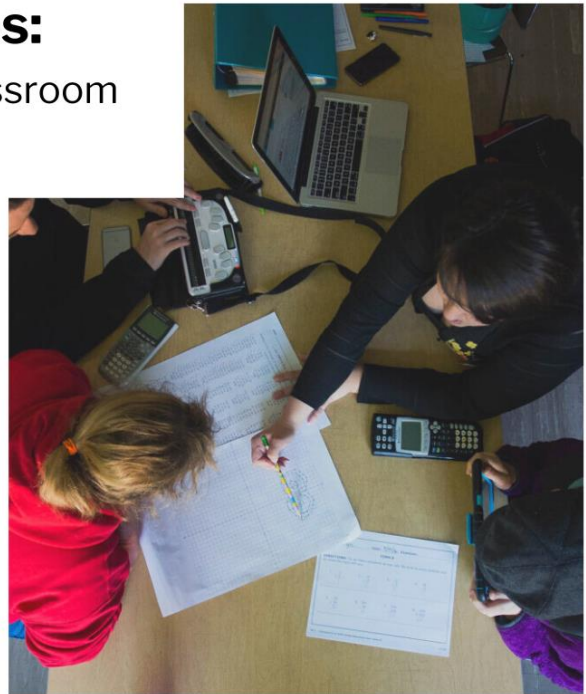




Writing Across Disciplines:
An Expansion of Composition in the Classroom
Fall 2023



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 FOR PUBLICATION Across Disciplines

[Writing for Publication](#), as previously described, allows students to share their learning with audiences beyond the classroom and school community. Writing for Publication is preceded by intentional opportunities for students to Write to Learn and Write to Demonstrate Learning. The primary difference between Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication is the *audience*: whereas teachers are the primary audience of Writing to Demonstrate Learning, publication is for the world beyond the school community.

“Publication” indicates writing will be shared with an intended audience and approximates writing done in a variety of real-world settings, such as in a career or academic setting or in response to civic duty. Pieces for publication are produced for an authentic audience and purpose and are also directly relevant to students’ learning. Ideally, students make decisions about audience, purpose and/or form based on their interests, experiences or inquiry. These pieces of writing are more successful when the writers pay careful attention to success criteria for writing. Teacher and/or student created rubrics may address audience/purpose, idea development, organization, word choice and conventions as well as the content of the subject matter.

Authentic Writing for Publication is writing for authentic audiences and purposes that has been taken through the complete writing process. Draper & Siegert (2010) define Writing for Publication as tasks that allow students “to negotiate (e.g., read, view, listen, taste, smell, critique) and create (e.g., write, produce, sing, act, speak) texts in discipline-appropriate ways or in ways that other members of a discipline (e.g., mathematicians, historians, artists) would recognize as ‘correct’ or ‘viable.’”¹ Thus, Writing for Publication must include both reading complex disciplinary text and then writing about what is learned as a disciplinary expert might write.

When students Write for Publication, they become subject matter experts who communicate their learning to the world, requiring them to make considerations for the needs of their audience. In addition to the content and skills of the discipline, many students may also require instruction or support in using technological tools, communication platforms or technical writing/communication strategies used in professional or career settings. Consider opportunities to collaborate with professionals outside of the field of education to provide feedback

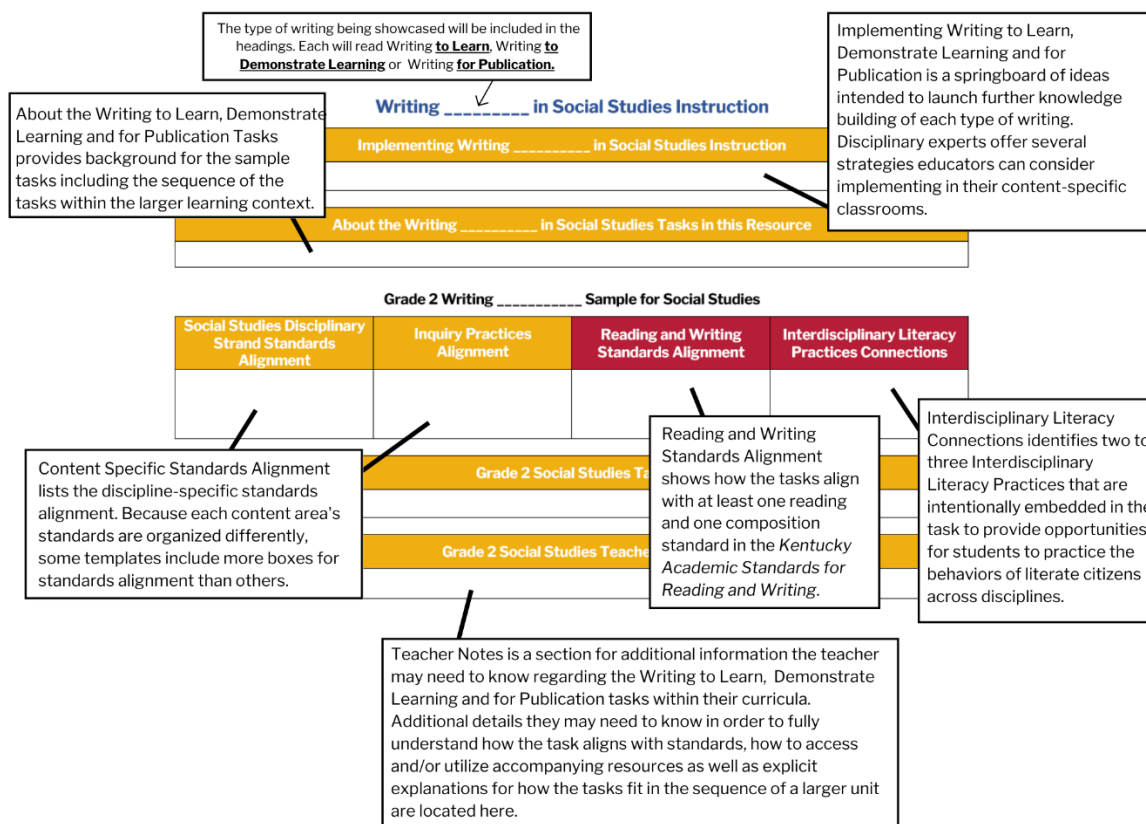
¹ Draper, R.J., & Siebert, D. (2010). Rethinking texts, literacies, and literacy across the curriculum. In R.J. Draper, P. Broomhead, A.P. Jensen, J.D. Nokes, & D. Siebert (Eds.), *(Re)imagining content-area literacy instruction* (pp. 20–39). New York: Teachers College Press.

or serve as the authentic audience to prepare students to Write for Publication. For example, the grade 4 visual art sample task included in this resource asks students to write biographies of fellow student artists prior to presenting the art in a community show. Teachers may collaborate with local gallerists or artists to discuss why this type of writing matters in the field of visual art. In the high school physics sample task, students write a proposal to improve local energy infrastructure. Teachers may collaborate with local energy experts or engineers to share knowledge about their field as well as provide feedback on student proposals.

At the heart of Writing for Publication is **Interdisciplinary Literacy Practice 10: Develop a literacy identity that promotes lifelong learning.** Indeed, as students access complex texts across disciplines and apply their learning from those texts to real world problems, educators can create an environment where students are empowered as lifelong learners able to think for themselves and effectively propose solutions to complex problems. When students have opportunities to engage with relevant issues through the texts they read and write, they can engage more deeply in inquiry and ultimately can take stronger ownership of their learning.

How to Read the Writing Across Disciplines Templates

Each content area template begins broadly with a compilation of possible Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication 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, Writing to Demonstrate Learning or Writing for Publication instructional strategies within their adopted high-quality instructional resource (HQIR), 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 each type of writing.



Writing for Publication in Reading and Writing Instruction

Implementing Writing for Publication in Reading and Writing Instruction

Writing for Publication in reading and writing classrooms includes opportunities to publish (via print, non-print and digitally) in all three modes required within the Composition Strand: Opinion/Argument, Informational/Explanatory and Narrative. Students must gather, evaluate, synthesize and cite sources to develop and organize clear, coherent products that are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

Although the purpose and audience considerations are essential for producing an authentic publication, teachers should also plan to integrate reading throughout the learning process, allowing students to have rich input from various sources prior to writing. According to Vaughn, Roberts et al. (2019), when students read and analyze complex, grade-level text, they are provided with opportunities to build knowledge, vocabulary and metacognitive skills essential for success at school and beyond.² As the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing* assert, reading and writing should be viewed as complementary learning rather than as separate subjects. Furthermore, Graham and Hebert (2010) found that students who write with a reader in mind and read with the writer in mind strengthen both skills.³

These byproducts of access to complex, grade-level texts are equally important for students to be able to Write for Publication authentically. When Writing for Publication, purpose refers to a reason beyond demonstrating a student's understanding of standards and an audience other than the teacher. As always, the writing is text- and evidence-based.

Some examples of Writing for Publication in the English/language arts classroom are included below. Note that beginning in Grade 8, the *KAS for Reading and Writing* specifies that students will use narratives strategically in other modes of writing; therefore, Grade 8-12 students would not be instructed to publish a narrative in isolation.

Journalistic Compositions (opinion/argument or informational/explanatory):

letters to the editor, op eds, news articles, profiles/biographies, critiques/reviews, biography, autobiography

Multimodal Compositions (may include elements of opinion/argument, informational/explanatory or narrative as well as digital components that allow students to display ideas flexibly and dynamically):

bumper stickers, social media posts, billboards, blogs, infographics, airplane banners, flyers, public service announcements, advertisements, commercials, brochures, websites, blogs/vlogs, digital storytelling, how to instructions, TEDTalks, podcasts.

² Vaughn, S., Roberts, G. J., Miciak, J., Taylor, P., & Fletcher, J. M. (2019). Efficacy of a Word- and Text-Based Intervention for Students With Significant Reading Difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 52(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219418775113>.

³ Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act report. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Implementing Writing for Publication in Reading and Writing Instruction

Narrative Compositions:

short stories/novels, poems/verse novels, cartoons/graphic novels, drama/screenplays, memoir/personal narrative, creative non-fiction/essays

Authentic Correspondence (opinion/argument or informational/explanatory):

cover letters, resumes, formal email, thank you notes

Writing for Publication often concludes a series of lessons or a unit of study. The publication typically develops over time and results from students engaging in a variety of intentional, deeper learning experiences such as Writing to Learn tasks like those described in [Writing to Learn in Reading and Writing](#). See [Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Reading and Writing](#) for tools to assess and monitor progress towards mastery of skills and concepts.

About the Writing for Publication Tasks in this Resource

The Kindergarten Writing for Publication sample is adapted from Unit 4, Lesson 5 in *Fishtank Learning*, a free, online, open-source product that earns green ratings on EdReports. In this Kindergarten unit, students read a series of picture books and write various responses to explore the topic “Falling in Love with Authors and Illustrators.” In each of the [lessons 1-4](#) [first four lessons](#), students will read (or listen to a read aloud) a picture book written by Grace Lin. The students will engage in classroom discussions after reading each book. These discussions will be centered around retelling key details and events. Students may use details and illustrations when retelling aspects from the books. In lesson 5, students will choose one of the books they read in the previous lessons as their favorite. They will write a letter to Grace Lin, the author, telling her which story was their favorite and why. They will use details and possibly illustrations from the book in their letter to Grace Lin.

The Grade 4 Writing for Publication sample is adapted from Unit 5, Lesson 6 in *Fishtank Learning*, a free, online, open-source product that earns green ratings on EdReports. In this Grade 4 unit, students explore the topic of “Learning Differently.” In lessons 1-5, students learn about ADHD and how it influences a person’s life through the fictional character Joey Pigza who lives with ADHD in the novel *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*. Readers experience how different people and situations in Joey’s life deal with his condition and how their actions affect Joey’s behavior. During these lessons students engage in literary analysis to understand Joey and how his character develops. Readers get to know how Joey’s mind works and see how his relationships with others impact what he thinks about himself. Students also spend time critiquing and analyzing the reasoning of others. Then in Lesson 6, students are expected to write a literary analysis/opinion in the form of a multiple paragraph essay about ADHD and how it influences a person’s life. In the Grade 4 sample below, the task has been adapted so that students engage in Writing for Publication instead of Writing to Demonstrate Learning. Rather, students are asked to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) instead of multiple paragraphs. PSAs are written for an audience outside of the classroom, shifting the assignment from Writing to Demonstrate Learning to Writing for Publication. Students still use their character analysis of Joey to help them write the PSA so that others understand ADHD and how it influences a person’s life.

Similarly, the Grade 7 Writing for Publication sample is adapted from Unit 5, Lesson 9 in *Fishtank Learning*, a free, online, open-source product that earns green ratings on EdReports. In this Grade 7 unit, students explore the topic of “Understanding Identity: *American Born Chinese*.” In lessons 1-8, students learn how to read a graphic novel (a novel written in the style of a comic strip) and begin engaging with Chinese stereotypes depicted in various articles and within graphic novel, *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang. For this composition, students must integrate knowledge and ideas from multiple informational texts (RI.7.9) in order to raise awareness of racial harassment and violence towards Asian Americans via a published infographic. These infographics are intended for an audience outside of the classroom, shifting the assignment from Writing to Demonstrate Learning to Writing for Publication.

Kindergarten Writing for Publication Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RL.K.2 With prompting and support, orally recognize key details from a summary to demonstrate understanding of the lesson learned in the story.</p> <p>RL.K.6 With prompting and support, identify the author and illustrator of a story and explain how each tells the story</p> <p>C.K.1 Compose opinion pieces, using a combination of drawing, dictating, writing and digital resources, to state the topic and an opinion.</p> <p>C.K.6 With guidance and support, collect information from real-world experiences or provided sources to answer or generate questions.</p>	<p>ILP 1: Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.</p> <p>ILP 3: View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary and transformational.</p> <p>ILP 5: Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.</p> <p>ILP 6: Collaborate with others to create new meaning.</p>

Kindergarten Reading and Writing Task

Adapted from [Fishtank Learning Kindergarten Unit 4, Lesson 5: Falling in Love with Authors and Illustrators](#).

We have just read four books by author Grace Lin: *Kite Flying*, *Dim Sum*, *Fortune Cookie* and *Ugly Vegetables*. We have also discussed details and events in those books in the last four lessons. Now, you will write a letter to author Grace Lin explaining which of her stories is your favorite and why.

Kindergarten Teacher Notes

The original writing prompt from [Fishtank Learning Kindergarten Unit 4, Lesson 5: Falling in Love with Authors and Illustrators](#) tasks students with writing a letter to author Grace Lin to tell her which of her books they read is their favorite and why they chose that book. The original prompt aligns with Kentucky's reading literature and composition strands and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning to the teacher and publish writing with an authentic audience, a published author.

The teacher may choose to read each of Grace Lin's books from lessons 1-4 aloud to the students since independent reading may not be possible for all kindergarten students. Grace Lin's books can be displayed around the room and be accessible to students to refer to as they are writing their letters.

Prior to this task, the students should have been exposed to letter writing and perhaps have participated in writing letters together as a class along with some independent practice in letter writing. Model the format of a letter with a greeting such as "Dear Grace Lin," in the upper left-hand corner of a poster as well as a letter closing such as, "Your friend." You may use a [template](#) to guide students as you model the format of letter writing.

You may choose to use sentence stems such as, "My favorite book is _____ because _____" in addition to the modeled letter format.

Grade 4 Writing for Publication Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character’s thoughts, words and/or actions, the setting or event(s) in a story or drama, drawing on specific details to analyze their interaction over the course of the text.</p> <p>RI.4.3 Explain the individuals, events, procedures, ideas or concepts in a historical, scientific or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information over the course of a text.</p> <p>*See Teacher Notes for an explanation of the <i>KAS for Reading and Writing</i> reading strand and how these standards align to the task.</p> <p>C.4.2 Compose informative and/or explanatory texts, using writing and digital resources, to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.</p>	<p>ILP 4: Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</p> <p>ILP 8: Engage in specialized, discipline specific literacy practices.</p> <p>ILP 9: Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.</p>

Grade 4 Reading and Writing Task

Adapted from [Fishtank Learning Grade 4, Unit 5, Lesson 6, Learning Differently: Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key](#)

Create a public service announcement (PSA) to help others understand ADHD and how having ADHD may influence a person's life. Collaborate with appropriate local establishments to receive permission to post the PSA. Appropriate locations may include local grocery stores, doctor offices, afterschool programs, counseling offices or the local library.

Your PSA must include:

- Clearly introduce the topic with a heading that reflects the purpose and audience;
- Organization that helps readers understanding the message of the PSA;
- At least three ways ADHD may influence a person's life;
- Provide information (facts, definitions, details, quotations and more) from at least 3 of Joey's relationships in *Joey Pigza Swallows the Key* to help demonstrate how ADHD influences his life;
- At least one sentences that correctly uses a conjunction;
- Transition words we have learned when appropriate to the text structure;
- Precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic;
- Closure: a section or overall indication that the announcement is complete.
- Revising and editing with guidance and support from peers and adults that leads to a rewritten, clean copy.

Grade 4 Teacher Notes

The original writing prompt from [Fishtank Learning, Grade 4, Unit 5, Lesson 6](#) tasks students with writing a literary analysis that answers the essential question, “What is ADHD? How does having ADHD influence a person’s life?” The original prompt aligns with Kentucky’s reading literature and composition strands and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning to the teacher. The task has been adapted from its original form to show how educators may use their adopted High-Quality Instructional Resource as a springboard for developing a supplemental task when a gap in the curriculum is identified. Minimal but intentional adjustments may be necessary to ensure students have opportunities to practice all three types of writing described in *Composition in the Classroom* and expanded upon in this resource, *Writing Across Disciplines*.

A Note About the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing*: Both the literary and informational strands for reading standard three align to this task as students build their background knowledge on ADHD through reading the article [About ADHD Overview](#). Students refer to the article as they read the fictional story *Joey Pigza Swallows the Key* to help them understand Joey’s relationships with other characters. They use the article to reflect on whether or not the other characters are helping to make things more equal for Joey or more challenging based on what they have learned about ADHD or ADD.

An explanation of each connected Interdisciplinary Literacy Practice is provided below to demonstrate the relationship between the task and selected practices. **ILP 4:** Utilizing receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world is an embedded practice as reading about and discussing – receptive and expressive - how ADHD impacted Joey’s life may help students understand themselves and/or others they encounter who have ADHD. Creating the PSA is an example of expressive language arts and those who see the PSA will engage in receptive language arts, hopefully feeling like they have a better understanding of themselves and/or others they encounter who have ADHD. **ILP 8:** Engaging in specialized, discipline specific literacy practices happens when students perform a literary analysis (a specialized practice of English/Language Arts scholars) and then convert their analysis to the PSA (a specialized practice in the field of public relations). **ILP 9:** Applying high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text occurs when students engaged in high level thinking while reading Joey’s story. Class discussions required them to think deeply and critically about how ADHD influenced Joey’s life, including his relationships.

Grade 7 Writing for Publication Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic present key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.</p> <p>C.7.2 Compose informative and/or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p>C.7.5 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.</p> <p>C.7.6 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and, in order to engage in reflection or analysis, quote or paraphrase data and conclusions of others, avoiding plagiarism by providing in-text and bibliographic MLA or APA citation.</p>	<p>ILP 2: Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.</p> <p>ILP 4: Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</p> <p>ILP 7: Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.</p> <p>ILP 10: Develop a literacy identity that promotes lifelong learning.</p>

Grade 7 Reading and Writing Task

Adapted from *Fishtank Learning*, [Grade 7, Unit 5, Lesson 9, Exploring Identity: American Born Chinese](#)

Consider your reflections on Jin Wang's experiences in *American Born Chinese* as you read the following articles:

- Article: "[The recent rise in Asian American hate crimes could have impacts beyond the pandemic](#)" by Candice Wang (originally published in *Popular Science*, September 2020)
- Article: "[Anti-Asian Hate Has Surged During the Coronavirus Pandemic, Reports Find](#)" by Sara Li (originally published in *Teen Vogue*, September 2020)
- Article: "['You have Chinese virus!': 1 in 4 Asian American youths experience racist bullying, report says](#)" by Claire Wang (originally published on *NBC News*, September 2020)
- Article: "[Stop AAPI Hate: Safety Tips for Those Experiencing or Witnessing Hate](#)" (originally published by Stop AAPI Hate civil rights group, March 2021)

In *American Born Chinese*, Gene Luen Yang explores the dangerous power of stereotypes and bias in the lives of his characters. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in racial harassment and violence toward Asian Americans. According to the Anti-Defamation League, "These incidents include being told to 'Go back to China,' being blamed for 'bringing the virus' to the United States, being referred to with racial slurs, spat on, or physically assaulted." ("[Reports of Anti-Asian Assaults, Harassment and Hate Crimes Rise as Coronavirus Spreads](#)" by Anti-Defamation League).

Consider information you have read in literature (*American Born Chinese*) as well as in informational texts (the articles above). Create an infographic to share online in which you explain how racism has impacted the lives of young Asian Americans since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your infographic must:

- Clearly introduce the topic with a heading;
- State at least three effects or impacts of racial harassment and violence;
- Provide information from all four informational texts (You may integrate examples from *American Born Chinese*, but this is not required);
- Provide examples, facts/statistics, and quotations from experts cited in the articles;
- Include at least three linking words that clarify the relationship between ideas;
- Include a suggestion on how to protect human rights or civil rights;
- Maintain a formal style;
- Include correct citations to show where information was obtained.

Grade 7 Teacher Notes

The original writing prompt from *Fishtank Learning* [Grade 7, Unit 5, Lesson 9, Exploring Identity: American Born Chinese](#) tasks students with writing an informational essay to answer the unit essential question, “Where do stereotypes come from and how do they affect people?” The original prompt aligns with Kentucky’s reading informational text and composition strands and provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning to the teacher. The task has been adapted from its original form to show how educators may use their adopted High-Quality Instructional Resource as a springboard for developing a supplemental task when a gap in the curriculum is identified. Minimal but intentional adjustments may be necessary to ensure students have opportunities to practice all three types of writing described in *Composition in the Classroom* and expanded upon in this resource, *Writing Across Disciplines*.

Analyzing and synthesizing information from four articles may present a challenge for students. Engage students in Writing to Learn to support comprehension and synthesis as they read the articles using a graphic organizer such as this [Infographic Planning Tool](#). Note students may need support with the MLA in-text citation and works cited.

Students may create the infographic on paper or with digital tools such as Canva, Google Slides, Venngage or Piktochart. These tools provide templates for students to use as examples as well as an opportunity to display information flexibly and dynamically.