



Common Core State Standards Professional Learning Module Series

English Language Arts: Writing to Inform, Argue, and Analyze Unit 3

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Welcome to Unit 3

Learning From Students' Work and Teachers' Lessons

2 | California Department of Education

Unit 3 Learning Objectives

Throughout and upon completion of Unit 3, you will:

- Explore approaches to learning from and assessing students' work
- Examine strategies for involving students in learning from their work
- Examine lessons that teach and assess writing to inform, argue, and analyze

3 | California Department of Education

Learning from Student Work

Samples of student writing "help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades" (CCSS Initiative, 2012).

- The *CCSS for ELA/Literacy: Appendix C* includes writing samples by grade level organized by narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion/argument.
- Each writing sample is annotated using the language of the Common Core Writing Text Type and Purpose grade level standards.
- The writing samples are intended to serve as illustrations of adequate performance for the identified grade level.

4 | California Department of Education

Analyzing Student Writing Samples

Read a student example of a text type that is difficult for your students to write. Consider the following questions:

- Do the annotations help you target some aspects of the writing that you could focus on that would demystify the writing type for your students?
- Does a specific student sample give you an idea for a writing lesson for which the student writing might serve as a model for your students?
- Do the writing samples help you see how your students' writing compares to what is described as adequate performance?

5 | California Department of Education

Analyzing Student Writing Samples

Assessing Writing to Inform Teaching and Learning

One part of the *Lesson Planning Template* not addressed in Unit 2 was the box titled, "Method(s) for Formative Assessment or Checking for Understanding Along the Way and Plan for Writing Assessment and Feedback."

- For the next section, refer to the *Lesson Planning Template* (Handout 2.1.1b), as well as any of your notes about a lesson you wish to develop for your students.

6 | California Department of Education

Assessing and Annotating Student Work to Inform Instruction

Reflect on assessment tools you have used:

- May include rubrics and scoring guides, used mainly for evaluating or scoring benchmark writing.
- When used by teachers and students to improve teaching and learning, these tools are even more effective.

Consider three assessment tools that inform instruction and ask yourself:

- What is the assessment tool for? In what context is it used?
- How can teachers use the tool to gather and annotate information about students meeting the Writing Text Type standards and also using genre-specific writing features and language?

7 | California Department of Education

“6 Traits Rubrics” for Assessment and Annotation

What is the tool for? In what context is it used?

“The 6+1 Trait® Writing analytical model for assessing and teaching writing is made up of 6+1 key qualities that define strong writing.”

Source: Education Northwest

These qualities are:

- **Ideas:** the main message
- **Organization:** the internal structure of the piece
- **Voice:** the personal tone and flavor of the author's message
- **Word Choice:** the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning
- **Sentence Fluency:** the rhythm and flow of the language
- **Conventions:** the mechanical correctness
- **Presentation:** how the writing actually looks on the page

8 | California Department of Education

6 Traits Rubrics: Early Elementary Example

How can teachers use the tool to gather and annotate information about students meeting Common Core writing text type standards, and also using genre-specific writing features and language?

Kindergarten Example: Kim Holsberry answers this question through the way she assesses and annotates her Kindergarten students' writing:

- District has created grade level adaptations of the 6 Traits Rubrics.
- Students wrote an informative text (a multiple page booklet) using science learning about red eye tree frogs.

9 | California Department of Education

6 Traits Rubrics: Early Elementary Example

Refer to “*Learning From Student Work- Kindergarten*” (Handout 3.1.2a) and notice how the teacher:

- Annotates the writing by addressing each of the six traits to describe what she sees the students doing or attempting in the writing. She does not “score” the writing; instead she annotates how the student writing connects to which trait and at which performance level.
- Notes what she sees in the writing that exemplifies the Kindergarten writing standard for informative writing. Because the traits do not explicitly reference the writing standards, she includes the standard she focused her instruction on as a reminder to connect her annotations to the CCSS.
- Identifies what she will work on next with each student. Through her annotations, she draws on the rubric to name the ways the students can improve the qualities of their informative writing.
- Points toward the Writing Informative/Explanatory Text Type Standards for Grades 1 and 2.

10 | California Department of Education

6 Traits Rubrics Across Grade Levels

To view examples of “6 Traits” or “6+1 Traits” rubrics for use in your own classroom, refer to the following (available on the Education Northwest Web site at <http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/464>)

Kindergarten through Grade 2	Grades 3 through 12
5-Point Beginning Writer's Rubric for K–2	5-Point Writer's Rubric for Grades 3–12
Beginning Writer's Rubric: Illustrated	6-Point Writer's Rubric for Grades 3–12

11 | California Department of Education

6 Traits Rubrics and the CCSS

Education Northwest has created another tool that is helpful for teachers who would like to assess and annotate in the way Kim has. To view this tool:

- Download “*Crosswalk Between 6+1 Traits and CCSS English Language Arts Standards for Writing and Language*,” at http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1252
- The crosswalk helps teachers “assess the quality of the writing outlined in the CCSS and monitor the growth of the student using the Traits rubrics” (Education Northwest, 2013).

12 | California Department of Education

Criteria Charts as Assessment and Teaching Tools

Criteria charts communicate to students exactly what to include in their writing through a four-step development process that encourages student participation, understanding, and ownership.

- Refer to Handout 3.1.2b: “Criteria Charts: What are they and how do we create them?”

What is the tool for? In what context is it used?

- Criteria describe features of a writing genre/assignment.
- Setting the criteria for assignments precedes developing a rubric.
- Variations of criteria become levels of the rubric.
- Teachers can set the criteria *for* or *with* their students.

13 | California Department of Education

Criteria Charts: Upper Elementary Example

How can teachers use the tool to gather and annotate information about students meeting Common Core writing standards and also using genre-specific writing features and language?

Refer to Handout 3.1.2c “Learning From Student Work: Criteria Chart for Opinion Writing (Grade 5)”

- Example works best for grades 2–5 opinion writing, but provides teachers in higher grades a good example of how to develop criteria charts with students that link genre features and the Common Core writing standards.

Grade 5 Example: Teacher scaffolds to support 5th-grade reading intervention students through a series of opinion writing lessons that address the Writing Opinion Text Type standards and features of opinion genres.

- As students increase knowledge of opinion writing, they develop a criteria chart to be used for writing conferences, discussion, and revision.
- Teacher also uses chart to annotate student writing samples.

14 | California Department of Education

Criteria Charts: Upper Elementary Example

Review 5th-grade opinion text type and purpose **Writing Standard 1** (page 17 of the *CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy*):

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.

- *Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.*
- *Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).*
- *Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.*

15 | California Department of Education

Criteria Charts: Upper Elementary Example

Refer to 5th-grade criteria chart (Handout 3.1.2c):

- First page draws on 5th-grade opinion text type and purpose writing standards on the left-hand side.
- Right-hand side of chart uses teacher and student language from classroom discussions and genre feature analyses of opinion writing.
- Annotations describe what the writer has learned and instructional next steps to serve as a guide for a writing conference.
- Discussions with students point toward CCSS argument writing standards for grade six and seven — *counterarguments and conclusions that follow from the arguments and reiterate the stance.*

16 | California Department of Education

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

Editorial Rubric and Criteria Chart for Informational/Argument Writing
Review Handout 3.1.2d: “Learning from Student Work: Writing an Editorial”

- Teacher uses an editorial rubric, as an extension to a criteria chart, for annotation and assessment of her 7th-grade students’ writing.

What is the tool for? In what context is it used?

First page contains a criteria tool developed with and for students that links features of the genre to the writing assignment:

- Details what students need to attend to when they write, as well as specific content that students need to include in their editorials.
 - Information can be used as a formative assessment on student rough drafts.
- The second page contains a traits rubric specifically developed by the school to assess the writing of editorials.
- Rubric is used to evaluate the final draft.

17 | California Department of Education

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

How can teachers use the tool to gather and annotate information about students meeting Common Core writing standards and also using genre-specific writing features and language?

Example works best for grades 6–12 informative/explanatory writing, but provides teachers in lower grades a good example of how to link criteria charts to writing rubrics, connecting genre features and the CCSS.

Grade 7 Example: Teacher’s Upstander, Not Bystander *Lesson Planning Template* provides the writing prompt adapted for her 7th-grade students.

- Purpose of an editorial is to make a claim about a problem or issue, but the bulk of the text tends to be more informative than argument.
- Note in the “Process” section in Handout 3.1.2d how many times the teacher reminds students to explain rather than argue.

18 | California Department of Education

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

In the lesson example, the teacher chooses to assess her students' writing at the revision stage and again after the final draft is written. To mirror her steps, complete the following:

1. Read the two student drafts and compare them to what they were asked to attend to and to the traits rubric that was used to assess their final drafts.
2. Read how the teacher's assessment of the drafts will guide the revision conferences she will hold with each student.

Note that for teachers and students, assessment information is most helpful during the process rather than at the end.

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

Review Grade 7 **Writing Standard 1** (page 50 of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy):

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

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge **and address** alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) **or counterarguments** with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

(**Bold font** indicates California additions)

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

Compare the language used to describe genre features to Grade 7 **Writing Standard 1** (argument writing):

Learning from Student Work: Writing an Editorial (Genre Features)

Characteristics of an editorial:

- An article that presents the newspaper's opinion on an issue
- Usually unsigned
- Intended to influence public opinion and promote critical thinking
- Sometimes intended to cause people to take action on an issue
- Includes both arguments and researched facts (research rarely cited)

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

Compare language describing genre features to Grade 7 informative/explanatory **Writing Standard 2** (page 51 of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy):

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 **or thesis statement** clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

(**Bold font** indicates California additions)

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: Middle School Example

Compare the language used to describe genre features to the Grade 7 **Writing Standard 2** (informative/explanatory).

Learning from Student Work: Writing an Editorial (Genre Features)

Characteristics of an editorial:

- An article that presents the newspaper's opinion on an issue
- Usually unsigned
- Intended to influence public opinion and promote critical thinking
- Sometimes intended to cause people to take action on an issue
- Includes both arguments and researched facts (research rarely cited)

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: High School Example

Refer to "Assessment Guide for Argumentation/Analytical Writing" (Handout 3.1.2e):

A genre-specific guide for use with students as a tool for assessment and discussion during a lesson sequence, and for assessment and annotation at the conclusion of a writing lesson.

- Blends aspects of trait rubrics and criteria charts.

What is the tool for? In what context is it used?

Names and provides descriptions of traits, using language that is aligned to features of the writing task — an analytical essay.

- Focuses on which traits and genre features are in evidence in the writing and what the quality and effectiveness are of the evidence.

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: High School Example

How can teachers use the tool to gather and annotate information about students meeting Common Core writing standards and also using genre-specific writing features and language?

Lesson and assessment example works best for grades 6–12 analytical/argument writing.

Grade 12 Example: Teacher asked 12th-grade students to write an analytical essay that makes an argument about the power of assumption and misperception related to valuing people and their communities.

- Essay used experience, observation, reading, and lessons learned as sources of evidence for the argument.
- *Assessment Guide for Argumentation/Analytical Writing* used in individual and small-group conferences, and to assess and annotate an exemplary essay.

25 | California Department of Education

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: High School Example

Read student writing and annotation chart, and note how the teacher draws on the writing argument text type and purpose standards for grades 11–12 (see page 55 of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy):

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

- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.*
- Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.*
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.*
- Establish and maintain a formal style.*
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.*

Note also how she draws on the:

- Genre traits/features and effectiveness of writer's rhetorical and language choices
- Essay as a model for students — to increase genre and language knowledge

26 | California Department of Education

Assessment Tools to Guide Revision Conferences: High School Example

Discuss the connections between and among the annotations on the student's writing, the assessment guide, and the grades 11–12 argument standards.

Important Takeaway: All four of the lessons in this section illustrate the importance of assessing and annotating student writing to inform the teacher's own learning and instructional decisions.

But, are there more direct benefits for students?

27 | California Department of Education

Assessment as Feedback for Students

As students develop their reading and writing skills through the grades, assessment and annotation tools can help teachers provide the timely and detailed feedback that students need to learn from and improve their writing.

"Effective assessors know that to improve student learning, they have to do more than just measure students' performance. Timely and useful feedback has to accompany the assessment."

Tovani, 2011

28 | California Department of Education

Assessment as Feedback for Students

The Importance of Formative Assessment

"Timely and useful feedback" is a crucial part of teachers' use of **formative assessment practices — assessment during the teaching and during the students' writing process and research.**

In the *Policy Research Brief: Fostering High-Quality Formative Assessment*, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) stresses the importance of feedback and that the purpose of assessment is more than improving instruction.

29 | California Department of Education

Assessment as Feedback for Students

"What teachers learn from formative assessment can certainly help shape teaching decisions. Identifying areas where students are having difficulty as well as where they have clear understandings can lead teachers to change classroom practices in order to reach instructional goals.... However, changes in teaching and curriculum are not the central purpose of formative assessment. High-quality formative assessment always puts student learning at the center."

High-quality formative assessment takes many forms, but it always:

- emphasizes the quality rather than the quantity of student work
- prizes giving advice and guidance over giving grades
- enables students to assess their own learning
- fosters dialogues that explore understandings rather than lectures that present information
- provides feedback that engenders motivation and leads to improvement

30 | California Department of Education

NCTE, 2010

Classroom Examples of Formative Assessment

Over the next several slides, observe how several teachers use information gathered from checking in on students during the writing process.

- Note how they create opportunities to use this formative assessment information to give students important feedback for improving and revising their writing.

31 | California Department of Education

Classroom Examples of Formative Assessment: K–2 Example

Pushing First Graders to Improve Informative Writing

Students meeting the Grade 1 Informative/Explanatory Text Type standards can push themselves to do more in preparation for 2nd grade:

Grade 1, Writing Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

Grade 2, Writing Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

32 | California Department of Education

Classroom Examples of Formative Assessment: K–2 Example

Watch a classroom video to see how the teacher pushes and supports the students to expand on what they have already written:

"Using a Learning Progression to Help Students Work Towards Clear Goals as they Lift the Level of Their Information Writing (K-2)"

<http://vimeo.com/55951746>

Source: TC Reading and Writing Project on Vimeo

33 | California Department of Education

Reflect, Write, Discuss

Reflect on the following questions about the video:

- How is the teacher using a discussion of pushing her own writing to help students push their own informative/explanatory writing?
- How does what she is suggesting move students beyond the informative/explanatory writing standards for grade 1 students?
- What might she be pointing to in those standards for Grade 2 students?
- How has her assessment of what these students were on the verge of understanding informing her teaching them to revise and extend their writing?

34 | California Department of Education

Teaching Students to Assess to Revise: Grades 5–8 Example

Feedback through Writing Conferences

Students learn to strengthen the concluding paragraphs of their arguments by participating in a writing conference. In the video, note how the teacher:

- Uses the writing conference to develop a criteria chart, anchored by **Grade 8 Standard 1e**: "Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and support the argument presented."
- Uses informal and personalized criteria charts can be used for teaching students to assess and revise.

"Assessing Endings to Persuasive Essays in Order to Clarify Expectations and Inform Essay Revisions (5-8)"
<http://vimeo.com/56067219>

Source: TC Reading and Writing Project on Vimeo

35 | California Department of Education

Strategies for Assessing Students' Understanding and Learning: Grades 6–8 Example

Checking in for Understanding

Effective strategies for checking on and assessing students' understanding can be simple and take very little time.

Watch an 8th-grade teacher using "Be Sure To" to assess learning while giving the responsibility for using the new knowledge back to the students.

"Be Sure To": A Powerful Reflection Strategy (6–8)
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-goal-setting>

Source: Teaching Channel

36 | California Department of Education

Reflect, Write, Discuss

Reflect on what you could ask your students to “be sure to” take from their learning and apply to their writing. Possibilities include, but are not limited to:

- using a section of a rubric to assess their own writing
- using a point from a discussion of a writing sample that is a model for the genre they are writing
- using a strategy they just practiced for organizing their argument
- using what they learned from analyzing claims and deciding which are more effective than others

37 | California Department of Education

Using Technology Tools for Feedback: Grades 9–12 Examples

Communicating Feedback through Technology

Watch how a high school teacher uses texting as a formative assessment tool by collecting individual statements of learning and then representing the collective learning of the class in a Wordle or “word cloud”.

“Text What You Learned: Using Technology to Assess Student Learning (9–12)”

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/texting-to-assess-learning>

Source: Teaching Channel



38 | California Department of Education

Using Technology Tools for Feedback: Grades 9–12 Examples

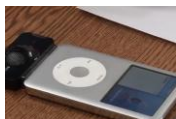
Communicating Feedback through Technology

Watch how the teacher uses podcasts to provide feedback during the writing process to support subsequent revisions.

“Podcasting to Personalize Feedback (9–12)”

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-feedback-through-technology>

Source: Teaching Channel



39 | California Department of Education

Teacher Recommendations for Formative Assessment Technology Tools

Discuss:

- *What other technology tools can you use that can help you gather assessment information and also set up a communication and feedback loop with individual student writers?*

For examples of how California teachers are using innovative approaches and technology tools for formative assessment of writing, refer to Handout 3.2.2: “Teacher Recommendations for Formative Assessment Tools”

40 | California Department of Education

Reflect, Write, Discuss

Discuss:

How could you and your students use one or more of the technology tools illustrated in this unit as a formative assessment tool?

Important Takeaway: The assessment practices in this section of Unit 3 illustrate that learning from student work is important for both teacher and students. Teachers who capture what they are learning from their students’ writing have gathered important information from which to make sound instructional decisions while developing ways to involve students in learning from their own writing.

41 | California Department of Education

Learning From and Adapting CCSS-Informed Lessons

Examine lessons that focus on writing to inform, argue, and analyze through narrative, informational/explanatory, and opinion/argument text types and the writing genres that give them audience, purpose, and form.

Lessons are organized by grade level spans (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12):

- Refer to Handout 3.3b “*Learning From and Adapting CCSS-Informed Lessons*” for abstracts and online links to lesson resources.

42 | California Department of Education

Learning From and Adapting CCSS-Informed Lessons

In each grade level span, you will find lessons that include:

- teaching sequences that support student writing, from generating ideas and research, to drafting and feedback, to revision and assessment, including links to the CCSS, discipline-specific California Academic Content Standards, and ELD standards
- recommendations for informational texts and links to digital texts that can be used to increase content knowledge or serve as genre or language models
- annotated student writing samples with suggestions for using them with students, along with formative assessment tools, criteria charts, and rubrics

43 | California Department of Education

Learning From and Adapting CCSS-Informed Lessons (Optional)

Read the descriptions on Handout 3.3b: “*Learning From and Adapting CCSS-Informed Lessons*” in the grade span of your choice.

- Refer to hard copy or link to and download lessons that you would like to study, use, or adapt. You might want to begin with the *Learning From Student Work* section of the lesson.
- Refer to Handout 3.3a: “*Considerations for Your Lesson Planning*,” as a resource. The planning questions and *Lesson Planning Template*, may prove helpful as you tailor a particular lesson for your students.

Full lessons available on the Brokers of Expertise Web site at <http://www.myboe.org/auth/portal/default/Content/Viewer/Content?action=2&scld=504695&scld=12714>

44 | California Department of Education

Summing Up

Read the following quote from the *CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy* (page 49) and take note of the ideas addressed in the module, as well as how many of the ideas are a part of the complete lessons the teachers have developed:

“For students, writing is a key means of asserting and defending claims, showing what they know about a subject, and conveying what they have experienced, imagined, thought, and felt. To be college- and career-ready writers, students must take task, purpose, and audience into careful consideration, choosing words, information, structures, and formats deliberately. They need to know how to combine elements of different kinds of writing—for example, to use narrative strategies within argument and explanation within narrative—to produce complex and nuanced writing. They need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline as well as the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it.”

45 | California Department of Education

Professional Resources

Professional resources that provide support for extending learning and deepening knowledge of writing to inform, argue, and analyze:

Brokers of Expertise ELA Writing Professional Learning Module Resources:
<http://www.myboe.org/auth/portal/default/Content/Viewer/Content?action=2&scld=504695&scld=12743>

California Writing Project:
<http://www.californiawritingproject.org/>

46 | California Department of Education

Post-Assessment

Assess your knowledge of the CCSS Writing Standards after completing the module:

- Complete the “Post-Assessment”
- Work independently, without discussion or assistance from others

47 | California Department of Education