, especially for the purpose of assessment.
- Have a participant read the slide aloud and give the group 15 seconds of silent time to reflect.
- Read the slide aloud once more before opening discussion.
- Engage participants in a three-minute, whole-group discussion to clarify understanding of the points made on the slide. If you anticipate confusion regarding the assessment implications for narrative writing, you are encouraged to refer to PARCC and/or SBAC sample tasks for useful exemplars.
- Encourage participants to revisit the handout entitled “Narrative Writing and the CCSS” if it would be helpful in explaining and clarifying narrative for participants.
- Explain that the group will now consider a sample narrative writing task.
- Check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

To extend the thinking and learning of this professional learning experience, encourage participants to bring sample writing tasks from their own instructional units so they can compare and contrast with the sample writing tasks provided by this module.

## Narrative Writing and Evidence: Sample Task

### 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>-grade sample task:

In the passage, the author used descriptive vocabulary and key details to set the scene and develop a strong character named Sylvia. Think about the adventure Sylvia has begun and the words and images the author used to create a sense of place and Sylvia's character.



Write an **original story** to **continue** where the passage ended, using **precise words**, **telling details**, and **sensory language**. In your story, be sure to use what you have learned about the setting of the story and the **character** Sylvia from your **close reading** of the passage to tell what happens to her next. Use appropriate **narrative techniques** and **transitional language** to **link** your story to what has already happened.

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## Critical Point

This sample narrative writing task requires students to use evidence from a complex text in order to write an original story that continues where the passage ends.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

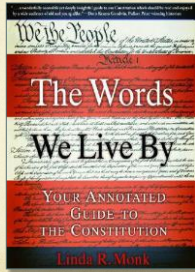
- Distribute to all participants the handout entitled “Evidence in Narrative Writing,” which includes an excerpt from “A White Heron” by Sarah Orne Jewett. Appendix B of the CCSS identifies “A White Heron” as within the 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade-band level of text complexity.
- Ask participants to spend 10 minutes reading the sample text.
- When all participants have completed their reading, read aloud the sample narrative writing task on the reverse side of the handout or on this slide.
- Begin a whole group discussion to analyze the sample task, asking the following questions:
  - *What role does evidence play in the completion of this task? What other standards does a student meet in producing a proficient narrative?*
  - *How does this task compare to narrative writing tasks you’ve written for students?*
  - *How does this task’s focus on evidence reinforce the CCSS’ expectations related to reading?*
- Click to reveal the red-highlight words, which show how tightly connected this task is to the language of the standards. Point out for participants that the task requires students to address the related narrative sub-standards, including using appropriate narrative technique and sensory details in the context of their writing.
- Solicit two volunteers to summarize the conversation. Check for understanding before moving on.

## Words of Wisdom

Encourage interested participants to explore the narrative writing standards for additional detail and information on how the complexity of the standards develops over grade levels.

### Research Projects and Evidence

Research projects are a significant focus of the CCSS: through research students **build** and **present** content knowledge and their **understanding** of the topics they are studying. Research is also the **bridge** between the reading and writing standards.



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### Critical Point

Research projects are a significant focus of the CCSS: through research students build and present content knowledge and their understanding of the topics they are studying. Research is also the bridge between the reading and writing standards and can involve writing within and across the three CCSS writing types.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore the relationship between research projects and evidence.
- Recall the earlier discussion related to research and remind participants that research and research projects at every grade level are key features of the integrated model of literacy envisioned by the CCSS. Research projects, both short and long-form, are important in that in they can involve the integration of multiple texts and writing types; a project is not necessarily limited to any one specific writing type. Through research students build content knowledge, and through research projects they demonstrate the depth of their understanding as well as their writing skill. Research projects unify reading and writing, as required by the CCSS.
- Stress that research (Anchor Writing Standard 9) is the bridge between the complex texts students must read and their writing tasks, and that research projects can involve writing within and across the three CCSS writing types.
- Explain that the group will now consider a sample informative/explanatory research project.
- Check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

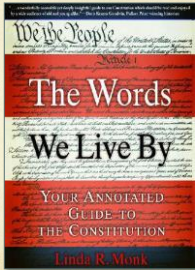
Expend the necessary time to ensure that all participants appreciate the special role that research and research projects play in CCSS writing expectations in all grade levels K-12.

## Research Writing and Evidence: Sample Task (Slide 30)

### Research Projects and Evidence: Sample Task

#### 6<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-grade sample task:

Consider the claims made about the purpose of the Constitution and the source of its legitimacy in the Preamble and Monk's *The Words We Live By*. Write an **essay** that **synthesizes** the pertinent information from **both texts** to **explain** the evolving understanding of who the Constitution applies to. Your essay should demonstrate your understanding of both the Preamble and Monk's interpretation of its opening phrase and use **relevant evidence** drawn from the texts provided to support your **explanation**.



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### Critical Point

This sample informative/explanatory research project requires students to extract evidence from multiple texts and to synthesize pertinent information and relevant evidence in support of an informative/explanatory essay.

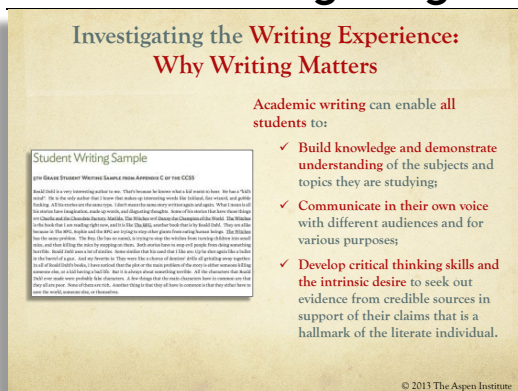
### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that the group will now explore two informative/explanatory text samples and an aligned sample research project task. Distribute the handout entitled “The Preamble to the US Constitution & Monk’s *The Words We Live By*”. Appendix B of the CCSS identifies both informational texts as within the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade-band level of text complexity.
- Ask participants to spend 10 minutes reading the sample texts.
- When all participants have completed their reading, read aloud the sample informative/explanatory research project task on the handout or on this slide.
- In small groups, ask participants to analyze the sample task, using the following questions as guide:
  - *What role does evidence play in the completion of this project? Where is the evidence necessary to complete this project?*
  - *What is different about this task and the previous informative/explanatory writing task that makes it a ‘project’?*
  - *How does this project compare to research tasks you’ve written for students?*
  - *How does this project’s focus on evidence reinforce the CCSS’ expectations related to reading?*
- Stress that research and research projects will call on students to engage with multiple texts, both within and across disciplines. Be sure to help participants make the connection between research and the CCSS’ vision of shared responsibility for implementing an integrated model of literacy.
- Solicit volunteers from the small groups to explain their group’s reflections. Check for understanding before moving on.

### Words of Wisdom

In PARCC and SBAC states, encourage participants to examine the sample assessments and performance tasks posted online if they haven’t already. PARCC prototype assessments can be found here: <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>. SBAC sample assessments can be found here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/>. Furthermore, facilitators should remind participants that in terms of teaching seminal US texts, like the Preamble, implications for curriculum and instruction emerge from the CCSS’ explicit guidance in the reading standards for 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade. This sample project thus serves as a useful demonstration of how the CCSS are integrated and designed to cut across the curriculum.

# Investigating One Student's Writing Experience: Why Writing Matters (Slide 31)



## Critical Point

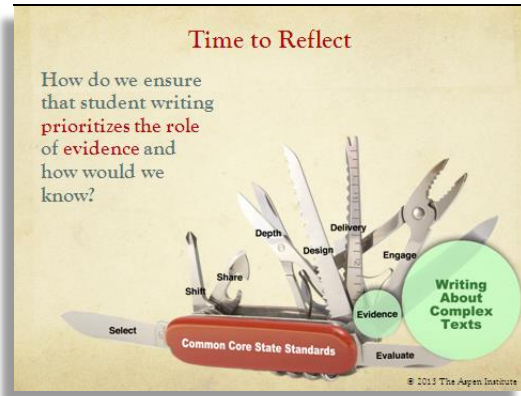
Academic writing can enable all students to build knowledge, demonstrate understanding, communicate in their own voice, and develop critical thinking skills and the intrinsic desire to seek out credible evidence in support of their claims.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that as this professional learning experience comes to a close, it's time to revisit the handout entitled "Student Writing Sample," which the group explored at the very beginning of the session. Remind participants that over the course of the module they have explored:
  - *The importance of the CCSS' key design considerations to effective writing instruction in all grades and across the curriculum.*
  - *The three CCSS writing types.*
  - *The role of evidence as the bridge between CCSS expectations for reading and writing.*
- Explain that in order for students to be most prepared to meet the demands and expectations of the CCSS, they must be supported across all disciplines by instruction that makes explicit connections between what they are reading and what they are writing.
- Ask participants to re-read the student writing sample and open a seven-minute discussion to consider that this student is able to:
  - *Build knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the subjects and topics they are studying.*
  - *Communicate in their own voice with different audiences and for various purposes.*
  - *Develop critical thinking skills and the intrinsic desire to seek out evidence from credible sources in support of their claims that are hallmarks of the literate individual.*
- Close discussion of this slide by asking participants to take five minutes to write their reflection on the following question:
  - *What will it take to ensure that every student in my class and at my school is supported by writing instruction aligned to the demands and expectations of the CCSS?*
- Solicit four volunteers to share their reflections before moving on.

## Words of Wisdom

This is a very important slide. Be sure to help all participants understand that beyond being the explicit expectations of the CCSS, cross-disciplinary academic writing is essential to college and career readiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



### Critical Point

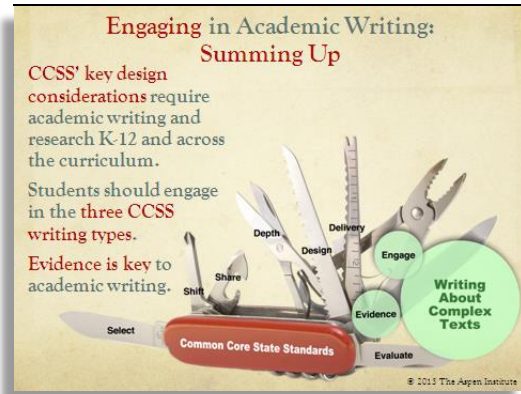
CCSS-aligned writing instruction in all grades and across the curriculum teaches students to value the role of evidence in supporting analysis, reflection, and research.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Ask participants to discuss in small groups what they have learned about the role of evidence to support student reading and writing. Questions to consider include:
  - *What are the implications of CCSS expectations regarding the role of evidence for your instructional planning and design process?*
  - *What are some of the implications of the role of evidence for writing instruction at your school?*
  - *How will you know that students are prioritizing the role of evidence in their reading and writing?*
  - *What will be needed to ensure that all students are supported as writers in all grades and across the curriculum?*
- Close this final section of the presentation by engaging participants in a modified “Final Word” protocol:
  - Ask each participant take four minutes to summarize in writing his/her major takeaways in three sentences or less. The summary will act as their “final word exit ticket” for this professional learning experience.
  - In small groups, participants should share their “final word” on why sharing the role of evidence matters.
- Solicit several volunteers to synthesize the discussion and bring the reflection to a close.

### Words of Wisdom

Reflection time is critically important to consolidating new learning. Be sure to provide participants sufficient time to reflect on their learning, including reflection on their hopes, fears, and thoughts on how to effectively engage in this important work.



### Critical Point

The CCSS requires writing at every grade level and across multiple disciplines aligned to the three CCSS writing types and supported by evidence from text.

### Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain to participants that this is their opportunity to consider how they will integrate the three facets of “Engaging in Academic Writing” into their instructional practice.
- In small groups, ask participants to create a T-chart on poster paper and list their thoughts under two categories:
  - *Areas Where We are Confident We Can Make These Shifts*
  - *Areas Where We Will Need Support*
- Following the small group work, lead a whole-group discussion to help participants achieve a deeper understanding of where participants are confident and where they will need support.
- As a group, identify several strategies for securing the support that the educators will need to change their instructional approach and practice around engaging in academic writing.
- Explain to participants that you will consolidate the reflections and critical understandings that the group achieved during the presentation and share the document with them to support work back at their schools.
- Return to slide 2 and review the session objectives to determine whether participants believe the objectives—and their learning expectations—have been met. Allow time for a final debrief and for participants to share their final takeaways.
- Emphasize the need for collaboration and communication in doing this important work.
- Thank participants for their attention and engagement. Close by distributing the session evaluation.

### Words of Wisdom

Ensure that participants leave the presentation with a strong sense of the main shifts involved in engaging in academic writing.



# Appendix

This section includes the following handouts to be used in conjunction with “Tools for Teachers: Engaging in Academic Writing”:

*Student Writing Sample*

*Argument and the CCSS*

*Informative/Explanatory Writing and the CCSS*

*Narrative Writing and the CCSS*

*CCSS Writing Standards Grades 9-12*

*The Argumentative Writing Standard Progression Chart*

*Evidence and the CCSS*

*Learned Hand, “I Am an American Day Address”*

*Evidence in Argumentative Writing*

*Evidence in Informative/Explanatory Writing*

*Evidence in Narrative Writing*

*The Preamble to the US Constitution & Monk’s The Words We Live By*