

PART 4

EXPLAINING UNDERSTANDING

"The true purpose of education is to produce citizens"

OBJECTIVE:

Students learn how to summarize and explain what they have learned from their reading, questioning, and analysis of texts. Students read and analyze three related texts.



ACTIVITIES

1- INTRODUCTION TO CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The teacher introduces the final culminating text-centered writing and comparative discussion.

2- READING AND DISCUSSING RELATED TEXTS

Students listen to three related texts and discuss them as a class.

3- QUESTIONING AND ANALYZING TEXTS INDEPENDENTLY

Students select (or are assigned) one of the texts to discuss with a small group and then analyze independently.

4- INDEPENDENT WRITING ACTIVITY

Students use their analysis to independently write a detail-based explanation of one of the texts.

ESTIMATED TIME: 3 days

MATERIALS:

Texts #1-9
Questioning Texts Tool
Analyzing Details Tool
Guiding Questions Handout



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RI.9-10.1 RI.9-10.2 RI.9-10.6

RI.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.

RI.9-10.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RI.9-10.10 RI.9-10.4 W.9-10.2 W.9-10.9

RI.9-10.10: By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

W.9-10.2: 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.9-10.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The teacher introduces the final culminating text-centered writing and comparative discussion.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

The final two parts (4 and 5) of the unit are a two-stage culminating activity in which students first analyze and write about one of three related texts, then lead a comparative discussion about the three texts. In the first stage, students are introduced to the texts and choose one to read closely with a small, “expert” group. Building on their collaborative close reading, students independently analyze and write about their text. In the second stage of the culminating activity, students return to their small groups to discuss their writing and draft a question that compares their text to the other texts in the unit. Students then “jigsaw” to a new group and use their analysis, writing, and comparative question to facilitate and participate in a structured text-centered discussion with students who have analyzed the other two texts.

The culminating text-centered discussions could be given in an “academic panel” format. In this format, student groups have their discussions in front of the class (and invited community members) to simulate real-world and college panel discussions. See the description at the end of Part 5 for more details.

ACTIVITY 2: READING AND DISCUSSING RELATED TEXTS

Students listen to three related texts and discuss them as a class.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

- Read aloud the texts #7, #8, and #9. Alternatively, strong readers can be asked to read aloud.
- Lead a discussion of the students’ first impressions of the texts, using the Guiding Questions to help facilitate discussion.

TEXTUAL NOTES

The first text is by Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D Roosevelt and is the easiest of the three texts for readers. The second is by Thomas Jefferson and the third is written by our current Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The three texts provide interesting perspectives on the role of public education in the United States. The texts are all rich with details and descriptive language, providing a fitting culmination to the unit’s focus and topic. However, they present varying degrees of reading challenges for students due to the more archaic language and craft in the Jefferson (1430L). The Roosevelt text has been abridged to provide a piece that still has complex ideas while being accessible to lower level readers (1140). The Duncan text (1250 L) is much easier to understand because of its modern writing style and vocabulary.

ACTIVITY 2: READING AND DISCUSSING RELATED TEXTS (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

TEXTUAL NOTES

Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education:

The Roosevelt piece presents her belief that the purpose of a strong education is to prepare educated citizens that can participate in the country's democratic practices. In the first two paragraphs she uses Theodore Roosevelt as an example of a citizen who believed in "service" to one's country, not only militarily but also in politics. She then moves on and discusses the education system in the U.S. and espouses a very progressive viewpoint of how some teachers and schools are preparing students to be educated, participating citizens and what those few do to cultivate that in students. This abridged version ends with some candor on teacher pay in the U.S. and how we value different professions which still contains relevance for teachers and students 75 years later.

Notes on the State of Virginia:

This report by Thomas Jefferson describes his carefully crafted plan for creating a compulsory system of schools in Virginia that give a basic "reading, writing and arithmetic" level of education to all citizens but then pulls the "geniuses" from this level and continues to educate them in higher grades and eventually at the university (William and Mary). He continues by stating the purpose behind educating all citizens is because "every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone." His belief is that an educated electorate is needed to hold the elected officials accountable. He uses examples from Great Britain where corrupt government officials have and now checks on their authority.

The Vision of Education Reform in the United States:

In this 2010 speech Arne Duncan highlights the importance of raising educational standards in the United States and abroad in order to remain economically competitive. Duncan argues that one purpose for education should be to ensure that students are prepared for the jobs of the current Information Age and, in-turn, are contributing to the economy of our country. Duncan begins this speech by discussing the positive global effects of raising education standards here and abroad, and then transitions in the middle by explaining the challenges faced when trying to raise achievement.

ACTIVITY 3: QUESTIONING AND ANALYZING TEXTS INDEPENDENTLY

Students select (or are assigned) one of the texts to discuss with a small group and then analyze independently.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students may be assigned a text based on their reading comprehension levels, interests, or developing skills (as demonstrated earlier in the unit), or they may be allowed to choose a text following their initial reading and small group discussion of the three. Either way, each student will be responsible for doing a close reading, questioning, analysis, and summary of one of the three related texts.

SMALL GROUP CLOSE READING USING THE QUESTIONING TEXTS TOOL

- Small “expert” groups read one of the texts collaboratively using the Questioning Texts Tool.
- Each group member fills in his/her own Questioning Texts Tool for their assigned text, and each develops a separate text-specific question through their discussion.

INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS USING THE ANALYZING DETAILS TOOL

- Students independently complete an Analyzing Texts Tool using a text-specific question (his/her own or one from another group member).
- Students might optionally return to their expert groups to discuss their analysis.

MODEL TEXT QUESTIONING SEQUENCE

Guiding Question(s)

- 1-What is the author’s personal relationship to the topic?
- 2- What information/ideas are described in detail?
- 3- What do the author’s words cause me to see or feel?

Text Specific Questions

Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education:

- 1- According to paragraph 1, what are the prevailing purposes Roosevelt states for education? How does she structure this paragraph so the reader knows what she believes the purpose of education really should be?
- 2- Based on paragraphs 3-4, how does Roosevelt believe education needs to change in order to meet “these objectives”?
- 3- In the final paragraphs, what mistake does Roosevelt see happening in the development of schools that is hindering some from reaching their ultimate purpose?

ACTIVITY 3: QUESTIONING AND ANALYZING TEXTS INDEPENDENTLY (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

MODEL TEXT QUESTIONING SEQUENCE

Guiding Question(s)

- 1-What is the author's personal relationship to the topic?
- 2- What information/ideas are described in detail?
- 3- What do the author's words cause me to see or feel?
- 4- How do details, information or ideas change across the text?

Text Specific Questions

Notes on the State of Virginia:

- 1- Describe Jefferson's structure for schools in Virginia.
- 2- According to Jefferson, what role does teaching literacy with a history focus have on the overall health of the nation?
- 3- What is Jefferson's argument for needing "an amendment to our constitution must here come in aid of the public education?" What is the ultimate purpose for education according to him?

The Vision of Education Reform in the United States:

- 1- What details does Duncan give to support his assertion that, "Closing the achievement gap and closing the opportunity gap is the civil rights issue of our generation." ? What does he mean by achievement gap and opportunity gap?
- 2- Duncan describes "a paradox at the heart of America's efforts to bolster international competitiveness." What is the paradox and what does he argue is the best path for education in the United States?
- 3- At the end of the passage, Duncan states that these "new partnerships must also inspire students to take a bigger and deeper view of their civic obligations..." What does this suggest about how Duncan wants the United States to think about global competitiveness in terms of education?



ACTIVITY 4: INDEPENDENT WRITING

Students use their analysis to independently write a detail-based explanation of one of the texts.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

This final activity of Part 4 serves both as a more formal assessment of each student's demonstration of the skills focused on in the unit, and as a foundation for their planning in Part 5, where they will lead a discussion comparing their text to others read in the unit. Students will submit this writing exercise as part of their assessment in Part 5.

Students write a multi-paragraph explanation, using textual evidence that explains:

- ⇒ A central idea of the text and how it is developed across it
- ⇒ What the central idea demonstrates about the author's perspective on the topic
- ⇒ What they have come to understand about the topic from the text.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The multi-paragraph explanations students draft in Part 4 should be reviewed closely as evidence of their close reading skills (and, to a lesser extent, as a formative assessment of their explanatory writing skills). At this point, students should be able to:

- Describe accurately central ideas of a text
- Explain observations about the author's perspective
- Identify something they have learned from their reading that is clearly text-related
- Reference details related to each of these writing purposes.

Students who can do so are ready to lead discussions in Part 5. Students who have not yet been able to read and explain their understanding of their text successfully may need additional support before moving on to Part 5.