



 Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Text-Based Writing ***ACROSS DISCIPLINES***

An Expansion of Composition in the Classroom



FALL 2023



What is Text-Based Writing Across Disciplines?

What does “Text-Based Writing Across Disciplines” mean?

Defining “Text-Based Writing Across Disciplines” requires clarity around the terms “Text-Based,” “Writing” and “Across Disciplines.” “Text-Based” signals that students are engaged with complex, grade level texts throughout their learning. 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.

Each of the tasks in this resource ground students in complex, grade-level text throughout the writing process.

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

Reading and 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 HQIRs but rather 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-aligned instruction through Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. *Reading and Writing Across Disciplines*, however, contains sample discipline-specific reading and 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, *Reading and 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 (October 2023), a professional learning space that will hopefully both affirm and stretch educators' practices. The second release added Writing to Demonstrate Learning (March 2023) and the final release will include Writing for Publication (September 2023).

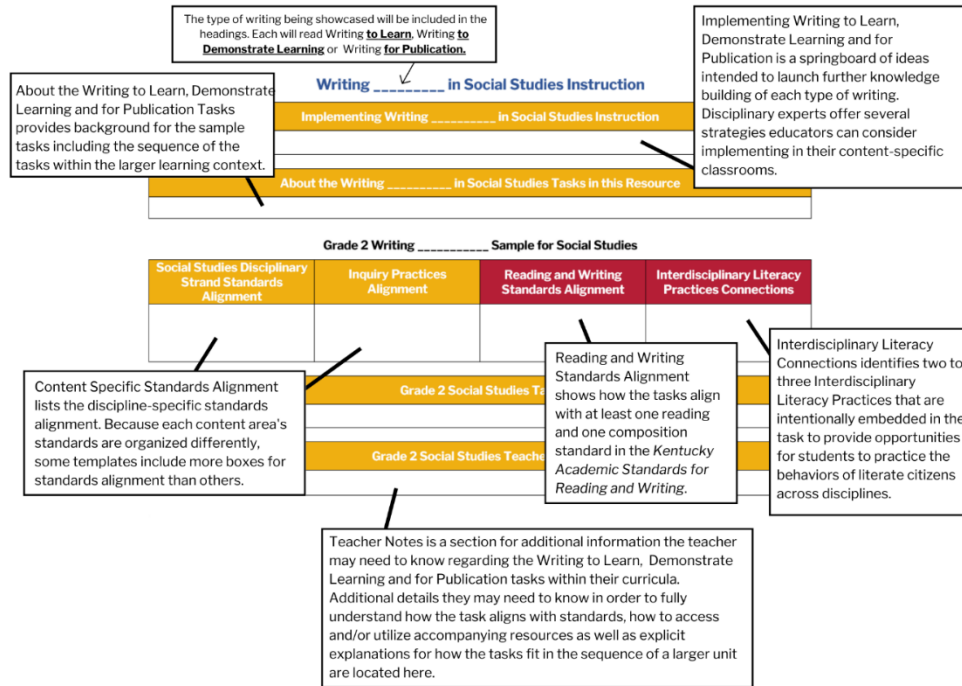
Reading and Writing Across Disciplines provides what *Composition in the Classroom*, alone, does not. While *Composition in the Classroom* provides general characteristics of each type of writing (Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication) and examples of strategies teachers can implement to engage students in each of the types of writing, this expansion includes a more disciplinary, or specialized, look at writing. *Reading and 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 *Reading and 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.

Reading and Writing TO LEARN Across Disciplines

[Writing to Learn](#), as previously described, is an instructional strategy used to promote student learning. Teachers utilize this instructional strategy to help deepen students' understanding of the subjects they are studying, to engage students in thinking, to provide opportunities for applying, extending and developing skills, and to help students reflect on their learning. Typically, Writing to Learn is informal writing with the student as the primary audience. Rather than emphasizing formal composition skills, Writing to Learn helps students obtain content knowledge and build capacity to analyze, synthesize, comprehend and express their thinking in writing. Most simply stated, Writing to Learn is any writing students engage in that promotes learning. Therefore, Writing to Learn Across Disciplines refers to using Writing to Learn 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. 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.

How to Read the 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 to Learn in Reading and Writing Instruction

Implementing Writing to Learn in Reading and Writing Instruction

Writing is an expectation of English/language arts classrooms beginning in kindergarten and becoming progressively more sophisticated as the grade levels increase. Some Writing to Learn strategies may work just as well for kindergarteners as they do high schoolers while others may not be as appropriate for five- and six-year-old learners as they are for teenagers. Writing to Learn strategies should be selected with attention to the learners' developmental levels and the intended learning goals. This resource provides a clearer picture of what implementing Writing to Learn strategies in reading and writing classrooms may look like across grade levels.

Teachers must intentionally provide opportunities for students to write daily and in all content areas. Some educators may think Writing to Learn is not appropriate for kindergarten students since this age group is still learning to write; however, this is a misconception. Young children are often enthusiastic writers, so the more opportunities they are given to write, the better. Conrad (2008)¹ emphasizes that, at the word level, writing can reinforce phonological, orthographic and morphological awareness and promotes higher quality word representations in memory, improving both spelling and reading skills. The Institute for Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide for *Teaching Elementary Students to Be Effective Writers*² recommends devoting 30 minutes of kindergarten instructional time to writing and developing writing skills. For older students, the Institute for Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide for *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively*³ recommends engaging students in Writing to Learn to promote intentional, strategic thinking that ultimately improves writing. For elementary students, Writing to Learn builds the foundation for reading, spelling and communicating in writing, while secondary students can leverage Writing to Learn to improve their strategic thinking and, in turn, their ability to communicate effectively.

Writing in kindergarten and first grades may be drawing and/or forming letters to make words, even if the spelling is invented (words have extra or omitted vowels and consonants). Early in kindergarten, Writing to Learn may begin with prewriting motor skills such as large arm movements in the air or on the carpet and tracing or drawing shapes. These types of activities build spatial awareness and directionality, skills that help young writers produce and remember letter forms. Writing at this level also includes whole class writing experiences led by the teacher for the purpose of learning letter formation or writer's craft, followed by instances of varying combinations of teacher and students and peers sharing the responsibility and then, finally, students independently Writing to Learn (e.g. forming letters, forming words, crafting text). This process continues into first and second grades with the teacher typically being able to release more responsibility to

¹ Conrad, N. (2008). From reading to spelling and spelling to reading: Transfer goes both ways. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 869-878.

² Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012- 4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx#pubsearch

³ Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., Kim, J., Lyskawa, J., Olson, C.B., & Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: <http://whatworks.ed.gov>.

Implementing Writing to Learn in Reading and Writing Instruction

students and sooner than was possible in the previous grade. Some Writing to Learn strategies that may work well in the earliest years, even kindergarten, include, but are not limited to:

- Drawing shapes to reinforce letter formation (early kindergarten)
- Tracing letters in trays of sand, in whipped cream, or on sandpaper (early kindergarten)
- Handwriting:
 - Printing all upper and lowercase letters and numerals (kindergarten)
 - Legibly printing all upper and lowercase letters and numerals with correct form (Grade 1)
 - Introductory formation of all upper and lowercase cursive letters (Grade 2)
 - Legibly forming cursive letters, words and sentences with accepted norms (Grade 3)
- Reading response journals
- Lists
- Simple Graphic Organizers
- Cloze writing

Other suggested Writing to Learn strategies for reading and writing classrooms across all grade levels include:

- Learning Journal, Learning Log, Class Journal
- Double-Entry Journal/Split-Page Journal
- Reading Response Journal or Reading Responses to text-dependent questions
- Bellringers and Exit Slips either handwritten or digital via a survey or forms tool such as Google Forms
- Annotations on documents or texts (on paper and via digital forms such as Perusall or Hypothesis)
- Graphic organizers on paper and via digital forms
- Answering questions on paper or through digital means such as PearDeck, Padlet, or shared Google Docs or Slides
- Collaborative writing or documentation of thinking on graphic organizers, chart paper or through digital means

About the Writing to Learn Tasks in this Resource

The sample elementary and secondary tasks have Writing to Learn embedded in each and address RL.2 (determining theme) and C.2 (supporting an informative or explanatory claim with evidence). Reading Literature Standard 2 is intentionally chosen as the aligned reading standard for these sample tasks in order to demonstrate how Writing to Learn is one way to address the language of the standard in grades K-3, "...from a summary...".

In the kindergarten example below, Writing to Learn occurs after the students have heard a story read aloud, seen the story's pictures and heard a summary of the story read aloud two to three times. The teacher leads students through an oral discussion of the story's lesson and prompts them to recognize the key details within the summary that support the story's lesson. Once students engage in the oral discussion, they are prepared to use Writing to Learn to capture their thinking and deepen their understanding. Teachers are encouraged to implement the [pre-work](#) before jumping into the sample kindergarten task. The purpose of this task is to give kindergarten students an opportunity to practice the skill of determining theme and citing textual evidence through explanation with an informal writing experience.

The Grade 3 example further provided provides the text summary to students. Students do not need to be familiar with the full text because the summary alone has enough implicit and explicit details to determine a possible theme. In other instructional settings, the summary may be written by the class, in collaboration with the teacher or peers or even independently. Of course, in those cases, students would need to be familiar with the full text. In any case, allowing students to experience a variety of opportunities to create and respond to summaries (some written by them and some not) with special attention to the theme is encouraged. The built-in scaffolds embedded in Reading Literature Standard 2 through grade three are intended to prepare students for the demands of the standard in fourth grade and beyond when there is an intentional shift for students to analyze theme using a text rather than from a summary of the text.

The Grade 8 sample task also models built-in scaffolds for determining theme based on concrete textual evidence. The task guides students through analyzing the positive and negative traits of character relationships and determining a theme supported by their analysis. Note that this task could be used with any literary text.

Kindergarten Writing to Learn 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>C.K.2 Compose informative and/or explanatory texts, using a combination of drawing, dictating, writing and digital resources, to establish a topic and supply information about the topic.</p>	<p>ILP 4: Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</p> <p>ILP 5: Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.</p>

Kindergarten Reading and Writing Task

After leading students through the [pre-work](#) for this task, the teacher will review the summary provided below either orally, without showing the written text, or with the text visible as the summary is read aloud.

Summary of *Oh, How I Wished I Could Read!* by John Gile

***Oh, How I Wished I Could Read!* is a book about a young boy who has a dream that he can't read. In his dream, he faces many dangers and problems because he can't read the signs. He ends up getting chased by dogs, sits on wet paint, gets poison ivy and almost gets hit by two cars and a bus! He wakes up from the nightmare to realize it was all just a dream, and he can pick up a book and read!**

Say, “We discovered this book teaches us that it is important to know how to read. You are going to answer questions about the lesson we and the character learned. You will use drawing or writing in the boxes to show your answers to the questions.” Give each student a copy of the [thinking paper](#), a tool for them to record their reflections (Writing to Learn). Say, “I am going to read each question to you, but I do not want you to answer any of the questions yet. Just listen and point to the box where you will write or draw your answer. I’m going to read the questions to you, and you point to the box under the question. In a few minutes, I will read the questions again and you will have time to answer them. The first question on your paper is, ‘What is the lesson learned in the story?’ The next question is, ‘Which sign do you think is most important to be able to read?’ After you write or draw the sign, you will have one more question to answer about the sign. The question is, ‘Why is the sign you chose the most important?’ WHY means you get to say what you think. What you think about something is called your opinion. There are two boxes to answer this question in because the question asks you to give two reasons why you think the sign is the most important one. You will draw or write one reason in each box for why you think the dog sign or the paint sign (or whichever sign you chose) is the most important to be able to read.

Kindergarten Reading and Writing Task

Now, let's go back to the top of your [thinking paper](#). I will read each question to you again, slowly, and give you time to put your answer in the box. Remember, you may draw or use words to answer each question. You may even choose to use words and pictures. Write the words the best you can. Draw the best you can. Your words and pictures do not have to be perfect. This writing is just for you." The teacher will read one question at a time and provide time for most students to respond to each question before moving on to the next question.

Kindergarten Teacher Notes

Oh, How I Wished I Could Read! by John Gile is not the only text summary kindergarteners may hear/read to work toward RL.K.2. Students could engage in a similar Writing to Learn task using nearly any grade-appropriate text. A specific text is named in this sample task in order to provide an example text summary for students to work from. Working from a summary is an expectation of RL.K.2, the reading standard to which this task aligns. The pre-work is intended to be used when students are learning to recognize the key details from a summary to demonstrate understanding of the lesson learned in the story and prior to expecting students to engage in this sample Writing to Learn task.

Grade 3 Writing to Learn Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RL.3.2 Identify and cite relevant implicit and explicit information from a summary to determine theme, lesson learned and/or moral, including but not limited to fables, folktales and myths from diverse cultures.</p> <p>C.3.2 Compose informative and/or explanatory texts, using writing and digital resources, to examine a topic and provide information.</p>	<p>ILP 2: Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.</p> <p>ILP 5: Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.</p>

Grade 3 Reading and Writing Task

Summary of *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco

My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother is a story about sibling rivalry. Richard and Patricia are in constant competition. Patricia, the younger sister, can't stand Richard and is always trying to find ways to outdo him, but it never works. It isn't until she wishes on a shooting star that she could do something - *anything* - better than Richard, that she finally outdoes him, but more importantly, she realizes how much she and her brother really do care about and love each other even though they are rivals.

Read the summary and then answer the provided questions to help you understand what the summary is telling you about the text's theme.

- Who are the siblings in the text? *Richard and Patricia*
- What is sibling rivalry? When brothers and sisters *constantly compete and don't get along*
- What does it mean to 'outdo' someone? *Do something better.*
- How do you know Patricia and Richard care about each other? *At the end something happens that lets Patricia know how much they really do care about and love each other.*

Now, using the provided summary (above), identify the information from the summary that you think best supports the theme that love exists even during sibling rivalry?

Sample Graphic Organizer

Write each detail you identify as support for the theme provided:	For each detail you identified, why do you think it supports the theme?	Theme:
<i>Patricia can't stand Richard and wants to do something better than him.</i>	<i>They are siblings who have a rivalry.</i>	Love exists even during sibling rivalry.
<i>...she realizes how much she and her brother really do care about and love each other...</i>	<i>This shows they do love each other even though they usually fight and don't get along.</i>	

Grade 3 Reading and Writing Teacher Notes

My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother by Patricia Polacco is not the only text summary third graders may read to work toward RL.3.2. Students could engage in a similar task using nearly any grade-appropriate text. A specific text is named in this sample task in order to provide an example text summary for students to work from. Working from a summary is an expectation of RL.3.2, the reading standard to which this task aligns.

The questioning portion of the task introduces students to determining a theme in Grade 3 or when students require more support to determine the theme. This portion of the assignment is not intended to reach the full depth of the standard, but rather serve as an initial steppingstone in the process of attaining the full standard. Writing to Learn is most effective when the task design is intentional. In this task, text dependent questions have been specifically crafted to direct the reader to the important details (both implicit and explicit) in the summary that relate to the story's theme. This approach equips the reader with the skills necessary to determine the theme of the text from the summary rather than being left to sort through the details without any structure or guidance. Without employing intentional, text dependent questions, the reader may not have the schema or disciplinary skills required to identify and cite relevant implicit and explicit information from a summary to determine the theme by the end of third grade. Implementing a Writing to Learn strategy (such as answering text-dependent questions) provides students an opportunity to practice and become comfortable applying the disciplinary skills readers and writers use to make sense of and analyze text. Once students become comfortable reading summaries and answering/discussing theme related text dependent questions that point to both implicit and explicit important details, they are ready to identify the relevant information that supports the theme. In this sample, students Write to Learn using a table format. One column of the table provides the theme for students and then they are asked to identify the information from the summary that best supports the theme. If students have utilized Writing to Learn to answer text dependent questions from the summary, they should be able to identify the information from the summary they think best supports the theme. If they are not able to accurately identify details that support the theme, more time reading the summary for understanding and thinking through text dependent questions may be helpful.

Grade 8 Writing to Learn Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RL.8.2: Determine themes of a text, and analyze how they are developed through relationships of characters, setting and plot, citing textual evidence, paraphrasing or summarizing.</p> <p>C.8.2: 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>ILP 4: Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others, and the world.</p> <p>ILP 9: Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about a text.</p>

Grade 8 Reading and Writing Task

Complex characters have both good and bad traits that can point to a text’s theme. While independently reading narrative short fiction, a novel or a poem that depicts a relationship between two or more individuals, complete the [“How do character relationships develop a text’s theme?” graphic organizer](#). This graphic organizer examines the good and bad traits within a character’s relationship with another. Finally, use this relationship analysis to make a claim about themes developed in the text.

Grade 8 Reading and Writing Teacher Notes

This graphic organizer can be used with any narrative, literary text and addresses the first part of RL.8.2, “Determine themes of a text, and analyze how they are developed through relationships of characters...” with the understanding that subsequent lessons will address subsequent skills in the standard.

This task relies on the concept of relationship complexity between characters, or that relationships in text—as in real life—can exhibit both positive and negative qualities. Requiring students to look at a relationship through both a positive and negative lens not only promotes critical thinking (ILP 9), but also promotes empathic habits of viewing self, others and the world from two perspectives (ILP 4).

Differentiation Option: The final row of the graphic organizer offers two options for supporting students without changing the complexity of the text. The first question provides more teacher support for students who are early in their progress towards mastery of RL.2. The second question provides less teacher support for students who are able to determine themes independently.

Grade 10 Writing to Demonstrate Learning Sample for Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p>RI.9-10.8 Evaluate the argument, specific claims and evidence in a text, assessing the validity, reasoning, relevancy and sufficiency of the evidence; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.</p> <p>C.9-10.2 Compose informative and/or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.</p>	<p>ILP 5: Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.</p> <p>ILP 8: Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.</p>

Grade 10 Reading and Writing Task

Using your annotations on “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr., compose a paragraph delineating the argument and specific claims in paragraphs 10–11. Assess whether King’s evidence is relevant and sufficient.

Grade 10 Teacher Notes

This task is adapted from an [EngageNY](#) unit that leverages a text set including Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and three short poems. EngageNY is a free, online high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) for reading and writing available to all educators. Many districts in Kentucky have adopted HQIRs for reading and writing, and EngageNY is a helpful resource for districts that have not yet adopted an HQIR.

EngageNY’s [Grade 10 Module 2, Unit 1: How Do Authors Use Rhetoric and Word Choice to Develop Ideas and Claims?](#) details the entire learning sequence for this unit, while [Lesson 5](#) specifically addresses instruction and assessment of **RI.9-10.8** and **C.9-10.2**.

Tools to Support Teacher and Student Content Knowledge: Some students may be able to write a response to this task independently or with little instructional support. However, explicit instruction of literacy skills remains best practice to support all learners, even if they are proficient readers and writers. Below are tools to provide explicit instruction of the analysis skills required in RI.9-10.8. Notice how Writing to Learn can support Writing to Demonstrate Learning:

Grade 10 Teacher Notes

1. [Argument Delineation Tool](#): An example of [Writing to Learn](#) that demonstrates to teachers and students how to delineate an argument with grade 10 standards expectations in any informational text.
2. [Central Ideas Tracker](#): Another example of Writing to Learn that demonstrates to teachers and students not only how to determine a central idea but how to analyze how specific textual details can shape and refine a central idea over the course of a text (RI.9-10.2).
3. [Short Response Rubric and Checklist](#): An assessment tool that helps teachers and students follow grade 10 standards expectations for reading informational text and responding to the task above. This tool helps teachers and students answer the questions, “How well am I applying the skills I learned in this lesson? To what level am I demonstrating my learning?”