Writing Across Disciplines:
An Expansion of Composition in the Classroom
Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Visual & Performing Arts

Spring 2023
What is Writing Across Disciplines?

What does “Writing Across Disciplines” mean?

Defining “Writing Across Disciplines,” requires clarity around the terms “Writing” and “Across Disciplines.” Most simply, writing is communicating. Student writers communicate with themselves, peers, teachers and others. Writing in the classroom can have many purposes and audiences and may be formal or informal. In the academic setting, writing can serve as a tool to promote student learning, to allow students to demonstrate their thinking and understanding of the content and/or concepts taught, and/or to share with others in a real-world setting. These types of writing are called Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. “Across Disciplines” refers to using the types of writing—as defined here—in English/language arts as well as other disciplines, such as social studies, science, math and visual and performing arts.

What is Writing Across Disciplines, and what is its purpose?

Writing Across Disciplines is an expansion of Composition in the Classroom, a resource developed by reading and writing teachers to help Kentucky educators provide students with opportunities to develop into confident, independent and proficient writers. Composition in the Classroom and its expansions support teachers implementing existing High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) adopted by school districts as well as educators teaching in districts that have not yet adopted a primary HQIR in reading and writing. The tips, suggestions and tasks in Composition in the Classroom and its expansions should not replace adopted HQIR but should serve to supplement instruction towards the full depth and rigor of the Kentucky Academic Standards. For more information regarding high-quality literacy curricula, districts and school leaders may access The Reading and Writing Instructional Resources Consumer Guide, a tool for evaluating and selecting instructional resources for alignment to the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing.

Composition in the Classroom is organized around three modes of writing in the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing, including information regarding standards instruction through Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. Writing Across Disciplines, however, contains sample discipline-specific writing tasks, organized by each of the three types of writing mentioned above. This resource is grounded in the KAS for Reading and Writing, which includes the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices as well as each discipline’s content specific standards. The ten Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices are part of the KAS for Reading and Writing, appearing on every page of the standards document but should not be confused as additional standards. They should guide teachers in providing intentional opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning by practicing the behaviors of a literate citizen. The student practices serve as the overarching goals for literacy instruction for each student across the state. These practices are further clarified by possible teacher and student actions. These actions do not define curriculum, but rather they demonstrate how teachers can provide opportunities for students to experience the literacy practices and how students will apply these practices, so they may become an innate part of life across the disciplines and beyond school. This resource aims to bring more clarity around what these practices look like in action.
While *Composition in the Classroom* primarily serves English/language arts teachers and their students, *Writing Across Disciplines* attends to the needs of all teachers and their students. Because of its widespread classroom use already, the developers chose to begin the expansion with a focus on Writing to Learn, a professional learning space that will hopefully both affirm and stretch educators' practices. The second release added Writing to Demonstrate Learning and the final release will include Writing for Publication.

Writing Across Disciplines is created to provide what *Composition in the Classroom*, alone, does not. While *Composition in the Classroom* provides general characteristics of each type of writing (Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication) and examples of strategies teachers can implement to engage students in each of the types of writing, this expansion includes a more disciplinary, or specialized, look at writing. *Writing Across Disciplines* intends to show more precisely how to ensure opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific literacies or learning that uses reading and writing skills specific to each field to teach or demonstrate content knowledge and for publication purposes as well. The sample tasks in *Writing Across Disciplines* represent some of the types of reading and writing experts in each field (e.g., economists, biologists, literary scholars, mathematicians, etc.) might authentically engage in to deepen their own expertise.

**Writing TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING Across Disciplines**

*Writing to Demonstrate Learning*, as previously described, is necessary in every classroom for teachers to ascertain how well students are understanding the content, skills or concepts taught. Teachers use this type of writing to provide students opportunities for applying and demonstrating the skills they have learned in class and for assessing students' understanding of the subjects they are studying.

Regularly asking students to think and write about text at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (i.e., analysis, synthesis, evaluation) can help students not only think through the content but also reveal the depth of their knowledge. Though this kind of writing certainly can promote learning, it is especially used to help teachers understand how well students are learning. Typically, Writing to Demonstrate Learning takes the form of an academic exercise with the teacher as the primary audience and, thus, would not be suitable for publication. When students Write to Demonstrate Learning, their responses will be graded, marked or scored with a rubric to provide feedback to both the teacher and the student on their progress towards mastery. While feedback may focus on compositional or technical skills as a writer, teacher feedback usually focuses on content and conceptual understandings. Most simply stated, Writing to Demonstrate Learning is any composition intended to serve as a measurement of the student’s depth of learning.

While students may demonstrate their learning through paragraphs or essays, at all ages, student composition should not be limited to traditional formats or restricted to writing on paper or drafting in a word processing document. Instead, students should have numerous opportunities to use digital resources to create, publish, research and update individual or shared products and to take advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically. This may even require students to incorporate a variety of communication methods into one Writing to Demonstrate Learning composition.
Like Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning Across Disciplines refers to using Writing to Demonstrate Learning in English/language arts as well as other disciplines such as math, science, social studies, and visual and performing arts. The first section of this expansion, Writing to Learn Across Disciplines, provides samples of Writing to Learn tasks for each discipline. The Writing to Demonstration Learning section is the second of three sections that will make up the complete expansion and provides samples of Writing to Demonstrate Learning. Explicit reading-writing connections are intentionally present throughout the sample tasks, requiring students to read and think deeply about text, or “anything that communicates a message,” as defined by the KAS for Reading and Writing. Throughout the sample tasks, readers engage in passages, videos, graphs, data sets, experiments or other forms of communication while processing and documenting their learning through Writing to Demonstrate Learning.
How to Read the Writing Across Disciplines Templates

Each content area template begins broadly with a compilation of possible Writing to Learn or Writing to Demonstrate Learning strategies that experts in the field deem especially applicable to learning that discipline's content. The remainder of each template provides authentic content-specific sample tasks, organized into elementary and secondary levels. These sample tasks can help educators recognize the presence or absence of Writing to Learn or Writing to Demonstrate Learning instructional strategies within their curricula, equipping them with the knowledge to identify when the curriculum does not include adequate opportunities for students to engage in both types of writing. Because the types of texts involved in reading and writing vary across disciplines, each sample contains discipline-specific approaches to Writing to Learn and Writing to Demonstrate Learning.
Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Visual/Performing Arts Instruction

Implementing Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Visual and Performing Arts Instruction

The Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Visual and Performing Arts emphasizes four arts processes universal across all five disciplines: Creating, Performing/Producing/Presenting, Responding and Connecting.

Creating is a continuous process when students conceive and develop artistic ideas and work, which may require space for thinking and reflecting throughout the artistic process. Writing to Demonstrate Learning when Creating may include:
- Generating artistic ideas based on prior knowledge
- Organizing a plan for production
- Refining an artistic work

The arts process of Performing is limited to the performing arts of music, dance and theatre. Producing is the process of sharing work in the area of media arts and will often utilize “product” as its final form. Presenting is often associated with sharing in more formal settings such as exhibitions in the visual arts. Writing to Demonstrate Learning allows students to reflect on previous learning and plan their next steps in Performing, Producing or Presenting. Using Writing to Demonstrate Learning as a vehicle to drive these processes may mean students are regularly:
- Maintaining reflection journals
- Providing peer reviews

Writing to Demonstrate Learning happens most often in the arts process of Responding, as students reflect on their learning as artists and audience members. Due to the cyclical nature of the arts processes, students can demonstrate their learning throughout the artistic process. Writing to Demonstrate Learning for this purpose may look like:
- Engaging in performance reflections
- Creating exhibition texts

Writing to Demonstrate Learning is an effective strategy for engaging Visual and Performing Arts students in Connecting or relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context. Some Writing to Demonstrate Learning ideas for Connecting include, but are not limited to:
- Comparing and contrasting two or more arts disciplines
- Engaging in a quick write about how an artistic piece relates to the student

The essence of Visual and Performing Arts is for the artist to communicate ideas and experiences to the audience. Similarly, writers also communicate ideas and experiences to the reader. When student artists likewise engage in writing, they can strengthen their understanding.
Implementing Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Visual and Performing Arts Instruction

of what they learned throughout the artistic process. Just as artists demonstrate their learning through the four arts processes, arts teachers can create opportunities for student artists to demonstrate their learning through the written word. Writers in the arts contribute to the field professionally in various forms. The examples that follow represent Writing to Demonstrate Learning and may be used by educators to assess student artists’ understanding of content and skills; however, in professional settings, these forms of writing are more representative of Writing for Publication as professional artists are not likely to write very often for the sole sake of demonstrating their learning. Writing for Publication will be addressed in the third section (coming soon) of this resource.

- Artist Statements
- Peer Critiques
- Exhibition reviews
- Artist interviews
- Blogs
- Gallery handouts

About the Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Visual and Performing Arts Tasks in This Resource

The Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Visual and Performing Arts include five contrasting arts disciplines connected through Anchor Standards. The elementary and secondary sample Writing to Demonstrate Learning tasks below both work towards mastery of Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Students also interact with Performing, Responding and Connecting (relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context) in these tasks, allowing for connection to multiple areas outside of the discipline presented. Educators may make connections to other disciplines and contexts when possible.
### Sample Task Featuring Writing to Demonstrate Learning: Middle School Visual Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visual and Performing Arts Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Artistic Process Alignment</th>
<th>Additional Standards Connections:</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts Standards Connections:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA:Re9.1.6</td>
<td>Artistic Process Connections: Responding</td>
<td>Additional Connections: The Artistic Process of “Responding” through this lens can be applied to any of the 5 arts disciplines: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts</td>
<td>C.6.2 Examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</td>
<td>ILP 1: Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Process Component: Interpret</td>
<td></td>
<td>RL.6.2 Analyze how the theme is reflected in the text by citing particular details and/or providing an objective summary.</td>
<td>ILP 8: Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</td>
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### The Task

**Artwork Artist Statement:**
As students complete an artistic work, they will reflect on the artistic process and the final product by writing an **Artwork Artist Statement**. The practice of including an Artist Statement with a piece of work provides an opportunity for the artist to **Write to Demonstrate their Learning** and is beneficial to assessing what students have learned throughout the artistic process.

### Teacher Notes

Writing to Learn strategies like weekly exit slips and periodic peer reviews help students work towards a completed Artist Statement by slowly drafting the statement over time and throughout the process of creating. Exit slips prompting students to consider how they have grown as an artist throughout the creative process allows students to think beyond what they have accomplished each week and gain more understanding of their own learning. These prompts may also ask students to consider their artistic choices and what elements of art impact the work they are doing.

Visual and Performing Arts teachers are encouraged to leverage writing as a tool for deeper learning through Writing to Learn described in **Writing to Learn in Visual and Performing Arts**.

Opportunities for students to Write to Learn can prepare students to Write to Demonstrate Learning via Artwork Artist Statements. Similarly, peer critiques provide an aspect of self-reflection to support students' demonstration of learning.
# Sample Task Featuring Writing to Demonstrate Learning: High School Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual and Performing Arts Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Artistic Process Alignment</th>
<th>Additional Standards Connections:</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual and Performing Arts Standards Connections:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Artistic Process Connections:</strong> Responding</td>
<td><strong>Additional Connections:</strong> The Artistic Process of “Responding” through this lens can be applied to any of the 5 arts disciplines:</td>
<td><strong>RI.11-12.1</strong> Cite relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 1:</strong> Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MU:Re9.1.E.III</strong> Develop and justify evaluations of music, programs of music, and performances based on criteria, personal decision-making, research, and understanding of contexts.</td>
<td><strong>Process Component:</strong> Evaluate</td>
<td><strong>Anchor Standard 9:</strong> Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</td>
<td><strong>C.11-12.2</strong> Compose informative/explanatory texts to examine and/or convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 4:</strong> Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## The Task

**Performance Reflection:**
After performing in or attending a public performance, students will demonstrate their learning of elements of music as they reflect on their experience as a performer and/or audience member using an assignment such as the [Performance Reflection form](#).

After the public performance, the teacher will provide a recording of the event for students to view as they complete a [Performance Reflection](#).
Teacher Notes

Students who were a part of the performance should view the performance recording within the same week as the live performance to give them an opportunity to reflect on their most fresh ideas and feelings about the experience.

Often, students will be the performer for some selections and an audience member for the rest of the concert. Therefore, the Performance Reflection should be labeled with each section of the performance or titles to aid students in responding from the correct viewpoint.

Response prompts can be catered to current discipline-specific vocabulary or focal points of the repertoire.

Examples:
What did you learn about the importance of dynamic contrast in music?
How did adding movement to our performance enhance the performance for the audience?

Teachers may allow students to listen to the piece in its entirety and then pause the recording giving students a chance to respond to prompts or encourage students to respond in real time while listening to the piece.

Remember: At the high school level, students may choose to specialize in one or more art forms. Students may also choose to not specialize in an art form but rather, move beyond the grounding in the arts achieved at the middle school level toward proficiency in the arts. Proficiency Levels allow for students at multiple grades and abilities to be in the same arts course, learning and growing at their own level.