

# CONNECTING THE COMMON CORE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND THE GEORGIA GRADE 8 WRITING ASSESSMENT



© 2014

## GRADE 8



*Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent*  
*"Making Education Work for All Georgians"*

## Table of Contents

---

Overview	2
Glossary of Terms	3 – 4
Grade 8 CCGPS Curriculum Map	5
Connecting the Grade 8 Writing Assessment Domains and the CCGPS	6 – 14
Sample Instructional Tasks	15 – 25
Supplemental Materials	26

### Overview

---

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) were fully implemented in Georgia's English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms beginning in August 2012. This resource is intended to make explicit the connections between the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for writing and the current Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment program. The Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment will maintain its current format and rubric utilizing an on-demand prompt that, in the Grade 8 assessment, will be either persuasive or expository. The skills assessed are universal and are required in both GPS and CCGPS: the development of strong controlling ideas, organization, style, sentence fluency, usage, and mechanics. These are elements characteristic of all effective writing rubrics, including those for the Georgia Writing Assessments in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.

By using this guide to focus CCGPS-based instruction in writing on the specific performance aspects of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment, students will be prepared not only to meet expectations on the Grade 8 Writing Assessment but also to successfully transition to future assessments.

While the performance demands and fundamental definition of expository (i.e., informational/explanatory) writing will remain unchanged in the transition from GPS to CCGPS, the persuasive aspect of the assessment will shift towards the more rigorous genre of "argument." In their common use as adjectives, the words "persuasive" and "argumentative" can be synonymous. In English Language Arts, there are subtle but very important differences in these two descriptors. Generally speaking, a persuasive may focus on emotional appeals and appeals to authority, and may not be as significantly based in specific factual evidence. Argumentative essays tend to depend more heavily on the citation of established facts, and so are more text and research-based. Given the increasing staircase of complexity in these two skill sets, it is clear that extemporaneous persuasive writing can serve both as an effective foundational exercise for text-based argumentative writing and as a useful formative assessment for both kinds of writing in this genre. Likewise, extemporaneous expository writing that emphasizes the effective use of anecdotal evidence as well as evidence from background knowledge, experts, and common knowledge is an effective precursor to building a strong exposition based on text. Students who are exposed to an evidence-based writing curriculum in both the argumentative and expository genres will bring more and better evidence from their own background knowledge to the Grade 8 Writing Assessment and will be well-positioned for future writing experiences.

## Glossary of Terms

---

For clarity in all aspects of the writing process we are providing a short compendium of terms as they are defined by the CCGPS:

**Editing** – A part of writing and preparing presentations concerned chiefly with improving the clarity, organization, concision, and correctness of expression relative to task, purpose, and audience; compared to *revising*, a smaller-scale activity often associated with surface aspects of a text; see also *revising*, *rewriting*.

**Evidence** – Facts, figures, details, quotations, or other sources of data and information that provide support for claims or an analysis and that can be evaluated by others; should appear in a form and be derived from a source widely accepted as appropriate to a particular discipline, as in details or quotations from a text in the study of literature and experimental results in the study of science.

**Focused question** – A query narrowly tailored to task, purpose, and audience, as in a research query that is sufficiently precise to allow a student to achieve adequate specificity and depth within the time and format constraints.

**Formal English** – See *Standard English*

**General academic words and phrases** – Vocabulary common to written texts but not commonly a part of speech.

**Independent(ly)** – A student performance done without *scaffolding* from a teacher, other adult, or peer; in the Standards, often paired with *proficient(ly)* to suggest a successful student performance done without *scaffolding*; in the Reading standards, the act of reading a text without scaffolding, as in an assessment.

**More sustained research project** – An investigation intended to address a relatively expansive query using several sources over an extended period of time, as in a few weeks of instructional time.

**Point of view** – Chiefly in literary texts, the narrative point of view (as in first- or third-person narration); more broadly, the position or perspective conveyed or represented by an author, narrator, speaker, or character.

**Print or digital (texts, sources)** – Sometimes added for emphasis to stress that a given standard is particularly likely to be applied to electronic as well as traditional texts; the Standards are generally assumed to apply to both.

**Proficient(ly)** – A student performance that meets the criterion established in the Standards as measured by a teacher or assessment; in the Standards, often paired with *independent(ly)* to suggest a successful student performance done without *scaffolding*; in the Reading standards, the act of reading a text with comprehension; see also *independent(ly)*, *scaffolding*.

**Revising** – A part of writing and preparing presentations concerned chiefly with a reconsideration and reworking of the content of a text relative to task, purpose, and audience; compared to *editing*, a larger-scale activity often associated with the overall content and structure of a text; see also *editing*, *rewriting*.

**Rewriting** – A part of writing and preparing presentations that involves largely or wholly replacing a previous, unsatisfactory effort with a new effort, better aligned to task, purpose, and audience, on the same or a similar topic or theme; compared to *revising*, a larger-scale activity more akin to replacement than refinement; see also *editing*, *revising*.

**Scaffolding** – Temporary guidance or assistance provided to a student by a teacher, another adult, or a more capable peer, enabling the student to perform a task he or she otherwise would not be able to do alone, with the goal of fostering the student's capacity to perform the task on his or her own later on

**Short research project** – An investigation intended to address a narrowly tailored query in a brief period of time, as in a few class periods or a week of instructional time.

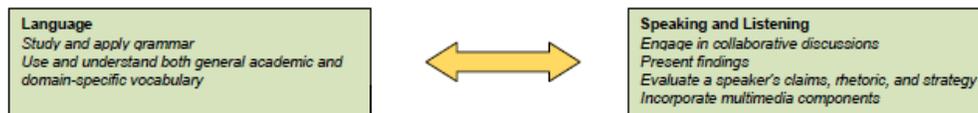
**Source** – A text used largely for informational purposes, as in research.

**Standard English** – In the Standards, the most widely accepted and understood form of expression in English in the United States; used in the Standards to refer to formal English writing and speaking; the particular focus of Language standards 1 and 2.

## Grade 8 CCGPS Curriculum Map

GRADE EIGHT CURRICULUM MAP			
First Nine Weeks	Second Nine Weeks	Third Nine Weeks	Fourth Nine Weeks
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Informational Focus</b>	<b>Literary Focus</b>	<b>Informational Focus</b>	<b>Literary Focus</b>
1 extended informational text 9 thematically connected short texts: 5 short literary texts 4 short informational texts	1 extended literary text 9 thematically connected short texts: 5 short literary texts 4 short informational texts	1 extended literary text 9 thematically connected short texts: 5 short literary texts 4 short informational texts	1 extended literary text 9 thematically connected short texts: 5 short literary texts 4 short informational texts
<b>Writing</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Writing</b>
<b>Informative/Explanatory Focus</b>	<b>Argumentative focus</b>	<b>Argumentative Focus</b>	<b>Informative/Explanatory Focus</b>
4-6 informative/explanatory analysis essays	4-6 argumentative analysis essays	4-6 argumentative analysis essays	4-6 informative/explanatory analysis essays
Research connection Brief or sustained inquiries related to the texts or topics	Research connection Brief or sustained inquiries related to the texts or themes	Research connection Brief or sustained inquiries related to the texts or topics	Research connection Brief or sustained inquiries related to the texts or themes
1-2 narratives to convey experiences	1-2 narratives to convey experiences	1-2 narratives to convey experiences	1-2 narratives to convey experiences
Routine writing Notes, summaries, process journals, and short responses across all genres	Routine writing Notes, summaries, process journals, and short responses across all genres	Routine writing Notes, summaries, process journals, and short responses across all genres	Routine writing Notes, summaries, process journals, and short responses across all genres

EVIDENCE FROM OR REFERENCE TO TEXTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN ALL WRITING



The curriculum map for Grade 8 in CCGPS focuses on informative and explanatory writing in the first nine weeks, and argumentative writing in the second nine weeks, providing focused and in-depth instruction in both skill sets well in advance of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment testing window in January. The curriculum also features the exploration of significant amounts of informational text, scaffolding students' abilities to respond effectively to a wide variety of topics.

The routine writing opportunities and research options may also focus on particular areas in need of remediation (for example, the construction of a solid controlling idea, organization, transitions, sentence fluency, etc.).

## Connecting the Grade 8 Writing Assessment Domains and the CCGPS

The four domains for the Grade 8 Writing Assessment are Ideas, Organization, Style, and Conventions, as described below. The alignments on the following pages illustrate the components that represent a strong meets or exceeds performance in each of these categories and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards that support each of those skills. Note that the development of a strong controlling idea is weighted more heavily in the scoring of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment than any other category.

### Four Domains of Writing

**Domain 1: IDEAS.** The degree to which the writer establishes a controlling idea and elaborates the main points with examples, illustrations, facts, or details that are appropriate to the persuasive genre.

#### Components

- Controlling Idea/Focus
- Supporting Ideas
- Relevance of Detail
- Depth of Development
- Awareness of the Persuasive Purpose
- Sense of Completeness

**Domain 2: ORGANIZATION.** The degree to which the writer's ideas are arranged in a clear order and the overall structure of the response is consistent with the persuasive genre.

#### Components

- Overall Plan
- Introduction/Body/Conclusion
- Sequence of Ideas
- Grouping of Ideas within Paragraphs
- Organizing Strategies Appropriate to Persuasion
- Transitions

**Domain 3: STYLE.** The degree to which the writer controls language to engage the reader.

#### Components

- Word Choice
- Audience Awareness
- Voice
- Sentence Variety

**Domain 4: CONVENTIONS.** The degree to which the writer demonstrates control of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. *Note: In general, sentence formation and usage are weighted more heavily than mechanics in determining the overall conventions score.*

Components:	Sentence Formation	Usage	Mechanics
Elements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correctness</li> <li>• clarity of meaning</li> <li>• complexity</li> <li>• end punctuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subject-verb agreement</li> <li>• standard word forms</li> <li>• verb tenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal punctuation</li> <li>• spelling</li> <li>• paragraph breaks</li> <li>• capitalization</li> </ul>

Scoring Domain	Domain Weight
Ideas	2 x the sum of raters' scores
Organization	1 x the sum of raters' scores
Style	1 x the sum of raters' scores
Conventions	1 x the sum of raters' scores

**ELACC8W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.**

To show the relationship between the CCGPS and the Grade 8 Writing Assessment’s rubric, the following tables show how the goals of each Grade 8 Writing Assessment domain align with the CCGPS.

**PERSUASIVE/ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING**

**\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: IDEAS \*\*\*\*\***

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>The paper contained a fully developed controlling idea that consistently focused on the assigned topic and purpose and addressed all aspects of the assigned task.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</i></p>
<p><b>Supporting ideas were relevant to the topic, genre, and audience and were fully elaborated with logical examples and details.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</i></p>
<p><b>The response fully addressed reader concerns and perspectives. Genre appropriate strategies were used to develop the ideas.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i> <i>ELACC8W1: c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</i></p>

\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: ORGANIZATION \*\*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>The overall organizational plan was appropriate to the assigned topic and genre. Ideas were logically and appropriately sequenced within paragraphs and across parts of the paper.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</i> <i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i></p>
<p><b>The introduction set the stage for the writer's ideas and purpose of the genre [...]</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</i></p>
<p><b>[...] the conclusion provided a sense of closure.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</i></p>
<p><b>Related ideas were grouped logically within paragraphs. Varied and effective transitional elements were used to link all elements of the response.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</i></p>

\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: STYLE \*\*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>Carefully crafted phrases and sentences created a sustained tone. Varied, precise, and engaging language was used throughout the response. Figurative or technical language was used for rhetorical effect.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i>  <i>ELACC8W1: c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</i>  <i>ELACC8L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</i></p>
<p><b>Sustained attention to the audience was demonstrated. An evocative or authoritative voice was used throughout the response.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</i>  <i>b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</i>  <i>d. Establish and maintain a formal style.</i></p>
<p><b>An extensive variety of sentence structures, beginnings and endings were used.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W1: c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</i></p>
<p><b>A variety of genre appropriate strategies engaged the reader.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i></p>

\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: CONVENTIONS \*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>Simple, compound, and complex sentences were clear and correct with correct end punctuation. A variety of coordination and subordination strategies were used. Usage and mechanics were correct in a variety of contexts. Errors were infrequent in all components.</b>                      (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 19)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</i>  <i>ELACC8L2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</i>  <i>ELACC8L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</i>  <i>ELACC8L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</i></p>

**ELACC8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.**

**EXPOSITORY/INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING**

**\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: IDEAS \*\*\*\***

<b>Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide</b>	<b>CCGPS</b>
<p><b>The paper contained a fully developed controlling idea that consistently focused on the assigned topic and purpose and addressed all aspects of the assigned task.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</i></p>
<p><b>Supporting ideas were relevant to the topic, genre, and audience and were fully elaborated with logical examples and details.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</i></p>
<p><b>The response fully addressed reader concerns and perspectives. Genre appropriate strategies were used to develop the ideas.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 16)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i> <i>ELACC8W2: c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i> <i>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</i></p>

\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: ORGANIZATION \*\*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>The overall organizational plan was appropriate to the assigned topic and genre. Ideas were logically and appropriately sequenced within paragraphs and across parts of the paper.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i> <i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i></p>
<p><b>The introduction set the stage for the writer's ideas and purpose of the genre [...]</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</i></p>
<p><b>[...] the conclusion provided a sense of closure.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.</i></p>
<p><b>Related ideas were grouped logically within paragraphs. Varied and effective transitional elements were used to link all elements of the response.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 17)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i></p>

\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: STYLE \*\*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>Carefully crafted phrases and sentences created a sustained tone. Varied, precise, and engaging language was used throughout the response. Figurative or technical language was used for rhetorical effect.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i>  <i>ELACC8W2: c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i>  <i>ELACC8L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</i></p>
<p><b>Sustained attention to the audience was demonstrated. An evocative or authoritative voice was used throughout the response.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</i>  <i>b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</i>  <i>e. Establish and maintain a formal style.</i></p>
<p><b>An extensive variety of sentence structures, beginnings and endings were used.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W2: c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</i></p>
<p><b>A variety of genre appropriate strategies engaged the reader.</b> (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 18)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i></p>

\*\*\*\*\* CCGPS CONNECTIONS: CONVENTIONS \*\*\*\*\*

Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide	CCGPS
<p><b>Simple, compound, and complex sentences were clear and correct with correct end punctuation. A variety of coordination and subordination strategies were used. Usage and mechanics were correct in a variety of contexts. Errors were infrequent in all components.</b>                      (Source: Grade 8 Writing Interpretive Guide 2012, p. 19)</p>	<p><i>ELACC8L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</i>  <i>ELACC8L2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</i>  <i>ELACC8L3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</i>  <i>ELACC8L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</i></p>

These modules are a collection of tasks that use standards-based CCGPS instructional strategies to scaffold student performance using an actual released Georgia Grade Eight Writing Assessment prompt (see “Culminating Assessment” box at the top of the module). Ideally, the final assessment in the module (requiring students to address the released prompt) should emulate the actual time limits and circumstances of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment as closely as possible. The modules may be used consecutively or spread throughout your routine instruction in the weeks leading up to the assessment. For additional resources please visit

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Grade-8-Writing-Assessment.aspx>

<b>CULMINATING ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>Persuasive Writing Topic 8115</b>
<b>Writing Situation</b> A family in your town has decided to donate a large amount of money to a person, charity, or cause. Choose a person, a group, or a charity that you think deserves the money.
<b>Directions for Writing</b> Write a letter to convince the family that your choice should receive the money. Include details about how the person, the group, or the charity would use the donation.
<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What constitutes strong evidence for a claim?</b>
<b>TASK: Examine and deconstruct effective arguments.</b>
<b>Standards:</b> ELACC8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. ELACC8RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. ELACC8RI5: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. ELACC8RI8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. ELACC8W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
<b>Instruction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Model for students the concept of “reverse engineering” an argumentative or persuasive essay (see elements of this process below). Using a straightforward example, model the process.</li><li>• Provide copies of John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Speech (often referred to as the “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You” speech; available online)</li><li>• Have students create a graphic organizer of the speech showing theme, topics of each text section, primary claims, counter-claims, and supporting evidence (provide explicit instruction on</li></ul>

these terms as necessary).

- Identify, through notation, which claims (if any) are unsupported; identify any evidence provided to support individual assertions.
- Identify the nature of the support provided for claims (for example, are anecdotes provided? Facts and statistics? The opinions of experts? Or simply words carefully constructed to make the audience feel emotional?)
- Guide students in a collaborative discussion about which parts of this persuasive piece are opinion or emotion, and which represent research and text-based evidence used by the author.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is text-based evidence/argument different from extemporaneous evidence/persuasion?**

**TASK: Compare and contrast of persuasive techniques.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELACC8RI5: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

ELACC11-12RI6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

ELACC8W7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

ELACC8SL3: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

ELACC8L5: b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

**Instruction:**

- Introduce students to text excerpts from Barbara Kingsolver's Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, and a variety of television or print commercials for fast food restaurants. The Kingsolver book contains a wealth of information on the unhealthy ways in which some of our foods are processed, statistics about the average fat, calories, sodium, and preservative content of many of our foods, the fuel expended to move those foods to non-local environments, etc. Skim or read the book to help students locate 10-20 usable, cited pieces of information that argue against the consumption of large amounts of fast food. For the opposing arguments, a wide variety of fast food commercials are available on YouTube (if YouTube is blocked at your location, download the pieces onto a thumb drive in advance or consult your media specialist) and of course print ads for fast and processed foods are in nearly every mass market periodical.
- Guide students in a discussion about whether they eat fast food very often, which kinds they enjoy or don't enjoy, and what their reasons are for their food choices in this category.
- Watch several of the television commercials (or provide magazine or other print ads) for fast food and have students take notes detailing whether their impressions of the product are positive or negative and the types of appeals they can identify. Do they refer to statistics about heart disease and obesity, or do they just show people having fun?
- Next, have students read a number of excerpts from Kingsolver's book and take notes on their impressions. How do they feel about eating fast food when they read Kingsolver's compiled research and anecdotal evidence about the benefits enjoyed by her family from growing, purchasing locally, and preparing their own food? What types of appeals does she use? Are her claims primarily based on facts, personal stories, opinions, or something else? Which kinds of claims are strongest, most convincing, and which are the most reliable?
- Students may complete a T-Chart or Venn diagram comparing these two images of the fast food industry to facilitate a deep understanding of the aims and strategies of these two different approaches. It is important to understand that not every persuasive text will stoop to the use of

deception or misdirection, but the comparison should serve to highlight the differences in approach.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are the most effective ways to build background knowledge?**

**TASK: Consume information proactively and responsibly.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8W7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

**Instruction:**

- Construct a simple pre-test that will allow students to gauge how informed they are about local, national, and world news, as well as on a variety of topics broadly considered to be "common knowledge." Augment questions such as these with your own questions about current events or fun facts, etc. For example, who is your senator? Who are the current candidates running for office? Is Georgia currently experiencing drought conditions? What is the speed limit on I-285 at Spaghetti Junction? How many continents are there? etc.)
- Have fun discussing the results of these pre-tests, engaging students in establishing an idea of whether or not they feel themselves to be well-informed citizens.
- Broaden this discussion to include sources of information. What sorts of information do students routinely seek out? (Do you check the weather before you come to school? Do you routinely watch the news? Do you listen to news radio? Do you get most of your information from friends?) Make a chart listing the kinds of information your students are interested in and where they go to get that information.
- Challenge students to brainstorm a list of avenues through which they could acquire more and better information about the world around them in their daily lives; from this list cull the sources that are most reliable and appropriate.
- Place students in teams and ask them to commit to consuming information responsibly and proactively over the next week, and come to tutorial or class prepared to compete in teams on their new background knowledge.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is the most important information in a writing prompt?**

**TASK: Deconstruct the prompt.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELACC8RI4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

ELACC8W5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

**Instruction:**

- Place the prompt for this culminating writing task (see above) on chart paper or Smart Board.

- Lead students in a thorough deconstruction of all parts of the prompt so that they thoroughly understand what they will be asked to do in the assessment. For example,

Provides background information. What are the parameters of the topic? What kinds of background knowledge can you use? Notice the key words.

**Writing Situation**

A **family** in **your town** has decided to donate a large amount of money to a **person, charity, or cause**. Choose a person, a group, or a charity that you think **deserves** the money.

*Things to notice: We are talking about your own town, and about a family and not a corporation or institution; these sorts of facts might influence your suggestions. Your response should demonstrate that you are aware of these specific facts and parameters. The context is local (though the donation need not be local), and you are being asked for your **opinion**. Think about the kinds of **support** you can give for that opinion. Do not choose a topic you know very little about. For example you may think juvenile diabetes is a worthy cause, but you may not have any idea how prevalent it is, how it is treated, or what charities exist to battle it. If this is the case, brainstorm another suggestion that you can more effectively support.*

A careful reading of the directions for writing is crucial. Here your audience and purpose are established, helping to establish the tone of your piece. Is this an article for the school newspaper or a letter to the President? (In this case it is a letter written directly to the donating family.)

**Directions for Writing**

Write a **letter** to convince the **family** that **your choice** should receive the money. Include **details** about how the person, the group, or the charity **would use** the donation.

You may receive hints and reminders of things to include.

- Examine the vocabulary of the prompt and share examples of the elements that will be inherent in a good response (use responses from the students' own portfolios or responses to other prompts to avoid having students draw too much from the content of the arguments in model papers on this prompt).
- Provide worksheets and copies of the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment rubrics to students and engage them (in teams, pairs, or whole groups) in determining what they need to work on or be sure to do during the assessment in order to succeed.
- Have students brainstorm a check-list of peer review items for their mock assessment; that is, what should you check your paper for before the final edit to make sure it meets the requirements of the rubric (for example, check sentence fluency to make sure you have employed diverse and interesting sentence construction; check for passive voice; check that all items are backed up by evidence and that evidence is properly cited, etc.).

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is the most effective way to present and organize an argument?**

**TASK: Explore organizational strategies.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

ELACC8W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

ELACC8W5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Instruction:**

- Place 5 or 10 brief argumentative or persuasive writing prompts on a chart or Smart Board for

consideration (very brief outlines of prompts are acceptable for this exercise; for example, “Should the driving age be lowered?” “Are cell phones dangerous when driving?” “Should the United States require 2 years of public service from its young people as some other countries do? etc.).

- Have the students brainstorm some possible responses for each prompt (identifying audience and purpose as well).
- Introduce several of the most basic organizational styles for persuasive writing:
  - Logical
  - Chronological
  - Compare/Contrast
  - Cause/Effect
  - Problem/Solution

(There are several more of these; choose at your discretion and for a good match to the topics you choose.)

- Individually, in groups, or in teams, challenge students to apply the best, most effective organizational strategy to the ideas brainstormed for each topic. For example, if they brainstormed that a lowered driving age would result in more accidents, more crime, and more school absences, they should be able to determine that cause and effect would be the most effective strategy. Likewise, if they brainstormed that the best time to require community service from young people is before college instead of after college, logical or chronological order would seem appropriate.
- After students have made their determinations about optimal organizational styles, ask them to articulate or write their rationales for their choices.

## CULMINATING ASSESSMENT

### Expository Writing Topic 8221

#### Writing Situation

In some countries, students are responsible for the basic cleaning of their school buildings. Fifteen minutes is set aside each day for all students to sweep, dust, and clean their classrooms and hallways. Think about what your class could do to clean the school.

#### Directions for Writing

Write a letter to your teacher explaining your solution for cleaning the school. Provide specific details so that your teacher will understand what your class will do.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What characteristics separate an effective essay from an ineffective one?**

**TASK: Comparison of student writing samples.**

#### Standards:

ELACC8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELACC8RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELACC8RI3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

ELACC8RI5: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

ELACC8RI6: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

#### Instruction:

- Using released writing prompts and student samples from the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment Resource link of the GaDOE website
- <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/WA-Grade-8-Resources.aspx>

have students complete the following activities. The culminating assessment for this module is a student response to the prompt above, so avoid using student samples responding to that particular prompt in this exercise.

- This exercise will be followed by an in-depth rubric study, and is not intended to focus on the rubric. We want students to bring their own common sense conclusions to this exercise. It will be useful for them to compare those to the rubric in the next exercise and see the ways in which the academic language of the rubric aligns with what plainly and simply makes for good, clear writing.
- Provide the prompt from which you pull your writing samples to the students for review. In small groups have them review the rubric and, using skills from the previous module, read and understand the audience, purpose, and parameters of the prompt.
- Purposefully provide student samples of work from varying performance levels (Meets, Does not Meet, Exceeds). Students will read the papers round-robin style within their small groups. Have students, after a single reading, assign a number between 1 and 5 that indicates their initial impression of the paper, with 5 being the best score. Students will not share their scores with each other until all papers have been read.
- Have students compare their initial impressions. Did they agree about which papers were best? Students in each group should defend their assessments of the paper, giving evidence from the work sample that supports their assertion. The group will arrive at a consensus as to which paper is high, which is middling, and which is lowest.
- Students should examine the highest and lowest papers to determine the elements that set them apart. It is not necessary to use the official rubric or even to use academic language in this exercise, but only to identify their perceptions. For example, "This paper didn't seem to make any sense, the ideas didn't flow together." "This paper provided relevant details and facts." "This paper used very simple, boring words and short sentences." "This paper was funny and engaging while making a good point." Ask students to clearly write each of these comments leaving space between them. They will be cut apart in a future task.
- Students should take very complete notes on their analyses of the papers. These will be used to compare to the rubric and performance domains in the next task.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How will my paper be graded and what do the rubric items mean?**

**TASK: Explore and understand the rubric.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

ELACC8RI4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

ELACC8RI7: Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

ELACC8L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

ELACC8L2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**Instruction:**

- In the small groups in which they analyzed model student papers, students will gather with their notes from the previous task.
- Provide students with a copy of the full Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment performance rubric.
- <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/WA-Grade-8-Resources.aspx>
- If you have the resources to make reusable posters of the rubric domains in your media center they can be used.
- Students should use scissors to cut apart their comments from the previous activity. Challenge students to match their comment to the precise rubric domain to which it correlates. For example, the comment "This paper gave many very good pieces of evidence" would correlate to Domain 1:

- Ideas, bullet point 4, descriptor level 5.
- After the matches have been found, ask students to notice which domains they commented on and which they did not. For example, did they notice good organization but tend not to notice the quality of evidence? Did they notice grammar and conventions problems but not notice controlling idea? Students should then determine a score for the paper in the domains they have not previously scored.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are the habits of effective pre-writers and planners?**

**TASK: Learn effective pre-writing strategies.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding in light of the evidence presented.

ELACC8W5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

ELACC8RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Instruction:**

- Engage students in a collaborative discussion about pre-writing and drafting, making notes of their primary points on chart paper or Smart Board. Many students prefer to skip pre-writing and drafting, and may not be convinced of the degree to which their writing can profit from these steps. Use their input to have a discussion about the ways in which pre-writing can make the difference between a Does Not Meet and an Exceeds score.
- Discuss and model the following steps of pre-writing and drafting, providing the positive rationale for each:
  - Before you begin writing, **read the prompt** carefully. Determine your topic, audience and purpose and double check that you have clearly understood your instructions.
  - Begin **brainstorming for your controlling idea**. Some comments that could be made to students: *Make it your practice to always determine more than one possible controlling idea, making a thoughtful choice. Your most obvious first idea may not always be the one you can support most thoroughly or tackle with the most enthusiasm. The one day of your academic career that you take the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment is not the one day you need to be in a big hurry! Why not slow down and use every single advantage you can, including thinking carefully at the front end.*
  - In considering your controlling idea or thesis, **consider all parts of the heavily-weighted "Ideas" domain**:
    - \* **Controlling Idea**
    - \* What kind of **support** for this thesis do you have at your disposal? Can you readily list several facts or pieces of evidence that support your thesis? If not, think again.
    - \* Look at your facts and evidence and think about how **well developed** your essay will be. Are these trivial or irrelevant facts and details or truly meaningful ones?
    - \* **Outline** the points you intend to make, the facts and details that will support each, and the order in which you intend to organize them. (Strongest to weakest? Point by point comparison?) NOTE: when discussing an outline with students, address the "5 paragraph essay" problem. Students should avoid a formulaic essay, striving to write as many paragraphs as are necessary (which may or may not be five) to make a strong paper and not writing within pre-established ideas of the number of paragraphs. Avoid formulaic phrases like "I am going to tell you" or "here are my three reasons."
    - \* Think about how you will **conclude** your paper, using one of the less traditional strategies (that is, do not plan to simply summarize your points).

- Use the input from the students at the beginning of the lesson to address the topic of writing a rough draft. Show effective models of rough drafts that have made the kinds of revisions that improved the paper.
- In pairs or groups, have students make a list of the top ten things one should check a paper for in a timed-writing situation. Have students compare their lists and collaborate to create one list upon which everyone can agree.
- When pre-writing and drafting, always remember to keep a close watch on your time.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: Which method of development works best with your thesis?**

**TASK: Choose the optimal approach for your topic.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

ELACC8SL2: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

ELACC8SL3: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

**Instruction:**

- Aid students in choosing an effective development strategy:
- **Definition** - Defining topics and subjects is particularly important in expository writing. Defining an object is, simply, stating what the particular object is.
- **Description** - Writing which intends to describe a person, place or thing is known as descriptive writing and is a form of expository writing. Description involves giving characteristics - such as how something appears, smells, or the dimensions of an object.
- **Sequence** - This structure is also known as 'process or collection' and is a form of expository writing that is used if the author intends to inform his or her readers by listing the order of steps in a process or listing events in chronological order. Examples of this type of writing are cooking instructions, driving directions and instructions on performing a task. Key words such as "first", "after", "next", "then" and "last" usually signal sequential writing.
- **Classification** - is an organizational strategy in which authors arrange groups of objects or ideas according to a common topic in detail. Placing different objects or ideas in categories is a type of classification.
- **Comparison** - Comparative text shows how two or more subjects are similar or contrasting. This type of structure is often used in determining which is the better of two or more choices.
- **Cause and effect** - Cause and effect writing identifies the reason for something occurring and lists what occurs because of that reason. This is also known as analysis text.
- Provide students with collections of magazines, or allow them to access popular and scholarly articles from Galileo or other appropriate sources via computer lab. As you provide explicit instruction in these concepts, stop and conduct a search for examples of each.
- At the conclusion of this activity, put students into groups to review their choices of samples for each development method, having them debate the merits to come to a group consensus about which pieces belong in which category. Students should consider which types of appeals work best with which types of subject matter. They should also think about which types of appeals they favor and can best use to their advantage.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are some effective strategies for conclusion?**

**TASK: Use interesting conclusion strategies and avoid repeating your points.**

**Standards:**

ELACC8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and

teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ELACC8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

**Instruction:**

- Engage students in a discussion of effective strategies for conclusion. Remind students to avoid old-fashioned, formulaic strategies including repeating the arguments you have just made, or “summing up.”
- Provide students with several high-scoring student work samples from the GaDOE Grade 8 Writing Assessment resource website (see link provided on page 20). White out or cut off the concluding paragraphs to these essays. After studying the following alternative conclusion strategies, have students choose one of them (they can pick from a hat, spin a wheel, etc., but use some system to ensure that they try a variety of the strategies and not just one or two that they find easy and approachable). Alternative ideas for concluding your essay:
  - Call to action (So join your local ASPCA today.)
  - Ask a question (How can you start a recycling program in your own community?)
  - Use parallel structure, repeating an evocative sentence from the opening paragraph
  - “Make them laugh or make them cry.” (America has given me so much. I only hope that someday I can repay these great gifts by serving my country.)
  - Provide ideas for further thought (Once space has been conquered will the world within our consciousness be next?)
  - Connect to a larger theme (Electric cars are just the beginning for the big picture of stopping the consumption of fossil fuels around the world.)

**Additional Expository Practice Prompt:**

**CULMINATING ASSESSMENT**

**Expository Writing Topic 8204**

**Writing Situation**

Celebrities are often considered role models simply because they are famous. Many younger students in your school admire entertainers and athletes. Think about the qualities you look for in a role model.

**Directions for Writing**

In a letter to a younger student, explain what makes a good role model. Include specific details that a younger student would understand.

The following CCGPS integrated sample tasks for writing appear in the Grade 8 Teacher Guidance Document that can be found on the CCGPS ELA page on the GaDOE website <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx>

Each of these tasks is accompanied by a list of Skills and Concepts for students, Suggested Instructional Strategies for teachers, and a list of Vocabulary for Teaching and Learning. The tasks listed here are for teaching argumentative and expository essay writing skills that will scaffold successful performance on the prompts students will encounter on the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment. For more lessons on grammar, conventions, sentence fluency, etc., see the Teacher Guidance Document for the standard you wish to address. These lessons may be used to supplement the modules provided above.

### Sample Task #1

In pairs, have students trade writing portfolios. Students will conduct a review of the collected works of the other student, which may or may not be facilitated by a template steering reviewers towards items for their attention (for example, students may be required to count the number of works in the portfolio, sort by genre or by quality, read at least 3 pieces in their entirety, and choose a favorite for commentary).

#### Grade 8 Writing Assessment Connection

Use this activity or a similar one to have students produce in a paired-peer review style a list of “hits and misses” in their partner’s writing to be put on a short list for remediation in advance of the test.

### Sample Task #2

Writing impassioned arguments on issues of emotional weight is usually easier for students than constructing valid arguments on academic points. To scaffold and support the later, have students practice writing argument-based analysis essays on a text under consideration by the class. Students will carefully read a text and construct an arguable claim based on the author’s use of literary and rhetorical strategies in the piece. For example, one student may argue that Stephen Crane was a very pessimistic author whose dark view of the human cost of war was oppressive, while another may argue that Stephen Crane was a visionary who believed a world without war was possible and that the human capacity to appreciate beauty is undimmed even by the most horrific experiences. Students will use text evidence of the author’s use of elements such as diction, imagery, syntax, and figurative language to support their claim, but will also be required to synthesize the information and form considered opinions about author’s purpose, audience and bias. An extension to the activity can include oral presentation of the arguments and/or debate.

#### Grade 8 Writing Assessment Connection

Use this activity as a way to prepare students to write effectively to a prompt about which they may not have a strong opinion. Here they focus on appeals to evidence and analysis instead of passion and opinion.

**Sample Task #3**

In a text currently under consideration by the class, have students conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the author's use of prose style and sentence structure. A simple analysis can be conducted by taking a sample excerpt of text and conducting a word count and sentence analysis (average words per sentence, average number of sentences per paragraph, numbers of simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentences, and common usages, such as introductory phrases, etc.). Have students use chart paper to identify the quantifiable aspects of the author's style. Students should attempt to articulate the ways in which the author's habits impact the reader and should make a list of habits to emulate.

**Grade 8 Writing Assessment Connection**

This activity addresses the critical components of style and voice.

**Sample Task #4**

Using a poem under consideration by the class that is largely or entirely figurative, have students rewrite the poem using only concrete and literal language. This exercise is not only instructive in determining the impact of figurative language on the reader, but can also be useful in identifying the meaning, theme, audience, and/or purpose of a poem. Students will annotate the poem using evidence from the text and may read aloud both the original and translated versions to hear the difference in musicality and cadence.

**Grade 8 Writing Assessment Connection**

This activity addresses the critical components of style and voice.

## Supplemental Materials

---

For Grade 8 Writing Assessment Resources including:

- Grade 8 Writing Assessment Interpretive Guide
- Grade 8 Writing Assessment Released Topic & Sample Papers
- Test Data/Results

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/WA-Grade-8-Resources.aspx>

For Common Core Initiative Student Writing Samples

[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)