



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 2A: Unit 2: Lesson 12

Writing an Argument Essay: Planning the Essay



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Writing an Argument Essay:
Planning The Essay

| Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS) | |
|---|---|
| I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1) I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.8.4) | |
| Supporting Learning Targets | Ongoing Assessment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can select reasons and support them with evidence to support my claim about <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>.• I can explain how the details develop the reasons that support my claim.• I can acknowledge and respond to a counterclaim. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exit ticket |



Writing an Argument Essay:
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| Agenda | Teaching Notes |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Entry Task: Writing Improvement Tracker (10 minutes) B. Reviewing Learning Targets (2 minutes) 2. Work Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continuing to Plan the Essay (20 minutes) B. Essay Plan Talk-Through (10 minutes) 3. Closing and Assessment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Debriefing Learning Targets (3 minutes) 4. Homework <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Revise your To Kill a Mockingbird essay planner, due next class. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this lesson, students start a Writing Improvement Tracker that they will return to after writing the essay in each module for the rest of the year. The purpose of this is to develop students' awareness of their strengths and challenges, as well as ask students to strategize to address their challenges. Self-assessment and goal-setting helps students take ownership of their learning. To begin, students will review the rubric from their essay in Module 1 and complete the Writing Improvement Tracker from Module 1. If rubrics from Module 1 are not available, pass out blank New York State Expository Writing Evaluation Rubrics and ask students to recall as best they can. • During Work Time Part B, consider working with students who still need help understanding what an argument essay is or how to write a claim with reasons and evidence for an argument essay. • In advance: Make sure students have access to their essay rubrics from Module 1. If the completed rubric is not accessible, provide a blank version of the rubric used in Module 1. • Review exit tickets from Lesson 10 to make sure all students are starting with appropriate claims and reasons. • Prepare the following passage from the model essay to post, either on board, chart paper, or with the document camera: • When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it. For instance, Scout says, "If I said as sunnily as I could, 'Hey, Mrs. Dubose,' I would receive for an answer, 'Don't you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!'" (99) This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake. • In advance: Decide which Discussion Appointment to use today. • Review: Fist to Five strategy (Appendix.) |



Writing an Argument Essay:
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| Lesson Vocabulary | Materials |
|---------------------|---|
| claim, counterclaim | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Improvement Tracker (one per student) • Student essay rubrics from Module 1 (one per student) • Model To Kill a Mockingbird Essay Planner (optional; for Teacher Reference and/or for students who need additional support) • Document camera • Students' exit tickets (from Lesson 10; collected by teacher at the end of Lesson 10) |

| Opening | Meeting Students' Needs |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Entry Task: Writing Improvement Tracker (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As students enter the room, distribute students' essay rubrics from Module 1 and the Writing Improvement Tracker. • Explain to students that this is a tracker to help them identify what strengths and challenges they have in writing. They will continue to use this tracker for the rest of the year. • Give students several minutes to reflect on and record their strengths and challenges from Module 1. • Then, ask students to turn to a partner and share a strength and a challenge from the Module 1 essay. Ask them also to talk about how knowing these will help them write their essay on <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing self-assessment and reflection supports all learners, but research shows it supports struggling learners most. |
| <p>B. Reviewing Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read learning targets aloud and let students know that they will be working on planning their argument essays today. | |



Writing an Argument Essay:
Planning The Essay

| Work Time | Meeting Students' Needs |
|--|--|
| <p>A. Continuing to Plan the Essay (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to get out their copies of the model essay; project the Model To Kill a Mockingbird Essay Planner on the document camera. Read the introduction paragraph aloud as the students read along silently. After reading, ask students to turn and talk to an elbow partner about what the author does in the introduction. Cold call on pairs to share their ideas. Listen for: “She says the title and author of the book,” “She introduces Mrs. Dubose, the character the claim is focused on,” and “She ends the introduction with her claim.”• Read the three body paragraphs aloud while students read along silently. After reading, ask students to talk with their elbow partner about how this third body paragraph is different from the first two body paragraphs. Cold call on pairs and listen for: “It focuses on a counterclaim,” “The author gives a reason to support the counterclaim and develops it,” and “The author responds to the thinking in the counterclaim with good thinking of his own.”• Lastly, read the conclusion aloud while students read along silently. Ask students to talk with their partner about what the author does in the conclusion. Cold call on pairs and listen for: “The author restates her claim” and “The author summarizes her reasons.”• Remind students that they have started to work on planning the first two body paragraphs of their essay and now they will get the chance to plan the other paragraphs.• Ask students to get out their To Kill a Mockingbird essay planners that they worked on for homework and their Supporting Evidence-Based Claims graphic organizers. Return students’ exit tickets from Lesson 10. Tell students that they should make any revision they need to on their essay planner.• Circulate as students are working. Push students to be clear and explicit in their plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graphic organizers provide the necessary scaffolding especially critical for learners with lower levels of language proficiency and/or learning. |



Writing an Argument Essay:
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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students' Needs |
|---|---|
| <p>B. Essay Plan Talk-Through (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite students to meet with their selected Discussion Appointment partner to talk through their essay plans with their partners. Make sure that students know not to read straight from their plans; instead, they should tell their partner what their essay will be about and how they are going to develop their claim.• As students are working, circulate and listen. If a student is being unclear or imprecise, ask questions like: “How does that support your claim?” or “How are those ideas related?”• After students have had the chance to share, let them know that for homework they should revise the ideas in their essay planner to make sure their argument is logical and clear. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If students are ready for a challenge, push them to include four body paragraphs in their essay instead of three.• For students who may need more support planning their essay, a Model To Kill a Mockingbird Essay Planner (optional) is included in the supporting materials. Consider using it with individual students or small groups during this time to guide them through the process.• Giving students the opportunity to talk through their argument allows students to ensure that the ideas in their essay are logical and flow well. Students can also learn from each other and so strengthen their own writing. |



Writing an Argument Essay:
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| Closing and Assessment | Meeting Students' Needs |
|--|--|
| <p>A. Debriefing Learning Targets (3 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the first learning target aloud. Ask students to rate their mastery of that learning target with the Fist to Five strategy. Repeat for the other two learning targets as well:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* I can select reasons and support them with evidence to support my claim about To Kill a Mockingbird.* I can explain how the details develop the reasons that support my claim.* I can acknowledge and respond to a counterclaim. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Checking in with learning targets helps students self-assess their own learning. This research-based strategy supports struggling learners most. |
| Homework | Meeting Students' Needs |
| <p>A. Revise your To Kill a Mockingbird essay planner, due next class.</p> <p><i>Note: Notice any students who rate themselves with a 2 or lower in Fist to Five on any of the learning targets; check in with them before they begin to draft their essay in the next class.</i></p> <p><i>The next lesson provides time for students to write their best independent draft of their essay. It assumes students will use computers to write the essay. Be sure to reserve laptops or the use of a computer lab, if necessary. If using computers is not possible in your classroom, consider giving students more time to handwrite their essays.</i></p> | |



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Supporting Materials



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Writing Improvement Tracker

Name: _____

Date: _____

Strategies to Improve Writing

Revise my writing (or my planning) multiple times

Ask myself, “Does this make sense?”

Look at other models

Read the necessary texts closely

Read others’ work

Talk through my ideas with an adult

Ask questions when I have them

Use quote sandwiches

Take a break and reread with fresh eyes

Have another student write the gist of my paragraphs and make sure they match what I thought they were



Writing Improvement Tracker

Essay from Module 1

Directions: Look at the first two rows of the New York State Expository Writing rubric.

1. What did I do well in my essay?

2. What do I need to improve?

3. What is my goal for the next module for those areas? (Be specific. “I will do better” is too general. Name a specific skill to improve, such as “I will use stronger evidence in my writing”)

4. Look at the list of strategies at the top of this tracker. What one or two strategies will I use to meet my goal in the next module?



Writing Improvement Tracker

Essay from Module 2

Directions: Look at the first two rows of the New York State Expository Writing rubric.

1. What did I do well in my essay?

2. What do I need to improve?

3. What is my goal for the next module for those areas? (Be specific. “I will do better” is too general. Name a specific skill to improve, such as “I will use stronger evidence in my writing”)

4. Look at the list of strategies at the top of this tracker. What one or two strategies will I use to meet my goal in the next module?



Writing Improvement Tracker

Essay from Module 3

Directions: Look at the first two rows of the New York State Expository Writing rubric.

1. What did I do well in my essay?

2. What do I need to improve?

3. What is my goal for the next module for those areas? (Be specific. “I will do better” is too general. Name a specific skill to improve, such as “I will use stronger evidence in my writing”)

4. Look at the list of strategies at the top of this tracker. What one or two strategies will I use to meet my goal in the next module?



Writing Improvement Tracker

Position Paper from Module 4

Directions: Look at the first two rows of Argument Writing rubric.

1. What did I do well in my essay?

2. What in my writing improved this year?

3. What strategy helped me the most?

4. What improvement am I most proud of?



Model *To Kill a Mockingbird* Essay Planner
(optional)

Focus Question: Does it make sense for Atticus to defend Tom Robinson?

| I. Introduction | |
|---|---|
| A. Hook to capture the reader's interest and attention | Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose is a grumpy old woman |
| B. Name the book and author | To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee |
| C. Give brief background information to the reader about the book (characters, plot overview, etc.) | Mrs. Dubose is grumpy. She spends her days in bed, but sometimes sits on her porch in her wheelchair. She yells at Jem and Scout as they walk by. |
| D. Claim | Despite her rough exterior, Mrs. Dubose takes a stand for herself, determined to overcome a morphine addiction before she dies. Because of her high expectations for herself and her courage, it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand. |



Model *To Kill a Mockingbird* Essay Planner
(optional)

| II. Body Paragraph 1 | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| First reason to support your claim | Mrs. Dubose has high expectations for herself |
| A. Topic sentence | The first reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is that she has high expectations for people, including herself. |
| B. Quote sandwich 1 | When Jem and Scout walk by her house, Mrs. Dubose would not let any small transgression go by without commenting on it. For instance, Scout says “If I said as sunnily as I could, ‘Hey, Mrs. Dubose,’ I would receive for an answer, ‘Don’t you say hey to me you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!’” (99) This shows that Mrs. Dubose holds high expectations of others, even if they make a small mistake. |
| C. Quote sandwich 2 | Just as she had high expectations for Scout and Jem’s behavior, she had high expectations of herself. After her death, Atticus reports that, “She said she was going to leave this world beholden to nothing and nobody.” (111) This shows that Mrs. Dubose meant to hold herself to the kind of expectations that she holds others to. |
| D. Quote sandwich 3 | |
| Concluding Sentence | <p>Mrs. Dubose meant to hold herself to the kind of expectations that she holds others to, even if it was going to be very difficult for her.</p> <p>Note: The concluding sentence is also part of the second quote sandwich in this paragraph.</p> |



Model *To Kill a Mockingbird* Essay Planner
(optional)

| III. Body Paragraph 2 | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Second reason to support your claim | Mrs. Dubose is courageous. |
| A. Topic sentence | The second reason it makes sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand is her courage. |
| B. Quote sandwich 1 | As Atticus says to Jem, Mrs. Dubose was in a lot of pain. “Most of time you were reading to her, I doubt if she heard a word you said. Her whole mind and body were concentrated on that alarm clock.” (111) This shows that Mrs. Dubose needed to find a way to keep her mind off the pain. The fact that she was successful shows how brave she was. |
| C. Quote sandwich 2 | Atticus says to Jem: “I wanted you to see something about her—I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand.... She was the bravest person I ever knew.” (112) This demonstrates that Mrs. Dubose has lots of courage, even though she seems so hateful. |
| D. Quote sandwich 3 | |
| Concluding Sentence | Mrs. Dubose shows courage by taking a stand for herself. |



Model *To Kill a Mockingbird* Essay Planner
(optional)

| IV. Body Paragraph 3 | |
|--|---|
| Counterclaim | It does not make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take a stand for herself. |
| A. Topic sentence | Some might say that it does not make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take this stand. |
| B. Reason to support counterclaim | It is true that her decision to overcome her addiction increases her pain. |
| C. Quote sandwich 1 | As Atticus says about her morphine addiction, “She’d have spent the rest of her life on it and died without so much agony, but she was too contrary ...” (111) This shows that it was agony to get herself off morphine. |
| D. Quote sandwich 2 | |
| E. Response to counterclaim | However, that reinforces the idea that Mrs. Dubose is, in fact, a brave woman. |
| F. Explanation of response to counterclaim | If she tolerates pain in order to die how she wants to, it means that she is courageous. |
| G. Concluding Sentence | Therefore, it does make sense for Mrs. Dubose to take that stand. |



Model *To Kill a Mockingbird* Essay Planner
(optional)

| V. Conclusion | |
|---|---|
| A Restate claim | It is clear that Mrs. Dubose’s decision to take a stand for herself makes sense. |
| B. Summarize reasons | She holds herself to the same high expectations that she holds others to. Mrs. Dubose is also very brave and faces pain and suffering to take her stand. |
| C. Explain why your view is worth consideration by the reader | Mrs. Dubose shows how important it is to stand up for yourself, even “... when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.” (112). |