
6

English Language Arts

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are divided into two main categories: reading and writing. In upper elementary grades the reading standards focus on reading literature, informational texts, and foundational skills. The standards for reading literature and informational texts emphasize the importance of exposing students to a wide range of texts and tasks. The foundational skills foster students' "understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system" (Reading Standards: Foundational Skills: Introduction). In middle school the foundational skills are dropped, indicating that by sixth grade students should have demonstrated proficiency in basic language skills. The reading literature and informational text standards continue through high school, becoming increasingly more challenging.

The reading standards must be taught in conjunction with the writing standards, which focus on three specific types of writing: opinion/argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative. Students must be able to convey ideas clearly, edit and revise their writing, conduct research, and use technology to produce and publish their work. Each year students need to "demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to development and organization of ideas" (Writing Standards: Introduction), which requires that they write frequently.

In this chapter, I have designed online discussion questions and writing tasks that combine the reading and writing standards for each grade level to demonstrate how teachers can address multiple standards simultaneously using an online environment. The online activities require students to produce writing based on texts they have read. I have used texts specifically identified in the Common Core State Standards as those “illustrating the complexity, quality and range of student reading” (Standard 10). This writing then leads to a more in-depth discussion of the topic because students are encouraged to compliment, question, and build on each other’s contributions. This conversation drives a deeper level of engagement and requires that students communicate clearly and coherently to be understood.

Common Core State Standards: Upper Elementary English

The following are the reading literature standards addressed for the upper elementary grades. I have listed the Grades 4 and 5 reading standards separately because the language is slightly different. In contrast, the Grades 4 and 5 writing standards appear together as the language is almost identical.

Grades 4–5 Reading Literature Standards Addressed

RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	RL.5.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

RL.4.7	Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.	RL.5.7	Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text.
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Grades 4–5 Writing Standards Addressed

W.4-5.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
W.4-5.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.4-5.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.4-5.6	With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
W.4-5.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Note: The language describing each standard is taken directly from the Common Core State Standards Initiative website: www.corestandards.org.

The upper elementary reading standards ask students to reference details and examples from texts, identify central themes, and discuss characters, events, and settings in a story. This requires that students are able to comprehend, summarize, and think critically about what they read.

Three types of writing are required in upper elementary: opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative. Students must be able to introduce a topic clearly and support that topic with evidence and a clear explanation. Writing should be organized, developed, and “appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (Standards W.4-5.4). Technology should also be used to “produce and publish” writing (Standards W.4-5.6).

Example Online Activity 6.1. What Does Minli Learn About Greed in the Book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin?

What does Minli learn about greed in the book "Where the Mountain Meets the Moon" by Grace Lin?

Popularity: 0

Vote

Comment

Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to Upper Elementary on 11/10/2011

Greed is a central idea/theme in this book. Choose one moment from the book where you think Minli learns a lesson about greed. Explain what happens and what Minli learns about greed.

How does Minli respond to these moments when she is faced with greed? What does the reader learn about Minli's character and values? How do these moments impact her growth as a character? Use a specific example or a quote from the book to support your answer.

Suggest your own answer or vote for an answer. If you vote for another person's answer, then reply to that person explaining why you agree with them and build on their ideas.

Liland, Stein. "A Fairytale Scene." Mountain. Flickr. 23 Jun 2009. 10 Nov 2011 <http://www.flickr.com/photos/53609194@N00/3653694957/>; ; ;

Attachments



Be the first to submit an answer

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Post

View and Comment (0) Watch Topic Library

Action --Choose--

Common Core Standards

RL.5.1, RL.5.2, W.4-5.2, W.4-5.4, W.4-5.6, W.4-5.9

This question asks students to consider the theme of greed in Grace Lin's book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. When introducing

abstract concepts like theme to younger students, it is helpful to first identify a theme and ask students to discuss it. The next step in a gradual approach to teaching students about theme is to identify a few themes in a given novel and have students select one to discuss in depth. Teachers can also ask students to argue which theme they believe is most important; this can create a lively dialogue about the ideas in literature. Students learn that multiple themes are present in a given text. They also learn to analyze each theme’s degree of importance—a skill they will need as they progress through high school. Once they have a clear understanding of what a theme is, then they can begin to identify themes on their own.

This question also asks that students produce a short informative piece of writing that conveys their ideas about what Minli learns about greed in the novel. This requires that they develop their ideas with examples from the novel and analysis of those concrete details.

**Weave Online Work Into the Classroom
With Student-Centered Activities**

1. *Creative Assignment.* Ask students, in groups, to create a collage of images that they believe represent the theme of greed. They can create their collages with magazines, scissors, and glue or use Glogster to create and share a multimedia collage online.

Students love collages, and they can be used as inspiration for an original poem or story about the theme of greed.

Glogster

edu.glogster.com

Create and share multimedia posters online.

Single Free	Teacher Light	Teacher Premium	School Premium
Single license Limited features	Single license 50 students	Single license 200 students	Multilicense 2,500 students
	\$29.95 per year	\$99 per year	\$2 per student per year

2. *Written Reflection and/or Group Discussion.* Ask students to reflect on a time in their lives when they acted greedily or encountered greed in another person.

- What caused the greed?
- How did they respond in this situation?
- What did they learn from this experience?
- Was their greed justified?

Give students time to reflect in writing, then come together as a group to discuss.

3. *Copy Change Poetry-Writing Activity.* Use John Mullan's poem "Greed" to create a copy change poem students can then fill in to make their own. This is a great way to support younger writers in poetry writing. Once students have written their poems, they can publish them by reading them to their group or by posting them online.

"Greed"

by John Mullan

Be wary of Greed. It's _____
 that sneaks up _____
 It starts with " _____ "
 and ends with " _____ "
 At first _____ it has an _____
 An equal share _____, but _____
 So don't _____
 Because _____
 Greed will _____.

Example Online Activity 6.2.

Do You Prefer Reading "Casey at the Bat" or Listening to a Dramatic Reading of the Poem?

Do you prefer reading "Casey at the Bat" or listening to the dramatic reading of the poem?

Popularity: 0

Vote

Comment

Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to Upper Elementary on 11/10/2011

Read this poem then listen to the dramatic reading by James Earl Jones. Which did you enjoy more?

Compare and contrast the experience of reading versus listening to a dramatic reading of the poem. How did the audio version impact your understanding of the poem itself? Did it add to or take away from the beauty of the poem?

Once you have posted your response, reply thoughtfully to at least two of your classmates. Compliment strong points made, ask questions if something is unclear, and/or build on the ideas shared.

Spenna99. "Casey At The Bat - James Earl Jones." Online video clip. YouTube. 12 Feb 2010. 10 Nov 2011
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-21XQQcXb8>.

Attachments

James Earl Jones reads



- ☐ I liked reading the poem to myself.
- ☐ I liked listening to the dramatic reading of the poem.

View and Comment (0) Watch

Teacher's Note: You can insert the poem into the description of the question or provide a hyperlink. The poem can be found at the Baseball Almanac website: www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po_case.shtml.

Common Core Standards

RL.4-5.7, W.4-5.1, W.4-5.4, W.4-5.6, W.4-5.9

In addition to identifying and discussing key elements of a story, poem, or drama, the Standards ask students to analyze how media impacts the “meaning, tone, or beauty of a text” (Standard RL.5.7). This requires that they think critically about the impact of media.

This question asks students to compare reading a poem with the experience of listening to the dramatic reading to evaluate how the addition of media affects their comprehension and enjoyment of the poem.

In addition to motivating students to think deeply about media and literature, this strategy of pairing literature in the written form with an audio version also makes it easier for a teacher to differentiate instruction for lower-level students and/or second language learners who might struggle with the vocabulary in a given text. Many students—both native speakers and second language learners—exhaust so much energy decoding words that they are not able to focus on understanding the meaning of the words themselves. Listening to a dramatic reading provides clues about the connotation of words and phrases that aid comprehension. This question allows students to benefit from both the visual text and the auditory reading to improve overall comprehension.

Weave Online Work Into the Classroom With Student-Centered Activities

1. *Follow-Up Discussion.* Put the results of this multiple-choice question on the board in the form of a chart showing what percentage of the class said they preferred to read the poem versus listen to it. Use this to motivate a follow-up discussion about the impact of media.

Here are some possible discussion questions:

- How did the poem change when you heard it read aloud?
- Were the emotions you experienced when reading the poem different from those you experienced when listening to the dramatic reading?
- Did you enjoy the reader, James Earl Jones? Why or why not?
- Did the reader add to or distract from the poem?
- Do you think the reading changed the meaning of the poem or the points of emphasis in the poem? Explain.
- Did you struggle with the poem when you read it by yourself? If so, was it easier to understand when you listened to the audio version?

2. *Poetry Assignment.* Ask students to write a poem about a sport or activity they love. *Example Poetry Prompt:* Think about a sport, hobby,

or activity you enjoy—similar to baseball in “Casey at the Bat.” Brainstorm possible successes or failures associated with this activity, like hitting a home run or striking out in a baseball game. Then choose one success or failure to be the climactic moment in your poem. As you write your poem, consider elements of poetry: rhyme, repetition, simile, and stanzas. Try to incorporate these elements into your poem.

Publish these poems by sharing them with the class or use a creative online storytelling tool like Storybird to create an online storybook pairing their poetry with images and artwork.

Storybird

storybird.com/teachers

Create art-inspired stories to share, read or print.

Forever Free	Pro	Pro+
Up to 75 students	Up to 150 students	Up to 300 students
3 classes	Unlimited classes	Unlimited classes
Unlimited Storybirds	Unlimited Storybirds	Unlimited Storybirds
Free	\$69 per year	\$99 per year

3. *Practice Dramatic Readings.* Divide the class into groups or pairs, provide them with poetry, and give them time to practice performing a dramatic reading of their poems. Students should give each other constructive feedback on their dramatic readings. This activity gives students an opportunity to work hands-on with poetry. They must think about the way reading a poem—emphasis of words/phrases, tone of voice, dramatic pauses, and volume—can affect the meaning, tone, or beauty of that poem. Performing a dramatic reading also requires students to have a thorough understanding of the meaning and emotions of the text.

Using an online tool like Blabberize is a fun and less-intimidating approach to a dramatic reading. Students can

Blabberize

blabberize.com

Animate any image and make it talk.

Free

upload a picture (of themselves, a famous historical figure, an object, or an animal), then animate that photo with a recording of their dramatic reading.

**Common Core State Standards:
Middle School English**

The following are the reading literature standards addressed for middle school. The Grades 6, 7, and 8 reading standards are listed separately because the language is slightly different. In contrast, the writing standards for these grades appear together as the language is almost identical.

Grades 6–8 Reading Literature Standards Addressed

RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL.8.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	RL.7.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.	RL.8.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

Grades 6–8 Writing Standards Addressed

W.6-8.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
W.6-8.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.6-8.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.6-8.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
W.6-8.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Note: The language describing each standard is taken directly from the Common Core State Standards Initiative website: www.corestandards.org.

The reading standards in middle school move students from identifying and explaining to analyzing and making inferences. Students must begin to think critically about characters, events, themes, story elements, and lines of dialogue. They must compare and contrast the written text with other representations of that same text in different mediums using analysis to support their comparisons. The focus transitions from comprehension and explanation to critical thinking and analysis.

In middle school, opinion pieces develop into argument writing, which is slightly different from persuasive writing. Argument writing convinces “the audience with the perceived merit and reasonableness of the claims and proof offered” (Owens, 2011, para. 1). In contrast, persuasive writing attempts to “persuade using . . . ‘the emotions the writer evokes in the audience’” (para. 1). The emphasis in argument writing is to present a logical argument that is supported by strong evidence. In addition to argument/opinion writing, informative/explanatory and narrative writing continue to be emphasized in the standards for middle school.

Example Online Activity 6.3. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*: Do You Think the Boycott of the Wallace's Store Was the Best Way for the African American Community to Fight Racism?

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry: Do you think the boycott of the Wallace's store was the best way for the black community to fight racism?


Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to Middle School on 10/07/2011


Vote yes or no, then clearly state why you think the boycott of the Wallace's store was or was not the best way for the African American community to fight racism. This discussion will be the basis for your argument essay on the novel, so keep your examples specific and your explanations clear.

Once you have posted your response, reply to at least 3 of your peers. Compliment strong points made, ask questions and build on ideas presented.

Kaul, Abhinav. "Montgomery Bus Boycott." Protest. BlackPast.org. 10 Nov 2011 <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/montgomery-bus-boycott-1955-56>.


Popularity: 0
Vote
Comment





 YES


 NO

Attachments

Boycott



 View and Comment (0)  Watch  Topic Library

Action --Choose--

Common Core Standards

RL.6-8.1, W.6-8.1, W.6-8.4, W.6-8.6, W.6-8.9

This yes-or-no discussion question is the first step in writing an argument essay. It is helpful for middle school students to have the time and space to articulate an argument, explain and support their position, and engage in a discussion about their position prior to writing an essay. Students may initially feel they have a strong argument; however, they can learn a great deal from reading their peers' perspectives. Often they will hear a point of view or argument they had

not considered. This provides them with possible counterarguments that need to be addressed in their essays.

Beginning an argument essay with a debate-style discussion question online not only creates interest but also teaches the importance of backing up statements with strong evidence. Students identify areas of weakness and highlight them in an online debate or discussion. This challenges members of the class to carefully select moments from the text and quotes that are strong enough to justify their position on an issue. This translates into stronger concrete details and more thorough analysis of those details in the actual essay.

Weave Online Work Into the Classroom With Student-Centered Activities

1. *Creative Research Project.* Assign groups of students an important historical figure from the civil rights movement to research.

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Rosa Parks
- Malcolm X
- Andrew Goodman

Wix

www.wix.com

Create a flash website. Drag and drop images and information without programming.

Free

Students then create an informational poster to present to the class or design an informational website using Wix to teach others about this important figure and his or her impact on history.

2. *Timeline Research Activity.* Divide the class into groups and assign each group a topic to research.

- Jim Crow laws
- Harlem Renaissance
- Formation of the NAACP
- Separate but equal
- Scottsboro trial

Then have each group collaborate to create a timeline detailing the key events and people related to this topic. Students can use Tiki-Toki to create an interactive multimedia timeline of their topic, incorporating text, images, and video. *Note:* If a group of students work together on a single Tiki-Toki timeline, a teacher can save money because a fewer number of timelines will be needed.

Tiki-Toki

www.tiki-toki.com

Create a Web-based multimedia timeline.

Free	Bronze Account	Silver Account	Education Account
1 free timeline No group edits	5 timelines per month Group edit capability	25 timelines per month Group edit capability	Teacher gets a Silver Account, and up to 50 students get a Bronze Account
	\$5 per month	\$20 per month	\$100 per year

Teacher's Note: The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow website (www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/) has information about the Jim Crow laws, the formation of the NAACP, and the birth of the civil rights movement.

Read, Write, Think

www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/venn-diagram-circles-30006.html

Create a variety of Venn diagrams online.

Free

3. *Group Research and Venn Diagram Activity.* Have students research the Montgomery Bus Boycott and then compare it to the boycott in the novel. How were they similar? How were they different? What inspired each? How did each end? What did each accomplish? Students create a Venn diagram that clearly identifies their main points.

Teacher's Note: The Montgomery Advertiser hosts a site (montgomeryboycott.com) that has news articles, biographies, information on

History.com

www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement

Access a wide variety of photos, videos, articles, speeches, and primary and secondary sources.

Free

Rosa Parks, and a timeline of events. History.com also has information on the Civil Rights Movement, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington.

Example Online Activity 6.4. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*: How Does Guilt Motivate Action in the Novel?

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: How Does Guilt Motivate Action in the Novel?

Popularity: 0
Vote
Comment

Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to Middle School on 10/07/2011

Select 3 examples from the book that demonstrate the way guilt motivates action. Consider the following in your explanation:

- Who is experiencing guilt?
- Why does this character feel guilty?
- What does this guilt motivate this character to do in the book?
- Why is guilt such a powerful emotion?

This discussion will be the basis for your informative essay on the novel, so keep your examples specific and your explanations clear.

Once you have posted your response, reply to at least 3 of your peers. Compliment strong points made, suggest areas for development, ask questions and build on ideas presented.

Nadolski, Jacob. "Tom Sawyer's Mill." Mill. Flickr. 1 Sept 2006. 10 Nov 2011 <http://www.flickr.com/photos/122385378@N02/2186981104/>.

Attachments



Post a Comment

Rich text editor toolbar with buttons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Strikethrough (ABC), Text color (x), Background color (x), Link (Ω), Unlink (Ω), Bulleted list (≡), Numbered list (≡), Indent (≡), Outdent (≡), Decrease indent (≡), Increase indent (≡), and a full screen icon (≡).

Large text input area for writing a comment.

Post

Last 0 posts:

View and Comment (0) Watch Topic Library

Action --Choose--

Common Core Standards

RL.6-8.1, RL.6-8.2, W.6-8.2, W.6-8.4, W.6-8.6, W.6-8.9

Informative/explanatory writing in middle school requires that students be able to “examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection” (Standards W.6-8.2). Instead of focusing on a single moment or section of the text to discuss and explain, students must be able to write about the topic in the context of the entire piece of literature. The scope of writing is much larger, yet the writing must stay clear, focused, and concise. The topic must be developed with “relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations” (Standards W.6-8.2). Instead of relying solely on summarized examples, the textual evidence and subsequent analysis of that evidence must be more specific.

This question asks students to consider the theme of guilt and how that emotion motivates action in the novel. Instead of focusing on a particular section of the novel, students must think about the entire work of literature. They have to identify three moments from the novel when they believe guilt motivates action. This ties together the reading standards and the writing standards in a single task; students must analyze a central theme and use it to write a clear informative piece of writing.

Weave Online Work Into the Classroom With Student-Centered Activities

1. *Written Reflection.* Ask students to think of a time in their lives when they were motivated by guilt. Have them write about it and then share in groups.

- What did they do that caused them to experience guilt?
- How did feeling guilty motivate them?
- Did the guilt they experienced keep them from making similar mistakes in the future?

These reflective writing assignments can also be done using an online journal, like Penzu (for more on Penzu, see p. 119). Online journal entries can be shared, locked, or printed, allowing students to keep their reflective writing in one location throughout the school year.

2. *Group Discussion.* Divide the class into small groups, and ask them to discuss the following questions.

- Does Huck ever experience guilt in the novel? If so, when? How does he respond to guilt? If not, why not?
- How does Huck respond to Tom's feelings of guilt?
- How are Tom and Huck different in terms of their values and morals?
- How did Huck's childhood impact his feelings about right and wrong?

Once students have discussed these questions, have them use their ideas to create a Venn diagram comparing Huck and Tom.

3. *Artistic Activity.* Have students create a comic strip visually representing an important scene from the novel involving both Tom and Huck. The comic strip should reveal aspects of their personalities and focus on a central theme in the novel. Students can draw their own comics by hand or use an online comic maker tool like Pixton.

Pixton

pixton.com/schools

Create a comic online. Design your own characters, upload pictures, add sound, use a variety of speech bubbles, then print, download, or embed.

30-day free trial with 50 students

Pricing for educators depends on number of students and amount of time needed.

Common Core State Standards: High School English

The following are the reading literature standards addressed for the high school level. The Grades 9–10 and 11–12 reading standards are listed separately because the language is slightly different. In contrast, the writing standards for all four grades appear together as the language is almost identical.

Grades 9–12 Reading Literature Standards Addressed

RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RL.9-10.7	Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.	RL.11-12.7	Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

Grades 9–12 Writing Standards Addressed

W.9-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W.9-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.9-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
W.9-12.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Note: The language describing each standard is taken directly from the Common Core State Standards Initiative website: www.corestandards.org.

At the high school level, students should be able to use strong textual evidence to support both the explicit and implicit meaning of a given text. Students must be able to make inferences based on the information available and identify areas of ambiguity in the text.

They must move from simply identifying and discussing a central idea to analyzing how multiple themes in a given work “interact and build on one another” (Standards RI.11-12.2). Attention to an author’s use of diction, syntax, and figurative language is also emphasized at this level. Students need to demonstrate an understanding of how language can be used to create meaning and achieve a particular tone. Beyond the language, students must also think critically about how the author has chosen to order events in a text.

High school builds on the same writing requirements established in middle school. Argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing are identified specifically in the Standards. Even though the types of writing required are the same, “students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources” (Writing Standards: Introduction).

Example Online Activity 6.5. *A Raisin in the Sun*: What a Difference a Film Can Make!

Common Core Standards

RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.7, RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.7, W.9-12.4, W.9-12.6, W.9-12.9

This discussion question asks students to evaluate different movie versions of the play *A Raisin in the Sun* and analyze the way that the different versions interpret the same text. Students are inundated by media, so it is important that they think critically about that media. This question asks them to consider how a director’s decisions, casting, and set design can impact the overall effect of the performance.

Teacher’s Note: The video clip from the 1961 film version of *A Raisin in the Sun* used in this question can be found on YouTube.

Weave Online Work Into the Classroom With Student-Centered Activities

A Raisin in the Sun: What a difference a film can make!

Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to High School on 10/07/2011

Popularity: 0
Vote
Comment

Watch this clip of the 1961 version of *A Raisin in the Sun* and compare it to the 2008 version we watched in class. Analyze how Act I, scene i is interpreted in each film. Consider the following questions:

- How are they similar to or different from one another?
- Which film version follows the language of the play more closely?
- Which version deviates more from the actual language of the play?
- How do the actors in each film version impact the emotions portrayed in this scene?
- Which film version portrays the setting of the Younger family's apartment more accurately?
- Compare any other details that stand out to you as significant.


Use details and/or quotes from the play and both film versions to support your analysis. Once you have posted your response, reply thoughtfully to at least 2 other students.

Ilovesidneypoitier (Poster). "A Raisin in the Sun (1961) 1/14." Online video clip. YouTube. 13 Jul 2009. 10 Nov 2011 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xgxLmnzURc.;](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xgxLmnzURc.)

Attachments

A Raisin in the Sun (1961)

A Raisin in the Sun (1961) 1/14



Be the first to submit an answer

B

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x_2

x^2

Ω

∞

$\frac{1}{x}$

$\frac{1}{x^2}$

$\frac{1}{x^3}$

$\frac{1}{x^4}$

$\frac{1}{x^5}$

$\frac{1}{x^6}$

Post

View and Comment (0)

Watch

1. *Acting.* Assign roles to small acting groups for subsequent scenes from the play. Give students time to read their roles and practice performing the scenes in their acting groups. Then have them perform their scenes for the class. As a class, discuss the way acting helps to reinforce students' understanding of each scene.

Groups can take photos and video clips of their scenes using mobile devices in the classroom and then use these to create an Animoto video.

Animoto

www.animoto.com

This online video-making tool enables students to pair photos and short videos with music to create a high-quality video that can be shared. Students can choose from a collection of images, video clips, and music or upload their own.

Lite	Plus	Pro
Unlimited 30-second videos	Unlimited feature-length films	Unlimited feature-length films
Themed video styles	Themed video styles	Themed video styles plus exclusive pro video styles
600+ tracks of music	600+ tracks of music	1,100+ tracks of music
		HD upgrades included
		Download to computer and DVD
Free	\$5 per month	\$39 per month

2. *Soundtrack Project*. Students select a song to pair with each scene of the play and explain their choice in writing. How does the song match the scene in terms of themes, action, characters, and/or pacing? Students can do this individually or collaboratively in pairs or groups, then discuss their choices.

This can also be facilitated as an ongoing online project in which students post their song selection and analysis each night after they complete a scene. During my Shakespeare units—*Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*—I have students select a song for every scene of the play, then post their song and analysis online. I highlight some of the strongest selections and play the songs associated with them (when I can find them online) the next day in class. It is a fun way to get students connecting with literature using music—something they are passionate about.

3. *Rewrite the Last Scene*. In writing groups, ask students to rewrite the last scene of *A Raisin in the Sun* with character lines and stage directions. Groups can act out or film their rewritten final scene to share with the class. Videos could be edited and paired with music online using iMovie or Movie Maker and then shared on a video-hosting site like SchoolTube or YouTube Education.

Example Online Activity 6.6. *Fahrenheit 451*: Transition From Reading to Burning . . .

Fahrenheit 451: Analyze the Transition from Reading to Burning...

Popularity: 0
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Comment

Posted By C. Tucker Moderator to High School on 11/10/2011

Choose one of the factors below that contributed to the transition from valuing books to burning them. Begin by clearly stating the factor you are focusing on then develop your analysis of the effect of this factor on society.

How did the factor you chose impact the role of literature in people's lives? Why were books, literature and knowledge in general devalued? Support your statements with quotes from the text.

Pcorreia. "Book Burning." Burning. Flickr. 12 May 2007. 10 Nov 2011 <http://www.flickr.com/photos/70458860@N00/517900257/>;

Attachments



- ☐ Advances in Technology
- ☐ Population Growth
- ☐ Speed of Life Increasing
- ☐ Shortened School Day
- ☐ Pursuit of Pleasure
- ☐ Increased Physical Activity/Organized Sports
- ☐ Minority Pressure/Fear of Offending

View and Comment (0) Watch

Common Core Standards

RL.9-12.1, W.9-12.2, W.9-12.4, W.9-12.6, W.9-12.9

This question asks that students focus on one factor that is responsible for the transition from reading books to burning them in Bradbury's novel. The sequence of events and multitude of factors identified in the novel are often confusing for students who struggle to understand the subtle ways these factors overlapped and influenced society's changing views on literature and education. This question simplifies the task of understanding this complex shift by asking students to focus on a single factor. Then they can read what their peers have said and benefit from all the ideas shared. This results in a better understanding of the factors at work, making it possible for students to draw inferences based on the text. Ultimately, they work as a group to put the pieces together to understand how Bradbury's society evolved.

Weave Online Work Into the Classroom With Student-Centered Activities

1. *Create a Flowchart.* Ask small groups of students to use what they learned about the transition from reading to burning in Bradbury's futuristic society to create a flowchart of events that show this progression. They should work as a group to create 8–10 images that represent

the changes that took place. Pairing the images with quotes from the text can make this activity a bit more challenging for advanced students. Students can draw their flowcharts on construction paper to be posted around the room, or they can use Gliffy, a collaborative online flowchart tool.

2. *Debate.* Could this transition from reading books to burning them happen in our society? Break the class into two groups to debate this topic.

3. *Research.* Ask groups of students to research an example of book burning from history. Select either the Cultural Revolution in China

Gliffy

www.gliffy.com

Gliffy is a collaborative tool that students can use to design and create high-quality flowcharts and diagrams together.

Free

when Mao Zedong burned books or the Holocaust in Europe when Hitler burned books. Then discuss:

- What types of books were burned?
- Why were they burned?
- Who did the burning?
- What was the impact on society?
- How did the population at large react to this?

Students can design an informational poster, using Glogster (for more on Glogster, see p. 93), or the website Wix (for more on Wix, see p. 101).

Chapter Summary

The Standards for English Language Arts are broken into two categories: reading and writing. Because the Standards build on the skills taught in the previous year, it is important that students be able to demonstrate competency at the end of each academic year.

The reading standards stress frequency and variety; students should read often from a wide range of texts. Teachers using an online learning platform or learning management system can make an array of texts more accessible by embedding documents—stories, articles, poetry, and biographies. Engaging students in online discussions about the literature they are reading encourages them to employ higher-order thinking to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what they read.

Online discussions and group work also require that students articulate their ideas in writing, which addresses the writing standards as well. Learning to communicate thoughts clearly and concisely takes practice. If online conversations and group work are part of the curriculum, students constantly fine-tune their writing to produce clear and coherent work.

The writing standards specifically focus on three types of writing: argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative. Argument/opinion writing must make a clear claim, then support that claim with strong evidence and analysis. Informative/explanatory writing examines and explains complex ideas through the use of concrete examples and analysis. Finally, narrative writing develops real or imagined events, situations, or experiences while effectively using language and narrative techniques to develop this type of writing.

This chapter provides examples of online discussion questions, topics, and writing prompts as well as student-centered classroom

activities that require students to satisfy multiple standards at once. Writing is required throughout, but several of the prompts are specifically intended to develop argument/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing as described in the Common Core State Standards. Many of these online tasks can be developed into process papers if teachers want to continue to build on the work done online.

Book Study Questions

1. What is the biggest challenge associated with teaching reading? How might you address this challenge using a blended instruction approach to reading, understanding, and analyzing a text? How would the online space help you improve your reading program? How can you encourage your students to read more? Do you believe it will help motivate students to read if you stress how much reading can help them improve their own writing? Brainstorm creative solutions using a blended learning model. For example, consider posting samples of excellent writing online and suggest to students that if they like the samples, they should consider reading the works from which the samples are taken.
2. Do you currently use media in your reading program? If so, what types do you use? How have your students responded to media? Where do you find your media? How does it help you differentiate instruction and appeal to multiple learning styles? Do you have resources you would recommend for quality media for English teachers?
3. How can media support lower-level readers in your class? What kinds of media would make the readings more accessible and less intimidating? What are the benefits of having students listen to a recording or watch a film version in addition to reading a text?
4. What is the biggest challenge you face in teaching students how to write well? How might a blended instruction approach to writing help you address this challenge? How would the online space help improve your writing program? Brainstorm creative solutions using a blended learning model.
5. How would you use the online space to actively engage students in peer editing? What strategies would you use to keep

the peer feedback focused and valuable? What benefits would you expect online peer editing to have on the overall quality of writing?

6. How can using an online learning platform help you scaffold writing assignments so they better support all students in reaching grade-level proficiency in writing? Think about a writing assignment you currently use with students—how could you use the online space to better support students during the different parts of the writing process?
7. How can the online space be leveraged to create more effective writing groups to provide a support network as students write? How many students do you think you would ideally have in each writing group? How might you group students to ensure that writing groups are successful and productive?
8. How can you use online media tools to allow students to explore digital writing and develop media literacy? Are there online tools you currently use or are interested in using to support students in creating multimedia representations of their writing? For example, would you enjoy having students create an iMovie of an original narrative or use a digital tool like Storybird to transform their story into a digital book with original photographs or artwork? What are the benefits of having students pair media with writing?

Reference

- Owens, B. (2011, January 26). Common Core State Standards FAQ #2: Argumentative vs. persuasive writing [Web log]. Retrieved from <http://emcpublishing-mirrorwindows.blogspot.com/2011/01/common-core-state-standards-q-2.html>