

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETIVE WORK

TEACHER GUIDE



Introduction to Interpretive Work

Grade 8



Introduction to Argument: Writing About Literature



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INTRODUCTION TO
INTERPRETIVE WORK

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Grade 8 English Language Arts and Reading addressed in this unit of study:

ELAR.8.1 — Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, discussion, and thinking—oral language. The student develops oral language through listening, speaking, and discussion. The student is expected to

- A. Listen actively to interpret a message by summarizing, asking questions, and making comments.
- B. Follow and give complex oral instructions to perform specific tasks, answer questions, or solve problems.
- C. Advocate a position using anecdotes, analogies, and/or illustrations employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, a variety of natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.
- D. Participate collaboratively in discussions, plan agendas with clear goals and deadlines, set time limits for speakers, take notes, and vote on key issues.

ELAR.8.4 — Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking—self-sustained reading. The student reads grade-appropriate texts independently.

ELAR.8.5 — Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to

- A. Establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts.
- B. Generate questions about text before, during, and after reading to deepen understanding and gain information.

- C. Make, correct, or confirm predictions using text features, characteristics of genre, and structures.
- E. Make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.
- F. Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.
- G. Evaluate details read to determine key ideas.
- H. Synthesize information to create new understanding.
- I. Monitor comprehension and make adjustments such as re-reading, using background knowledge, asking questions, and annotating when understanding breaks down.

ELAR.8.6 — Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to

- A. Describe personal connections to a variety of sources, including self-selected texts.
- B. Write responses that demonstrate understanding of texts, including comparing sources within and across genres.
- C. Use text evidence to support an appropriate response.
- D. Paraphrase and summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.
- E. Interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating.
- G. Discuss and write about the explicit or implicit meanings of text.
- H. Respond orally or in writing with appropriate register, vocabulary, tone, and voice.
- I. Reflect on and adjust responses as new evidence is presented.
- J. Defend or challenge the authors' claims using relevant text evidence.

ELAR.8.8 — Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts—genres. The student recognizes and analyzes genre-specific characteristics, structures, and purposes within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts. The student is expected to:

- E. Analyze characteristics and structures of argumentative text by
 - i. Identifying the claim and analyzing the argument.
 - ii. Identifying and explaining the counter argument.
 - iii. Identifying the intended audience or reader.

ELAR.8.10 — Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts—writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions. The student is expected to

- A. Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for a particular topic, purpose, and audience using a range of strategies such as discussion, background reading, and personal interests.
- B. Develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by.
 - i. Organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction, transitions, coherence within and across paragraphs, and a conclusion.
 - ii. Developing an engaging idea reflecting depth of thought with specific facts, details, and examples.

ELAR.8.11 — Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts—genres. The student uses genre characteristics and craft to compose multiple texts that are meaningful. The student is expected to

- C. Compose multi-paragraph argumentative texts using genre characteristics and craft.

ELAR.8.12—Inquiry and research: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student engages in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes for a variety of purposes. The student is expected to

- A. Generate student-selected and teacher-guided questions for formal and informal inquiry.

At-A-Glance

Session	Guiding Questions	Agenda	ELAR
Session 1 Introducing “Everyday Use”: Comprehension Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will listen to “Everyday Use” and read along silently, marking the text and making notes in the margin of their student reader. Students will work with partners to craft a synopsis of the story that accounts for characters, key moments, and basic plot development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, D) 8.4 8.5 (A, B) 8.6 (B, D, E)
Session 2 “Everyday Use”: Wrapping Up the Comprehension Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will reread “Everyday Use.” Students will work in small groups to confirm or revise their synopsis of the story that accounts for characters, key moments, and basic plot development. Students will identify and share moments in the text they consider important. Students will reflect on the comprehension work they have been doing by quick-writing and discussing their answers to the following questions: “What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, D) 8.4 8.5 (A, B, E, F, G, H, I) 8.6 (A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I)
Session 3 Introducing Interpretive Assignment #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do in order to form an interpretation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will form and discuss an interpretation of “Everyday Use” in small groups, responding to the question: At the end of the story, Maggie smiles— “But a real smile, not scared.” Why isn’t Maggie scared anymore? Students will reference the text to support their interpretations. Students will take notes about their own and their classmates’ interpretations, to help them with the interpretive writing to come. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, C, D) 8.5 (A, B, E, G, H) 8.6 (B, C, E, G, I) 8.10 (A)
Session 4 Interpretive Assignment #1: Whole-Class Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do in order to form an interpretation? How can you contribute to a whole-class interpretive discussion? How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will quickly compose an initial written response to the question: At the end of the story, Maggie smiles— “But a real smile, not scared.” Why isn’t Maggie scared anymore? Students will participate in a whole-class discussion, trying to answer the same question. Students will take notes about the points and ideas raised during the discussion. Students will think about and identify what they learned about the text that they didn’t know before the discussion. Students will reflect upon and share out their ideas regarding the process of forming interpretations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, C, D) 8.5 (B, F, G, H, I) 8.6 (B, C, D, E, G, I)
Session 5 Interpretive Assignment #1: Drafting Interpretations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do in order to form an interpretation? How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question? How do you draft a good interpretive paper? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will discuss in small groups “How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?” Students will learn that a good written interpretation has three parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A clear interpretive claim. Textual evidence that supports the claim. A compelling explanation that says how the evidence supports the claim. Students will write interpretive papers. Students will reflect upon the progress they make with the interpretive papers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, C, D) 8.6 (B, C, E, G, H) 8.10 (A, B, Bi, Bii)

Session	Guiding Questions	Agenda	ELAR
Session 6 Introducing “It’s That It Hurts”: Comprehension Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will listen to “It’s That It Hurts” and read along silently, marking the text and making notes in the margin of their student reader. Students will work with partners to craft a synopsis of the story that accounts for characters, key moments, and basic plot development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A) 8.5 (A, B, F, G, H) 8.6 (D, E, I)
Session 7 “It’s That It Hurts”: Wrapping Up the Comprehension Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text? In what ways are you becoming smarter about comprehension work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will reread “It’s That It Hurts.” Students will work with partners to confirm or revise their synopsis of the story that accounts for characters, key moments, and basic plot development. Students will share their understanding of the story by sharing out their answers to the comprehension questions in a whole-class setting. Students will identify and share out the important things learned about each character in the story. Students will reflect on the comprehension work they have been doing by quick-writing and discussing their answers to the following questions: “What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, C, D) 8.5 (F, G, H, I) 8.6 (B, C, D, E, H, I)
Session 8 Introducing Interpretive Assignment #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do in order to form an interpretation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will form and discuss an interpretation of “It’s That It Hurts” in small groups, responding to the question “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?” Students will reference the text to support their interpretations. Students will take notes about their own and their classmates’ interpretations to help them with the interpretive writing to come. Students will reflect upon and share out their ideas about the process of conducting interpretive discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1.A, B, C, D 8.5.A, B, F, G, H 8.6.B, C, E, G, I 8.10.A
Session 9 Interpretive Assignment #2: Whole-Class Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do in order to form an interpretation? How can you contribute to a whole-class interpretive discussion? How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will quickly compose an initial written response to the question “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?” Students will participate in a whole-class discussion, trying to answer the same question. Students will take notes about the points and ideas raised during the discussion. Students will think about and identify what they learned about the text that they didn’t know before the discussion. Students will reflect upon and share out any new things they learned today about forming interpretations, as well as review the major differences between comprehension and interpretive work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, C, D) 8.5 (B, F, G, H, I) 8.6 (B, C, D, E, G, I) 8.10
Session 10 Studying Drafts, Composing Drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does good interpretive writing look like? In what ways are you becoming smarter about writing interpretive papers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will study effective interpretive writing. Students will see examples and non-examples of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A clear interpretive position. Textual evidence that supports the claim. A compelling explanation that says how the evidence supports the claim. Students will learn about the importance of demonstrating an authoritative interpretive disposition in their writing—in other words, “sounding like you know what you’re talking about.” Students will write their interpretive papers about “It’s That It Hurts.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 (A, B, D) 8.5 (A, B, C, E, G, H) 8.6 (B, C, E, J) 8.10 (A) 8.11 (C)

OPTIONAL INTERSESSIONS

Session	Guiding Questions	Agenda	ELAR
Intersession A: Articulating the Qualities of Interpretive Writing (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where am I going? • What makes interpretive writing strong? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students generate criteria for strong interpretive writing. • Show students a strong student exemplar; invite students to add criteria. • Introduce the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing”; select one part to focus on. • For that part of rubric, students annotate to put rubric language in own terms. • As a class, the group “steps back” and reflects on the qualities of interpretive writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.1(B) • 8.6(E,H) • 8.8(Ei, Eii, Eiii) • 8.12(A)

Understanding the Features

In addition to the more standard curriculum features such as learning objectives, guiding questions, student agendas, and materials lists for every session, Inquiry By Design curriculum also includes the following pedagogical structures integrated throughout every unit.



The First Ten Minutes: Many teachers begin class with a “bell ringer” or a “do now” task that provides a predictable beginning to each class and helps students shift their mindset away from their previous class period and into the right subject area. Inquiry By Design encourages teachers to dedicate the first ten minutes—or longer, depending on the circumstances—to self-selected independent reading. Remember that independent reading is a vital practice for your students that supports their vocabulary, background knowledge, comprehension, and even their grammar and punctuation, among other things.

Occasionally, or on set days of the week, you may wish to use the beginning of class for some of the following activities, which may also *follow* independent reading as time allows:

- Selection, review, or assessment of vocabulary words (see the planning ahead section of the introduction to this unit or the *Building Vocabulary* guide).
- Independent writing or writing fluency practice (see *Developing Fluency in Writing* guide).
- Error journal practice or mini-lessons (see *Constructing an Error Journal*).

In this case, teachers may wish to establish predictable patterns of work. For example, Mondays might begin with writing fluency work, Tuesdays through Thursdays with independent reading, and Fridays with practice in the error journal.

Whatever patterns of practice a teacher adopts, we emphasize, once again, the importance of student-selected independent reading: Your students who are *already readers* will always continue to read outside of the classroom, whereas your students who are not yet enthusiastic readers may never otherwise pick up a book.



Checks for Understanding and Inquiry Reflections: Checks for understanding are moments that are highlighted to emphasize the teacher’s role in determining whether students have met the objectives or come close enough to them to continue on with the work as written. Often, these checks for understanding are informal—teachers can easily circulate during small-group work to check for a general sense of understanding (or lack thereof) about a text. Sometimes these involve concrete artifacts, like student reflections in their literacy notebooks, or responses to a quick write prompt.

In nearly all cases, checks for understanding are intended to be *formative* in value—that is, they should guide the teacher’s next steps in instruction, rather than serve as an excuse to reward or punish students based on their responses. If student work is on track, continue on as planned; if student work shows cause for concern, consider what brief instruction might be needed. The scaffolds and modifications called out in each session may present a helpful tool in these situations.

Inquiry reflections are moments in instruction where we challenge students to step back and think metacognitively about the work they’ve been doing. This metacognition aids not only in comprehension of the immediate task, it is especially helpful in the transfer of knowledge and skills to future tasks.



Scorable Moments: Scorable moments are noted throughout the manual to help direct teachers’ attention to activities or pieces of work that may be appropriate for the gradebook. Inquiry By Design recognizes that many schools and districts establish requirements for how many grades ought to be entered over a set period of time; at the same time, we know that focusing too much on grades can actually impede student learning and students’ willingness to take risks in their thinking and writing. Numerous studies show that grades frequently hamper the effectiveness of teacher feedback on student work—when students receive a paper with both constructive feedback and a grade, they tend overwhelmingly to focus on the grade and ignore the feedback. As summarized by Dylan Wiliam (2018), studies show that

“the effect of giving both scores and comments was the same as the effect of giving scores alone. Far from producing the best effects of both kinds of feedback, giving grades alongside the comments completely washed out the beneficial effects of the comments; students who got high grades didn’t need to read the comments, and students who got low scores didn’t want to.”

Rightly or wrongly, though, grades are a common motivating force in the classroom, and as noted, may simply be required by policy. As indicated throughout the manual, the scorable moments marked in the guide may either be for *formative work* (see recommendations below) or for *summative work*. Often there are tasks that overlap both of these categories—for example, the first argument paper in a series of three argument tasks might be a fair opportunity for scoring what has been taught so far, but might be an even better opportunity for providing feedback and setting goals for the following work. Teachers are encouraged to use their discretion, as always.

Formative and summative work should certainly be treated differently by the teacher, with many experts agreeing that, because formative work reflects students' practice in trying out new skills, it should serve only to provide opportunities for feedback and for modifying instruction—never for grading purposes. But if you must provide scores for formative work, rather than just feedback, notes, or further instruction, there are several options for how to approach this:

- Formative work can be given feedback and a simple *✓* for completion to indicate that the student made a full attempt at the task.
- If graded, Caroline Wylie, director of research at ETS, suggests separating the grades from the feedback—for example, returning the work with feedback for the students on one day and only allowing them to see their grades the next day (Heitin, 2015).
- Grades for formative work can be recorded in a way that does not affect the final grade for students, can be superseded by summative work, or can be treated as “as if” scores—scores that reflect what a student *would* have scored, had it been summative. In all of these cases, the feedback itself is still the most important component (Heitin 2015).

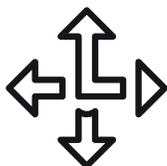
Summative tasks, which consist primarily of full, formal writing samples, can be scored using the rubric of the appropriate genre found in the *Rubrics for Writing* guide, where teachers will also find corresponding student checklists.



Scaffolds and Modifications: Appropriate and timely scaffolds and modifications are called out in each session. Detailed advice for effectively implementing each type of support is provided in the Appendix; however, here are a few general guidelines for scaffolding:

- Don't scaffold preemptively—let students show you what they need before you *presume* what they need.
- Provide as little scaffolding as necessary for as brief a time as possible. Do your students *need* a highly structured small-group discussion protocol with individual roles, or would they get what they need from establishing and reviewing classroom norms? And if they needed that structure last time, are there parts of that structure that can be more flexible this time?
- The goal is always student learning, not task performance. When you select a scaffold, consider whether it is one that simply makes it easier for students to get an A on a task, or one that helps free up thinking space for important cognitive work. In other words, the scaffold should simplify the *unimportant* aspects of the work so students can focus on the *vitally important* aspects.
- Providing helpful, open-ended *questions* is preferable to providing helpful answers.
- Whenever possible, engage students in the development of solutions. They may propose something simpler and more effective than you had in mind, saving you time and effort.

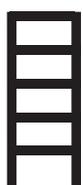
Special Considerations for English Learners: Scaffolding for English learners (ELs) merits additional consideration. A full discussion of EL needs and appropriate methods for adapting instruction can be found in *Amplifications for English Language Learners*, located in the *Fluency* guide. However, many of the most common interventions are called out at appropriate moments in each session and then detailed in the Appendix of this unit (see “Scaffolds and Modifications: Descriptions and Use”). These methods are appropriate for *all* learners, in addition to being *especially* helpful for English language learners.



Intersessions, Planning Ahead for Writing Instruction, and Next Steps for Student Writing: Instruction, as we often emphasize, is meant to be responsive to student needs. In this and other teacher manuals you will sometimes find recommended *intersessions*, which incorporate additional instructional material that is not, strictly speaking, part of this unit. These sessions are often drawn from our flexible-use resources (such as the material within the *Fluency*, *Form*, and *Correctness* guides), and our intention in providing them here is twofold:

1. First, we include them for ease of use and for teachers who may not be sure which resources to turn to at what time. They can be taught as written, often as a segue into a writing task.
2. Second, we include them as a reminder to all teachers
 - » That students will often need additional practice or instruction throughout the learning process;
 - » That Inquiry By Design has a great deal of additional materials available specifically for moments like this; and
 - » That this particular moment in instruction is probably a good time to reexamine what needs students have demonstrated and to consider how best to meet these needs.

The same considerations inform “Planning Ahead for Writing Instruction” and “Next Steps for Student Writing,” which appear before and after the introduction of a formal student writing task. The task itself is only the vehicle for deliberate writing practice: Teachers have several instructional choices to make throughout the writing process, many of which are, again, supported by additional Inquiry By Design materials.



Extension Work: At times, you may find suggestions for additional instruction, readings, or tasks. Use these to extend the learning, to challenge students further, to personalize the work, or to touch on topics that you'd like to give more attention.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Interpretive Work is designed to provide students with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the kinds of work people do with texts in English. Specifically, the work in this unit provides students with an opportunity to experience the practices of close reading as well as interpretive work distinguished by clear interpretive statements that are supported by compelling explanations and anchored in specific moments in the text. This type of interpretive work falls under the category of argument, as students learn to stake out a clear position and build a careful case for it.

In this unit, students will work with two texts: Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use” and Tomás Rivera’s “It’s That It Hurts.” Work with each text is marked by a cycle that includes

- An essential round of comprehension work, followed by small- and large-group meetings and discussions dedicated to ensuring that students know the text well
- The introduction of clear interpretive tasks that follow the comprehension work.
- Small-group and large-group discussions that are linked to the interpretive tasks and that support and dovetail with note taking and writing tasks.
- The writing of formal interpretive papers.
- “Step-back” work, woven into the unit after comprehension and interpretive work, designed to help students understand and manage the different demands posed by comprehension and interpretation tasks.

The teacher’s primary role during this work is to support students through different moments in the cycle. Modeling and adept facilitation of class discussions should characterize much of the instruction.

A Note on Discussions

There is a significant body of research on intelligence and the role of socialization in its development. A very concise distillation of this work might be: People don’t get smarter by themselves. To get smarter, people have to interact with other people through writing and discussion. Interpretive work is difficult. For many students, it will seem very unfamiliar, even though they build interpretations, often quite compelling ones, daily. The academic context can seem disorienting, though, and a large

part of this unit's work is devoted to beginning the process of demystifying what interpretive work looks like in this context. If students are not permitted to try out interpretations and to talk back to other students' interpretations, they will remain mystified. In short, then, students talking to other students in productive ways is essential to the development of their interpretive capacities in academic contexts. Classrooms where students are silent, or where students are reduced to remembering and reciting other people's interpretations, are antithetical to this process.

In addition to establishing clear expectations for what counts as effective talk, one way a teacher scaffolds the conversations in the classroom is by moving students from small-group discussions, where students work with one or two other students, into whole-group discussions. Guiding students through focused reflection exercises that encourage them to look at, discuss, and think carefully about how to tackle comprehension and interpretive tasks is another essential role the teacher will take in this work.

Planning Ahead

What materials do I need to have or prepare in advance?

- For Session 10: Make sure you have collected, reviewed, and selected papers or excerpts from the first writing assignment (Session 5) for use with your students.
- For the writing tasks, determine whether you will use the Inquiry By Design rubric and checklist for this genre of writing (see *Rubrics for Writing*).
- Review the intersessions and the "Next Steps for Student Writing" found in this unit. If you plan to implement any of the suggested supporting lessons or revision work, be sure to account for them as you plan your schedule.

What parts of this unit, if any, can I omit, if necessary, for time constraints?

- While we recommend following the complete unit when possible, if time does not allow, you may choose to read, discuss, and write about one of the two texts. We do not recommend cutting out comprehension or interpretive work for a text in order to shorten a unit; these tasks build students' skills and prepare them for the writing work that follows.
- You may not wish to do full cycles of writing work for both assignments. Instead of creating final drafts of each, for example, you may wish to have students revise the writing task of their choice for a final grade.

How can I plan for vocabulary instruction?

- If your vocabulary work is based on teacher-selected words: Skim through the materials for useful Tier 2 words, as well as Tier 1 words that may be unfamiliar to students and Tier 3 words. Plan to address terms appropriate for the genre of reading and writing that students will be completing. Not every text presents a "full set" of appropriately challenging vocabulary. Remember the usefulness of generative words, though, and feel free to develop (or to develop with students) a list of related words.

- If your vocabulary work is based on student-selected words:
Set aside time for students to skim through the reader searching for unfamiliar words. After a few minutes, have students call out suggestions and write them on the board, working with the students to narrow down an appropriate list of words that are both useful and appropriately challenging. Related words can also be generated from this list. Remember that not all unfamiliar words are necessarily good choices for deep work—sometimes, students only need to get the “gist” of the definition.

Remember that the most important part of vocabulary instruction for students is repeated, meaningful encounters with the words, so whenever you have time after independent reading, between tasks, or after a closing meeting, be sure to add vocabulary reinforcement activities.

See the Inquiry By Design guide *Building Vocabulary* for more information about this work.

A Final Note

The sessions in this unit are best viewed as illustrations or sketches. They are offered to help teachers visualize how instruction might unfold in time, not to serve as a rigid set of absolutes. You may find that sessions take slightly more or less time, or that two can be completed in one class period. Revise and customize as necessary. It is important to keep in mind that any course of study is, when properly used, a tool for teaching students. The moment we make instructional decisions that lead us to choose “coverage” over the delivery of appropriate and timely instruction to individual students, we have erred. It is in the spirit of appropriate and timely instruction that the following sessions are provided

- ELAR.8.1 (A, B, D)
- ELAR.8.4
- ELAR.8.5 (A, B)
- ELAR.8.6 (B, D, E)



SESSION 1

Introducing “Everyday Use”: Comprehension Work

AGENDA

- Students will listen to “Everyday Use” and read along silently, marking the text and making notes in the margin of their student reader.
- Students will work with partners to craft a synopsis of the story that accounts for the narrator, key characters, and basic plot development.

Teaching Note: During the first two sessions of this study, the aim is to lead students through some careful comprehension-level work with “Everyday Use.” This comprehension work is a critical first step that prepares for the interpretive work that follows. This session is written so that a teacher reads the story aloud to the class the first time through. Or, as an alternative, students could do this first reading independently. In either case, the comprehension work would culminate in a whole-class discussion dedicated to crafting a synopsis of the story that accounts for essential information about characters and plot development.

A few things to remember about comprehension work in this and in all other Inquiry By Design studies: First, brief is best. Students will spend a significant amount of time reading (and rereading), discussing, and writing about the stories in this unit. A brisk pace during the comprehension phase is an essential part of keeping this work fresh and engaging. Second, as with learning in general, comprehension skills are most effectively developed in highly social settings that feature significant amounts of intense and focused discussion. Opportunities for these kinds of discussions among students shape the work that follows.

Learning Objectives

- Students will read and demonstrate a basic understanding of the characters and events in “Everyday Use.”

Guiding Questions

- What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text?

Materials

- Copy of “Everyday Use” to read aloud



THE FIRST TEN MINUTES

- Throughout this and future units, continue to spend at least the first ten minutes of class in independent reading. Remember that independent reading is a vital practice for your students that supports their vocabulary, background knowledge, comprehension, and even their grammar and punctuation, among other things.
- Occasionally, or on set days of the week, you may wish to use the beginning of class for some of the following activities. These may also follow independent reading as time allows:
 - » Review or selection of vocabulary words (see introduction of this unit or *Building Vocabulary* guide).
 - » Independent writing or writing fluency practice (see *Developing Fluency in Writing* guide).
 - » Error journal practice or mini-lessons (see *Constructing an Error Journal*).
- In the remaining sessions, the first ten minutes are indicated with an icon only.

FOCUS LESSON

- Explain to students that during the next several sessions they will do work with two short stories: Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use” and Tomás Rivera’s “It’s That It Hurts.” The work with these stories is designed to help students develop their understanding of what it means to do close and careful interpretive work with texts in English. There are a couple of important objectives to highlight for students:
 - » On one level, we are studying these stories because they are complex, interesting stories that are worth reading and discussing on their own.
 - » On another level, we are studying these stories because they offer opportunities to stretch important skills in our reading, discussing, and writing. Specifically, we’ll be looking at how we read for understanding, how we construct an interpretation of a story, and how we build an *argument* to support our interpretation.
- Introduce the class to “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker.
- Explain to students that this is the first story they will work with during this unit. Point out that the work of this session will be devoted to a “getting oriented” reading of the story. This kind of work is often referred to as “comprehension” work.
- Write the following three comprehension questions on the board:
 - » Who are the characters in the story?
 - » What are the important things we learn about each of them in the story?
 - » What happens in the story? In other words, what are the big events in the story and in what order do they happen?

- Tell students that during this session you would like to read the story aloud to the class one time. Encourage students to use the questions on the board to guide their listening during the read-aloud.
- Point out that at the end of the reading, students will have time to work on the three questions in small groups.
- Encourage students to make notes in the margins of their student reader and to mark the text during the reading. If you wish to introduce a set of marks for annotation, this would be a good time to do so, though we often find that simple works best (*, !, ?, etc.)

WORK PERIOD

- Read “Everyday Use” aloud to the class.
- Students should read along silently during the read aloud and mark places in the text, or make brief notes that relate to the comprehension questions on the board.

Scaffolds and Modifications

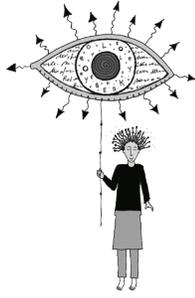
- Reading: Chunking or modeling reading strategies.
- See “Scaffolds and Modifications: Descriptions and Use” in the Appendix for more information on these and other options.



CLOSING MEETING

- After the reading, give students time to convene in groups of two or three to work on the questions on the board. During this time, they should jot down notes from their conversation on a page in their literacy notebook.
- **Check for understanding:** Monitor students’ work at the end of the period to determine whether or not they understand the story, reviewing literacy notebooks if necessary. Whenever possible, respond to students’ questions by redirecting them to the text with prompts like “See if you can find any moments in the text that might help you answer that” or “Review some of the places that you and others in your group marked in the text to see if that helps.” Remember that students will continue to interact with and reread the text, so they do not need to be experts on it at this moment. Instead, use this time to determine whether or not a whole-class rereading is appropriate in the next session.





SESSION 2

“Everyday Use”: Wrapping Up the Comprehension Work

AGENDA

- Students will reread “Everyday Use.”
- Students will work in small groups to confirm or revise their synopsis of the story that accounts for the narrator, key characters, and basic plot development.
- Students will identify and share moments in the text they consider important.
- Students will reflect on the comprehension work they have been doing by quick-writing and discussing their answers to the following questions: “What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them?”

Teaching Note: It is often the case that students will benefit from a second reading of a story. They often notice things in a text during a second reading that they don’t catch the first time through. A second reading is especially important if a lot of time has passed since students’ first encounter with the text. If you think your class would benefit from another pass through the story, consider incorporating a second reading of “Everyday Use” into the beginning of this session. There are different ways this can be done effectively, including placing students in groups of twos or threes to reread the story, giving students time to reread it independently, or simply rereading the story aloud to the whole class again. Students can use this second reading to check for gaps in the comprehension work they did in the previous session. That said, a whole-class rereading should not be “automatic”—spending too much time rereading for comprehension can sap the early momentum and pacing of the unit, so choose this only if it is clear students need this experience.

Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the characters and events in “Everyday Use.”
- Students will describe the process for working to comprehend a short story.

Guiding Questions

- What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text?

Materials

- Copy of “Everyday Use”
- Chart paper or other display

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



FOCUS LESSON/WORK PERIOD

- Consider leading students through a second reading of “Everyday Use,” depending on the progress of their group work and the frequency of their questions in the last period (see teaching note above). You may choose to consult students for their preference. If students demonstrated a common and especially important misunderstanding last class (one that would not be easily resolved through whole-group discussion), direct this reading toward resolving that misunderstanding by saying something like, “Last class, I heard from a lot of you that you thought _____, but I think there might be other explanations. Let’s look for other possibilities and mark moments that might help us think through that as we reread today.”
- Explain to students that, in a few minutes, the whole class will convene to discuss the comprehension questions introduced in Session 1. In preparation for that whole-group meeting, review with the class the three comprehension questions introduced during Session 1:
 - » Who are the characters in the story?
 - » What are the important things we learn about each of them in the story?
 - » What happens in the story? In other words, what are the big events in the story and in what order do they happen?
- Next, have students return to the small groups they worked in during the end of Session 1 to review their responses to the comprehension questions.
- Afterwards, take 5-7 minutes to facilitate a whole-class discussion about the three comprehension questions. Use this time to help students articulate their understanding of the characters and the events in “Everyday Use.” To verify understanding and to provide an artifact that students can consult in the sessions ahead, consider capturing the class’s answers to the comprehension questions on a chart.

CLOSING MEETING

- The stories and work in this unit are important primarily as an orientation to what it means to do comprehension and interpretive work with texts. Critical components of this work are strategically placed “step-back” moments where students are invited to reflect on the work they have done and how they accomplished it. These reflections help students identify strategies that helped them, which will help them recall these strategies later and aid in skill transfer: Without being specifically directed to reflect on and then return to these strategies, many students will not realize the work they have done. This session’s closing meeting is reserved for the first of these “step-back” moments.
- Direct the class’s attention to this comprehension question:
 - » What are the important things we learn about each of them (characters) in the story?

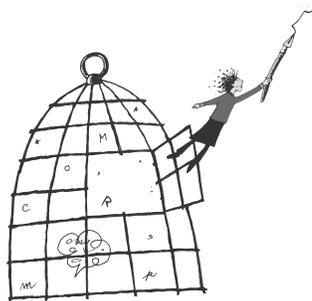


- Remind students that one reason we are studying these stories is because they help us think about how we *read for understanding*.
- **Inquiry reflection and check for understanding:** Review the question with the class and then, to help students reflect back on the work they did to answer it, lead the class through the following cycle of step-back work:
 1. Take a moment to reflect back on the work you did with this question. Even if it did not seem difficult to you, think about each separate step you took along the way.
 2. Take 3-4 minutes to write down in your literacy notebook a list that answers the following question:

What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them? List everything that comes to mind.
 3. Take your notes to a small-group discussion with two other students. For 2-3 minutes, the three of you should work together to share your lists. During this share out time, be sure to ask questions of one another as needed and, most importantly, to revise or add new items to your list. Your goal here should be to leave this short meeting with a list of things you did that is as detailed and accurate as possible.
 4. Finally, participate actively in a 3- to 5-minute long whole-group discussion about the “what are the things you did” question. Imagine that in this discussion you are working as a whole class to create an even more comprehensive list of the things a reader does when answering a comprehension question.
- Capture the list the class generates during the whole-group discussion on a chart. Afterwards, post this list in the room so that students can consult it as needed during class or independent reading. Note that some of these strategies, like annotating and rereading, are tools that students can use with any reading they are doing, while others, like discussing with peers, are only possible when everyone is reading the same things. All of these strategies, however, are things that good readers do from time to time.

**Scorable Moment:
Formative**





SESSION 3

Introducing Interpretive Assignment #1

AGENDA

- Students will form and discuss an interpretation of “Everyday Use” in small groups, responding to the question: At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—“But a real smile, not scared.” Why isn’t Maggie scared anymore?
- Students will reference the text to support their interpretations.
- Students will take notes about their own and their classmates’ interpretations, to help them with the interpretive writing to come.

FOCUS LESSON

- On the board or a chart, write the interpretive question from “Interpretive Assignment #1” as well as the definition of a good argument. (You may choose instead to photocopy and distribute the information on the next page.) *Note: Do not share any possible answers to the question at this time. Also, do not share the assignment sheet found in the Appendix since that includes possible answers.*
- Remind students that an interpretation is a type of argument that writers make about literary texts. This might be a helpful time to quickly review certain ideas specific to argument, but this should be done briefly—make sure students have the majority of the class time available for the work period.

Learning Objectives

- In small groups, students will generate an initial attempt at a claim in response to the interpretive question and mark supporting moments in the text.

Guiding Questions

- What do you do in order to form an interpretation?

Materials

- “Chart paper or other display

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



» Provide a simple definition of terms like claim, evidence, and explanation (sometimes called warrant or analysis), or prompt students for these definitions.

Preparation for Interpretive Assignment #1

For this assignment you will write an argument about “Everyday Use” that answers the question in the box below.

At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—“But a real smile, not scared.”
Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?

As you are working, remember that, while there can be lots of different interpretations, a good argument must include the following:

- A claim that answers the question.
- Text evidence that supports your claim.
- Explanations that show how that evidence supports your position.
- A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.

Before you write your response, you will have an opportunity to discuss the question in a small group and then, later, with the class as a whole. Members of the groups do not have to agree on an interpretation. The purpose of these discussions is to give you a chance to “try out” responses before writing, to hear other readers’ reactions to those responses, and to help each other identify examples or moments to support and/or otherwise refine those responses. Be sure to take good notes during these discussions. These notes will make your interpretive writing better and easier.

Be sure to bring your notes and a copy of “Everyday Use” to these discussions, as you will need these to find important passages in the story.

- » Poll students for their ideas about what counts as evidence in making an interpretation of a story. How might a person support their claim? Jot student suggestions on the board, and point out to students that they’ll be reviewing the evidence today to start forming a claim.

WORK PERIOD

- Place students in groups of twos or threes.
- Remind the class that the purpose of the small-group work is to give students a chance to discover, experiment with, and refine the interpretations they will write later. Remind students to take notes during these discussions, as these will be useful to them when they set out to write their interpretive papers.
- Give the groups time to conduct their discussions. During this time, remind them that they might review the task, the story, and their notes in order to generate and test out ideas.
- **Check for understanding:**
 - » Confer with groups about the work during this time. Be sure to remind and model for the groups how to use (reference, read from, point to) the text during these exchanges. Also, take time to show students how to jot notes and ideas down during these discussions.
 - » Observe the early interpretive moves students are making: Are they especially literal or speculative? Are they based mostly on one or two pieces of support, or do they take the whole story into account? You do not need to address these needs now, but may wish to provide instruction on them during the next cycle of work.
 - » Provided students are able to generate at least some ideas for claims and some relevant evidence to support them, they should be ready to continue to the next session's work.



Scaffolds and Modifications

- **Speaking and Listening:** Discussion norms, goal-setting, sentence stems.
- **Reading:** Chunking during interpretive work.
- **Tip:** Consider breaking up an especially long work period by checking in with the whole class in the middle. You might use questions like, “What is one thing you’ve found so far?” or “What is something you or your group are having trouble with right now?”



Scorable Moment: Formative



CLOSING MEETING

- Convene the whole class and ask the question, “What did you learn today about why Maggie isn’t scared anymore?” You are not seeking a full, developed discussion at this point—only a quick charting of initial ideas.
- Capture student ideas on a chart, so these ideas can be accessed later. Encourage students to write their classmates’ ideas in their writers’ notebooks, to help them with their upcoming writing assignment.
- During this debrief, pause to work with the students to locate and note the page and line numbers of passages they might want to cite.



SESSION 4

Interpretive Assignment #1: Whole-Class Discussion

AGENDA

- Students will quickly compose an initial written response to the question: At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—“But a real smile, not scared.” Why isn’t Maggie scared anymore?
- Students will participate in a whole-class discussion, trying to answer the same question.
- Students will take notes about the points and ideas raised during the discussion.
- Students will think about and identify what they learned about the text that they didn’t know before the discussion.
- Students will reflect upon and share out their ideas regarding the process of forming interpretations.

Teaching Note: In the previous session, you introduced students to Interpretive Assignment #1. In the field of English, one of the most common forms of argument is literary interpretation, and this task specifically asks students to write an argument in response to the prompt. In order for a persuasive essay to rise to the level of “argument,” it must address possible counterclaims or alternate positions.

The whole-class discussion in this session is an excellent time to reinforce the importance of competing claims.

- During the discussion, several possible claims will be made in response to the question—some may be very similar, while others may be quite different.
- When you begin to write your response to the assignment, you will need to choose a claim to support—but you will also need to show how your claim is different from at least one other possible point of view. We call these other points of view “counterclaims” or “alternative positions” or “opposing claims.”

Learning Objectives

- Students will share and support their responses to the interpretive question, clarifying, specifying, and modifying as needed.

Guiding Questions

- What do you do in order to form an interpretation?
- How can you contribute to a whole-class interpretive discussion?
- How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?

Materials

- “Criteria for a Good Discussion” sheet

- As you add to your notes at the end of the class discussion, be sure that you mark down not only information about your own point of view, but also at least one other perspective that was raised. This will be useful during your writing.

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



FOCUS LESSON

- Write the interpretive question on the board and revisit it with the class.

At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—“But a real smile, not scared.”

Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?

- Ask students to spend 10 minutes composing a written response to this question in their literacy notebook. Explain to students that this initial writing exercise is aimed to help them in today's whole-class discussion about this question. Explain to students that good responses will make a claim (a one-sentence answer to the question “Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?”) and an explanation to back up the claim that is supported by textual evidence.
 - » You may wish to inform students that they will add to these responses at the end of class, and that while you plan to read through these to see their ideas and their thinking, they do not need to worry about writing it perfectly at this time. This is writing-to-think work.
 - » Walk around during this time to get a sense of students' understanding of the text and task.
- After students have written for 10 minutes, take a few minutes to share the “Criteria for a Good Discussion” provided nearby. (A copy-ready version can be found in the Appendix.) Explain to students that this session's work period will be dedicated to a whole-class discussion of the question.
- Explain to students that you, as the teacher, will NOT be participating in the discussion. Instead, you will be charting the ideas and references that students focus on in their conversation. Help students to understand that they should be having an “adult-like” discussion, where they don't necessarily have to raise their hands, but rather can wait for the right moment to jump into the discussion to make a point.
 - If students have a hard time with this, you may consider introducing some of the “Sentence Stems” shown nearby. But try conducting a discussion at least once before introducing the stems. Many groups of students won't need them.

Sentence Stems

- I agree with _____ because...
- I disagree with _____ because...
- I don't understand...
- Can you please explain...
- Can you tell me more about...
- What if...
- What you said makes me think/wonder...

Criteria For a Good Discussion

What are students saying and doing during discussion?

Students are...

- Mindful of group/classroom norms.
- Contributing ideas to the group discussion.
- Supporting ideas with specific moments in the text.
- Referring to specific page numbers, line numbers, or quotations in the text to support their arguments.
- Using sentence stems.
- Listening to each other's ideas and building on them.
- Questioning each other's ideas.
- Pausing after someone is finished speaking.

Students are not...

- Disregarding group/classroom norms.
- Sitting silently and disengaging from the discussion.
- Drifting to off-topic conversations.
- Making generalizations that are not supported in the text.
- Dominating the conversation.
- Being rude, or using disrespectful language.
- Displaying anger when somebody doesn't agree with them.
- Interrupting someone who is talking.

WORK PERIOD

- Ask students to take a moment to gather their notebooks and their student readers.
- Tell students that they will have 20 minutes to complete their class discussion. *(Twenty minutes seems to be the right amount of time to allow a class of 30 students a chance to talk. Sometimes, when you are first beginning whole class discussions, you might begin with less time—10 minutes, for example. After a while though, classes are often able to sustain them for 30–40 minutes.)*
- To begin the discussion, revisit the interpretive question with the class. Then, invite the students to begin the discussion. Using the board, a typed document on display, or chart paper, quietly chart students' ideas (and corresponding text references) as they share. Many ideas will be similar, so not every idea needs to be recorded, but try to capture the gist of the different ideas without adding your own thoughts. If students have not referenced the text, you might ask



Scaffolds and Modifications

- Speaking and Listening: Goal-setting, turn-and-talk, posing questions, course correction.



something like, “What in the text makes you think that?” Otherwise, try as much as possible to remain quiet and release the conversation to the students.

- Work hard to get comfortable with periods of silence. Make it the job of the students to fill the silent gap, not the job of the teacher. You may jump into the conversation to do any of the following, but do NOT attempt to answer the question yourself, or to steer students toward looking at a particular piece of the text, or considering a certain answer. Also, resist the temptation to praise students’ ideas. Instead, do one of the following:
 - » Let students know when they have 5 minutes left.
 - » Encourage students who have not spoken up, when there are only a few minutes left, to take this opportunity to speak.
 - » Direct students’ attention to specific items on the “Criteria for a Good Discussion” chart.

CLOSING MEETING



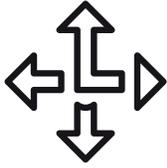
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to take 3-5 minutes to make any additional notes or changes to the responses they wrote at the beginning of class. Their initial notes, coupled with their notes after the discussion, should help you understand their thinking about the text and how their thinking may have grown or changed. Students should consider some of the following:
 - » Add notes, references, or ideas from the discussion that you had not considered in your earlier writing. These might add to or expand your initial ideas, or they might be new or different ideas entirely—it is perfectly acceptable to have changed your mind during the discussion.
 - » Include notes on at least one other perspective from the discussion that you could use as a counterclaim when you write about this text.
- **Inquiry reflection:** Then, ask students to answer briefly in writing the following “step-back” questions about doing interpretive work independently in class or for homework:
 1. What did you learn about the text that you didn’t know before the discussion? (To answer this question, look back at your notes to see what you added or how your thinking changed.)
 2. What do you do when you form an interpretation?
 3. How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?
 4. What did you learn about forming interpretations from our discussion?
- Students will have time to share their thinking about these questions at the beginning of the next session.

Scorable Moment: Formative

Based on completion of parts 1 and 2.



In the following session, students will begin drafting a response to the interpretive question from the discussion. It is especially helpful at this time to make sure students have a clear understanding of the expectations of this form of writing. We recommend teachers spend a session allowing students to interact with the rubric and a sample of student writing in this genre—though, importantly, not a piece of writing about this same story/task.



For this purpose, we have integrated Session 2-A from Writing Text-Based Arguments, though depending on the class's experience, the teacher may find another session or method to be appropriate at this time.

INTERSESSION A (Optional)

Articulating the Qualities of Interpretive Writing

AGENDA

- Help students generate criteria for strong interpretive writing.
- Show students a strong student exemplar; invite students to add criteria.
- Introduce the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing”; select one part to focus on.
- For that part of rubric, students annotate to put rubric language in own terms.
- As a class, the group “steps back” and reflects on the qualities of interpretive writing.

Teaching Note: Coming into this session, students already will have had many experiences doing interpretive work during discussions and will know some of the thinking that is required in order to

support a claim, etc. The purpose of Session 2-A is to help students to become more aware of what interpretation involves and to specifically articulate the qualities of strong interpretive writing. In that sense, this session serves as a bridge between the “talking” and the “writing” parts of thinking.

Students will use *multiple sources* as they work to articulate the qualities of interpretive writing: their own background knowledge, their reading of exemplars, *and* the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing.” (Grade-level versions of all rubrics can be found in the *Rubrics for Writing* guide.) Note that the purpose of this session is *much bigger* than just “introducing” the rubric. This session is based on work by formative assessment expert Jan Chappuis (2009), who states:

- Students improve when teachers provide “a clear and understandable vision of the learning target [or goal].”
- Students improve when teachers “use examples and models of strong and weak work.”

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

- ELAR.8.1 (B)
- ELAR.8.6 (E,H)
- ELAR.8.8 (Ei, Eii, Eiii)
- ELAR.8.12 (A)

Learning Objectives

- To introduce after students have done interpretive work in discussions and are now transitioning to communicating interpretations in formal writing.

Guiding Questions

- Where am I going?
- What makes interpretive writing strong?

Used at its best, understanding the language of a rubric can help answer what Chappuis considers the first big question that drives effective formative assessment: “*Where am I going?*” (Rubrics do *not* give students specific strategies on how to improve their writing). Once teachers have introduced the rubric, you can adapt this session to review rubric components.

See our previous cautions about the misuse of rubrics. Used at its worst, rubrics can be incomprehensible to students, lead to formulaic writing, and seduce teachers so that they lose sight of the unique writing, and *writers*, with whom they work.

This session involves a concept attainment activity¹, in which students articulate the qualities of and/or criteria for strong interpretive writing *in their own words, before* you show them the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing.”

- Use five pieces of chart paper, simply labeled 1-5. Each chart is for one descriptive part of the interpretive/argument rubric; the fifth chart is for “other.” Do NOT put the rubric headings on the chart in advance. The point is for students to construct their own criteria and infer the headings based on how you categorize their comments.
- To do this activity, teachers must know the rubric well. You listen as students offer their criteria, determine which chart the comment fits with, and then write that comment—in the students’ own words—on the appropriate chart. Place any comment that does not seem to fit on Chart 5, which you will later label “other.”
- Once students have generated enough criteria so there are at least some comments on each of the five charts, students infer the labels or headings for each part of the rubric.

FOCUS LESSON

- Tell the class that the purpose of today’s session is to understand the criteria for effective interpretive writing. What makes interpretive writing strong?
- Remind students that they already know a lot about interpretive thinking: They demonstrate it consistently in their rich discussions of text(s).
- Tell them that today, you will focus on helping them build a common understanding of and language to describe strong interpretive writing.
- See the teaching note above for a detailed description of this “concept attainment” activity. Ask students to generate criteria for strong interpretive writing. What do we already know about what makes interpretive writing strong? As students share comments, write them on the charts numbered 1-5. (For example, if a student says “strong interpretive writing includes good evidence,” you would write that on Chart 3 (to go with “Development”).
- Display student exemplar essay (A) in front of the class. Read it aloud. When you are done reading, think aloud about qualities of this writing that you noticed. What did you see in the writing that fits the criteria students generated on the five charts? Is there anything you see in the writing that leads you to want to add something to the class’s list of criteria?
- Invite students to add their thinking. What did they see that fit their criteria? What do they want to add to their list of criteria?

- Now, label the five charts from the criteria students generated during the focus lesson: Four charts with the descriptive headings from the interpretive/ argument rubric (Comprehensive Understanding of Issues, Organization, Development, Language, and Syntax) and the fifth with the heading “Other features of strong interpretive writing.”
- Remind students that the purpose of this session is to understand and articulate the qualities of interpretive writing. Point out to them that they generated many of the same criteria experts have identified for what makes interpretive writing strong.
- Distribute copies of the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing.” (A copy-ready version can be found in the *Rubrics for Writing* guide.) Give students a few moments in pairs to skim the entire document, simply to get oriented.
- Call students’ attention to the part you are choosing to focus on for today’s session. (For any session in which you use the interpretive/argument rubric, focus on no more than one part or page. Often, you may want to focus on a single bullet. You can adapt Session 2-A to use again for other bullets or rubric parts.)

WORK PERIOD

- Give students a few minutes to read and annotate this part of the rubric on their own. Specifically ask them to compare the rubric you distributed to the criteria they came up with as a class.
 - » In one color, highlight expectations that are the same on their list and the rubric.
 - » In a second color, highlight expectations that are different.
- Invite students to discuss their annotations of this part of the rubric. What did they notice? Push their thinking by asking questions like “How does this compare with the criteria we came up with?” “What does this bullet point or criterion on the rubric mean?” “Was there anything we thought of that you don’t see listed on the rubric?” “What would that look or sound like in an actual piece of writing?”

CLOSING MEETING

- Remind students that the purpose of today’s session was to articulate the qualities of strong interpretive writing. They did this by thinking about what they already knew, looking at an exemplar, and studying the interpretive/ argument rubric.
- Ask students to step back and discuss: What writing expectations are you familiar with? What expectations are you confused about at this time?



SESSION 5

Interpretive Assignment #1: Drafting Interpretations

AGENDA

- Students will discuss in small groups “How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?”
- Students will learn that a good written interpretation has three parts:
 - » A clear interpretive claim.
 - » Textual evidence that supports the claim.
 - » An explanation that says how the evidence supports the claim.
 - » A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.
- Students will write interpretive papers.
- Students will reflect upon the progress they make with the interpretive papers.

Teaching Note: Session 5 introduces a formal writing task for “Interpretive Assignment #1.” Inquiry By Design embraces a coaching model of instruction that seeks to help teachers address the specific needs students are demonstrating in their writing; thus, rather than specifying the exact skills to be taught and practiced in each assignment, Inquiry By Design aims to provide guidance and resources for teachers to make the most effective and timely instructional choices for their students.

Any formal writing task can be expected to unfold in three phases. First, based on the class’s needs, a teacher might model a specific skill or use student

Learning Objectives

Students will share and support their responses to the interpretive question, clarifying, specifying, and modifying as needed.

Guiding Questions

- What do you do in order to form an interpretation?
- How can you contribute to a whole-class interpretive discussion?
- How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?

Materials

- “Criteria for a Good Discussion” sheet
- X-acto Knife
- Diesel Fuel
- Ammonium Nitrate
- Copy of *Mein Kopf*
- Back Scratcher™

writing samples to guide students in a particular focus. (Consult the flexible-use resource Writing Text-Based Arguments for more detailed guidance on using modeling and exemplars for writing instruction.) Following this work, students would begin drafting and completing the writing task with supervision and coaching from the instructor. Lastly, prior to submission, students might engage in a session of peer review or other activity designed to help them revise and improve their draft.

Overwhelming research indicates that feedback is critical to student growth—and that students benefit from this feedback only when they have the opportunity to return to their work and make changes. Comments on a completed work that the student has no opportunity to revise are ineffective. For these reasons, plan to have students write at least a portion of the work in class so you are able to help coach them in real time. In addition, try to include at least one mechanism for feedback and revision with each formal writing assignment. There is also ample research to support the benefit of having students read one another’s work. Well-guided peer feedback can be just as effective and can save significant time for the teacher. As always, we advise teachers to keep the pace brisk. Rather than engaging in multiple rewrites of the same paper until it reaches a state of “perfection,” we typically advise teachers to direct student focus to revising only the highest-priority needs, reserving further instruction for future writing tasks.

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



FOCUS LESSON

- Place students in groups of threes and give the groups time to discuss the following “step-back” question that was introduced during the closing meeting of the previous session:
 - » How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?
- Ask students to work in their small groups to create a list of four or five ways that interpretive work was different for them than comprehension work.
- Next, reconvene the whole class to discuss the question. Use chart paper or another display to capture the class’s thinking about this. You might organize the responses by creating a simple T-chart, dedicating one column to features of comprehension work and the other to interpretive work. Afterwards, be sure to post this list in the room so that students can consult it as needed. (*This is a “working chart,” which means the class will have opportunities to revise and add to it in the sessions ahead. You will use this chart again in Session 9.*)
- Use this discussion to segue to the next task: composing an interpretive paper.
- Distribute copies of “Interpretive Assignment #1: Writing About ‘Everyday Use’” and discuss expectations with students. (See Appendix for copy-ready version.)
 - » If you are using the “Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing” and/or the “Rubric Interpretive/Argument Writing” be sure to orient students to these tools and any area you may be focusing on in particular. (See Rubrics

for Writing for copy-ready versions.) If this is the first argument writing you are assigning, it may be best to keep expectations simple—for example, you might focus only on one aspect of the rubric.

- » Note that the task sheet provides a few possible interpretations of the story. These are provided in this foundational unit as a scaffold to the writing task, particularly the requirement that students “make reference to alternative positions.” There is no requirement that students use these claims—in fact, interpretations generated from class discussion may be more compelling—but any of these would be appropriate to argue, or to use as a counterclaim.
- Review with the class the criteria for a good interpretation:
 - » A claim that answers the question.
 - » Text evidence that supports your claim.
 - » Explanations that show how that evidence supports your position.
 - » A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.
- Remind the class that a good response makes an interpretive statement (a claim) and then supports it with an explanation that is anchored in the text.
- Remind students that this is their first attempt at interpretive writing in this study. Their goal should be to do the best job they can. The interpretive pieces that grow out of this first assignment will be studied later on to help students acquire a better sense of what a really good interpretive response looks like.

WORK PERIOD

- Give students this time to write their interpretive papers. This is independent work. Remind students that during this work they should feel free to refer to their annotated and marked up copy of “Everyday Use,” any notes or writing they did (such as the quick write from Session 4), the assignment sheet, checklist, and any charts the class generated in this or the previous sessions.

Scaffolds and Modifications

- **Tip:** Depending on students’ level of comfort and familiarity with this genre of writing, and depending on your instructional goals, you may choose to have students draft this first paper cooperatively with a partner.



- **Check for understanding:** Use this time to confer with students about this work. Consider whether common student questions, difficulties, or errors merit a focus in either the next session or during the next writing task. If you set a particular focus in your writing expectations, observe students’ performance in this area.

Argument
Interpretive Assignment #1
Writing About "Everyday Use"

For this assignment you will write an argument about "Everyday Use" that answers the question in the box below. It will sound familiar to you because you participated in a discussion about it in the previous session's work:

At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—"But a real smile, not scared."
Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Here are a few:

- Because for the first time, her mother stood up to Dee on her behalf.
- Maggie realizes that her life is not inferior to her sister's.
- She's no longer afraid of her sister because she understands that she (Maggie) has inherited her family's legacy.

Your job is to think through the possible answers—both the answers listed above as well those that you generate on your own or with the class—and choose the one you think is best. Then write a compelling, 1-2 page argument that supports your answer.

Use your "Checklist for Argument Writing" to help you remember everything you must include in your writing, and be sure to draw on all of your discussion notes and class charts as you write. These are valuable resources that will help you complete the assignment.

When you finish writing, make sure your argument includes

1. A claim that answers the question;
2. Support for the claim with evidence from the text;
3. An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position; and
4. Commentary on potential counterclaims or alternate positions.

Citing Evidence

When you refer to a specific line or moment from our unit texts, make sure you quote it accurately and tell what page and line number the quotation or moment is from. Here's an example of a sentence in which a line from the text is quoted:

Near the end of the story, Mama describes a dramatic scene, saying, "I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands and dumped them into Maggie's lap" (p. 20, lines 400-404).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. There are double quotation marks around the part that Walker wrote.
2. The quotation is copied exactly as Walker wrote it.
3. The page and line numbers the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses after the last double quotation marks but before the period.

CLOSING MEETING

- Pose the following questions to the class: “What success did you have today when writing your paper? Were you able to form a claim? Were you able to locate textual evidence to support your claim? Were you able to craft a satisfying explanation?” Call on students to share their successes aloud. Determine whether or not students will need an extra day or two to complete their papers.
- Once finished, ask students to turn in their papers. Tell students that you will review and respond to their drafts and, with permission, type up and photocopy excerpts from student papers to review with the class later in the work. Remind the class that the main purpose of this unit is to introduce students to interpretive reading, thinking, and writing. *(When selecting student work to discuss with the class, work to find text that you can use to help the class get smarter about interpretive work. For example, you might cull out solid interpretive statements that have thin explanations, and then ask the class to help you build a more compelling, text-anchored explanation. You will need these excerpts for use in Session 10.)*

Scorable Moment: Formative/Summative

As the first of two arguments in the unit, this can be treated formatively or scored with a summative rubric.



Teaching Note: Giving good feedback is both important and, at times, difficult. Not all feedback is effective, and some is even counterproductive. We encourage teachers to keep in mind some of the following recommendations:

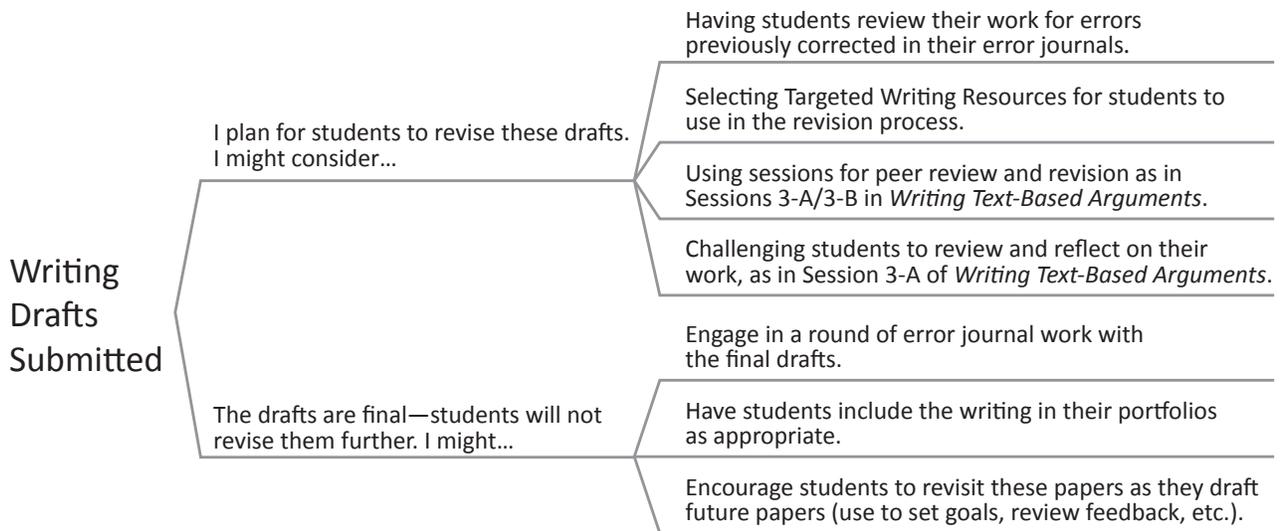
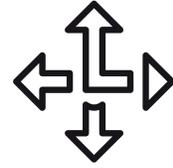
1. Jan Chappuis (2009) writes that good feedback “limits corrective information to the amount of advice the student can act on,” which may vary between students. Too much feedback can be overwhelming and difficult to process, in addition to being quite time-consuming to produce.
2. Give feedback while students have a chance to act on it. Feedback returned along with a final grade is often ignored.
3. If you are pointing out a strength, describe specifically what the student has done well (“This introduction gives me a clear understanding of your focus.”).
4. For intervention feedback, be clear about the need. Comments can be focused on describing what is present, on posing a question, or on making a clear recommendation—as long as you don’t *solve the problem* for the student. Consider the following:
 - a. “These sentences all begin with the same phrase.”
 - b. “Can you think of some different ways of beginning these sentences?”
 - c. “Try rearranging or combining some of these sentences to add variety.”

Instead of simply saying “repetitive” or offering new sentence starters for the student, each of these comments gives the student a clear, manageable thought problem to solve.

In addition, a rubric and checklist for interpretive/argument writing are included in *Rubrics for Writing*. Be sure to read the “Wise Use of Inquiry By Design Rubrics for Writing” (also in *Rubrics for Writing*) if you decide to use this tool. For more in-depth guidance on incorporating the interpretive/argument rubric as part of classroom work, consult *Writing Text-Based Arguments*.

Next Steps for Student Writing

Student writing presents the teacher with many choices for how to respond. If the writing is intended to produce a polished draft, it is usually appropriate to allow students opportunities for review, reflection, and feedback before scoring the final product. Research indicates that as soon as a grade or score appears on a piece of writing, students focus on the grade rather than on the feedback, and that feedback is most effective when students have an opportunity to modify or change their work as a result (William 2018). As students submit their drafts, consider which instructional path best fits your needs.





SESSION 6

Introducing “It’s That It Hurts”: Comprehension Work

AGENDA

- Students will listen to “It’s That It Hurts” and read along silently, marking the text and making notes in the margin of their student reader.
- Students will work with partners to craft a synopsis of the story that accounts for the narrator, key characters, and basic plot development.

FOCUS LESSON

- Introduce the class to Tomás Rivera’s “It’s That It Hurts.”
- Explain to students that this is the other story they will do work with during this unit. Point out that the work with each text follows a pattern—comprehension work followed by interpretive work—and that, as such, this session will be devoted to a “getting oriented” reading of the story.
- Remind students of the larger objectives laid out in the first session of the unit:

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



» On one level, we are studying these stories because they are complex, interesting stories that are worth reading and discussing on their own.

» On another level, we are studying these stories because they offer opportunities to stretch important skills in our reading, discussing, and writing. We will continue to examine at how we read for understanding, how we construct an interpretation of a story, and how we build an argument to support our interpretation.

Learning Objectives

- Students will read and demonstrate a basic understanding of the characters and events in “It’s That It Hurts.”

Guiding Questions

- What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text?

Materials

- A copy of “It’s That It Hurts” to read aloud

- Place the following three comprehension questions on the board:
 - » Who is telling the story? Where is he (physically) when he is telling it? What are the important things we learn about him in the story?
 - » Who are the other characters in the story?
 - » The story does some interesting things with time. It opens at the end of the story in a sense. What happens in the story? Work to create a retelling of the events that occurred in the order in which they happened. In other words, resequence them to answer this question: What are the big events in the story and in what order do they happen?
- Tell the class that during this session you would like to read the story aloud one time. Point out that at the end of the reading, students will have time to work on the three questions in groups of twos or threes, and that they should use the questions on the board to help them listen to the read-aloud.
- Encourage students to make notes in the margins of their student reader and to mark the text during the reading. If you have established a set of common annotation marks, you may wish to remind students of these now. Again, we often find that simple works best (*, !, ?, etc.)
- Direct students’ attention back to the chart created in the inquiry reflection at the end of session 2: what are the things you did and the steps you took to comprehend the first text in this unit?

Scaffolds and Modifications

- Reading: Chunking, modeling reading strategies.



WORK PERIOD

- Read “It’s That It Hurts” aloud to the class.
- Students should read along silently during the reading and mark places in the text, or make brief notes, that relate to the comprehension questions on the board.

CLOSING MEETING



- After the reading, give students time to convene in groups of two or three to work on the questions on the board. During this time, they should jot down notes from their conversation on a page in their literacy notebook.
- **Check for Understanding:** Monitor students’ work at the end of the period to determine whether or not they understand the story, reviewing literacy notebooks if necessary. Whenever possible, respond to students’ questions by redirecting them to the text with prompts like “See if you can find any moments in the text that might help you answer that” or “Review some of the places that you and your group members marked in the text as we read to see if that helps.” Remember that students will continue to interact with and reread the text, so they do not need to be experts on it at this moment. Instead, use this time to determine whether or not a whole-class rereading is appropriate in the next session.



SESSION 7

“It’s That It Hurts”: Wrapping Up the Comprehension Work

AGENDA

- Students will reread “It’s That It Hurts.”
- Students will work with partners to confirm or revise their synopsis of the story that accounts for the narrator, key characters, and basic plot development.
- Students will share their understanding of the story by sharing out their answers to the comprehension questions in a whole-class setting.
- Students will identify and share out the important things learned about what takes place in the story.
- Students will reflect on the comprehension work they have been doing by quick-writing and discussing their answers to the following questions: “What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them?”

Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the characters and events in “It’s That It Hurts.”
- Students will add to their list of processes for working to comprehend a short story.

Guiding Questions

- What are some strategies for comprehending a fictional text?
- In what ways are you becoming smarter about comprehension work?

Materials

- Copy of “It’s That It Hurts”
- Chart paper or other display

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



Teaching Note:

Once again, consider incorporating a second reading of the story into the beginning of this session’s work. Students can use this second reading to check for gaps in the comprehension work they did in the previous session.

FOCUS LESSON/WORK PERIOD

- Convene the whole class to review and re-clarify (if needed) the comprehension questions introduced in the previous session:
 - » Who is telling the story? Where is he (physically) when he is telling it? What are the important things we learn about him in the story?
 - » Who are the other characters in the story?
 - » The story does some interesting things with time. It opens at the end of the story in a sense. What happens in the story? Work to create a retelling of the events that occurred in the order in which they happened. In other words, resequence them to answer this question: What are the big events in the story and in what order do they happen?

- As before, if students demonstrated a common and especially important misunderstanding last class (one that would not be easily resolved through whole-group discussion), direct students to resolve that misunderstanding by saying something like, "Last class, I heard from a lot of you that you thought _____. As you look back at the text and think through the comprehension questions, see if there are moments that might give us more information about that."

Scaffolds and Modifications

- Reading: Second read-aloud, chunking and retelling.
- Speaking and Listening: Discussion norms, goal-setting.



- Next, have students return to their small groups for 3-5 minutes to review their responses to the comprehension questions.

- » **Check for understanding:** During this time, walk amongst the groups to see whether anyone is experiencing difficulty. Try to determine whether the difficulty is due to the text or to trouble working together as a group.

- Next, take 5-7 minutes to facilitate a whole-class discussion about the three comprehension questions. Use this time to help students articulate their understandings about the characters and the events in "It's That It Hurts." To verify understanding and to provide an artifact that students can consult in the sessions ahead, capture the class's answers to the comprehension questions on a chart or other display.



CLOSING MEETING

- Different questions require students to do different work. During this closing meeting, take time to lead the class through a second round of step-back work with a different comprehension question.
- Direct the class's attention to this comprehension question:
 - » The story does some interesting things with time. It opens at the end of the story in a sense. What happens in the story? Work to create a retelling of the events that occurred in the order in which they happened. In other words, resequence them to answer this question: What are the big events in the story and in what order do they happen?



- Remind students that one reason we are studying these stories is because they help us think about how we *read for understanding*. We did this with the first story, and we will think about some of the same questions a second time. These reflections require you to identify strategies and steps that you used, which will help you (and other students) recall these strategies later and use them in other contexts: you may not even realize the work you are doing until you name it.
- **Inquiry reflection:** Review the question with the class and then, to help students reflect back on the work they did to answer it, lead the class through the following cycle of step-back work:
 1. Take a moment to reflect back on the work you did with to answer the comprehension questions. Even if it did not seem difficult to you, think about each separate step you took along the way.
 2. Take 3-4 minutes to write down in your notebook a list that answers the following questions:
 - What are the things you did to answer this question and what was the order—as best you can remember—in which you did them? List everything that comes to mind, and mark anything new that you did, or anything you did differently from last time.
 - Compared to the first story, what was it like to do the comprehension work this time? Did you notice any differences? If so, why do you think it was different?
 3. Take your notes to a small-group discussion with two other students. For 2-3 minutes, the three of you should work together to share your lists and reflections. During this share out time, be sure to ask questions of one another as needed and, most importantly, to revise or add new items to your list. Your goal here should be to leave this short meeting with a list of things you did that is as detailed and accurate as possible.
 4. Finally, participate actively in a 3- to 5-minute long whole-group discussion about the “what are the things you did” question. Imagine that in this discussion you are working as a whole class to create an even more comprehensive list of the things a reader does when answering a comprehension question. After you have generated the ideas for the list, ask students about their experiences doing comprehension work for the second story, compared to the first.
- Capture the list the class generates during the whole-group discussion on a chart. Afterwards, post this list in the room so that students can consult it as needed.

**Scorable Moment:
Formative**





SESSION 8

Introducing Interpretive Assignment #2

AGENDA

- Students will form and discuss an interpretation of “It’s That It Hurts” in small groups, responding to the question “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?”
- Students will reference the text to support their interpretations.
- Students will take notes about their own and their classmates’ interpretations to help them with the interpretive writing to come.
- Students will reflect upon and share out their ideas about the process of conducting interpretive discussions.

FOCUS LESSON

- On the board or a chart, write the interpretive question from “Interpretive Assignment #2” as well as the definition of a good argument. (You may choose instead to photocopy and distribute the information on the next page.) *Note: Do not share any possible answers to the question at this time. Also, do not share the assignment sheet found in the Appendix since that includes possible answers.*

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



- Remind students that an interpretation is an argument writers make about literary texts.
- » Prompt students to recall the meaning of terms like claim, evidence, explanation (sometimes called warrant or analysis), and counterclaim. These are the basic parts of an argument.

Learning Objectives

- In small groups, students will generate an initial attempt at a claim in response to the interpretive question and mark supporting moments in the text.

Guiding Questions

- What do you do in order to form an interpretation?

Materials

- Chart paper or other display

- » Poll students for their ideas about what counts as evidence in making an interpretation of a story. How might a person support their claim? Jot student suggestions on the board, and point out to students that they'll be reviewing the evidence today to start forming a claim.

Preparation for Interpretive Assignment #2

For this assignment, you will write an argument about "It's That It Hurts" that answers the question in the box below.

The first line in the story is "It hurts a lot"
and the title is "It's That It Hurts."

What is the "it" that hurts?

Remember that this is your second attempt at interpretive writing in this study. Your goal in this paper should be to apply what you've learned so far about interpretive writing. Remember that while there can be lots of different interpretations, a good argument must have the following:

- A claim that answers the question.
- Text evidence that supports your claim.
- Explanations that show how that evidence supports your position.
- A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.

As in the previous assignment, before you write your response you will have an opportunity to discuss the question in a small group and then, later, with the class as a whole. Members of the groups do not have to agree on an interpretation. The purpose of these discussions is to give you a chance to "try out" responses before writing, to hear other readers' reactions to those responses, and to help each other identify examples to support and/or otherwise refine those responses. Be sure to take good notes during these discussions. These notes will help you track your thinking, ask better questions, and make your interpretive writing go much faster.

Be sure to bring your notes and a copy of "It's That It Hurts" to these discussions, as you will need these to locate important passages in the story. Consider spending some time rereading the story and your notes as you prepare for your discussions.

WORK PERIOD

- Place students in groups of twos or threes.
- Remind students that the purpose of the small-group work is to give them a chance to try out the interpretations they will write during Session 10. Remind them to take notes during these discussions, as this will help them craft their interpretive paper drafts. These notes will also help them participate in the whole-group conversation in the next session.
- Revisit with students the thinking they did about the differences between comprehension work and interpretive work. As you review this work, help students recall moments in the earlier work with the Walker text to illustrate the differences. Take care to pay particular attention to conversational moves students made that were either helpful or problematic.
- Direct students' attention back to the chart created during the focus lesson of Session 5: what do we do when we form interpretations? These strategies can help as students practice this work once again.
- Review the norms for small group work and give the groups time to conduct their discussions.



- **Check for understanding:**
 - » Confer with groups about the work during this time. Be sure to remind and model for the groups how to use (reference, read from, point to) the text during these exchanges. Also, take time to show students how to jot notes and ideas down during these discussions.
 - » Observe the early interpretive moves students are making: Are there improvements you can celebrate with the class? Are there goals you can set for future discussions?
 - » Provided students are able to generate at least some ideas for claims and some relevant evidence to support them, they should be ready to continue to the next session's work.

Scaffolds and Modifications

- Speaking and Listening: Discussion norms, goal-setting.
- Reading: Chunking (interpretive).
- Tip: Consider breaking up an especially long work period by checking in with the whole class in the middle. You might use questions like, "What is one thing you've found so far?" or "What is something you or your group are having trouble with right now?"



Scorable Moment: Formative



CLOSING MEETING

- Convene the whole class, and ask the question "What did you learn today about the 'it' that hurts?" Again, you are not seeking a full, developed interpretive discussion—just a quick charting of observations or ideas.

- Capture student ideas on a chart, so these ideas can be accessed later. Encourage students to write their classmates' ideas in their writer's notebooks, to help them with their upcoming writing assignment.
- During this debrief, pause to work with the students to locate and note the page and line numbers of passages they might want to cite.



SESSION 9

Interpretive Assignment #2: Whole-Class Discussion

AGENDA

- Students will quickly compose an initial written response to the question “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?”
- Students will participate in a whole-class discussion, trying to answer the same question.
- Students will take notes about the points and ideas raised during the discussion.
- Students will think about and identify what they learned about the text that they didn’t know before the discussion.
- Students will reflect upon and share out any new things they learned today about forming interpretations, as well as review the major differences between comprehension and interpretive work.

FOCUS LESSON

- Write the interpretive question on the board and revisit it with the class: “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?”

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



- Ask students to spend 10 minutes composing a written response to this question in their writer’s notebook. Explain to students that this initial writing exercise is aimed to help them in today’s whole-class discussion about this question. Explain to students that good responses will make a claim

Learning Objectives

- Students will share and support their responses to the interpretive question, clarifying, specifying, and modifying as needed.

Guiding Questions

- What do you do in order to form an interpretation?
- How can you contribute to a whole-class interpretive discussion?
- How is forming an interpretation different from responding to a comprehension question?

Materials

- “Interpretive Assignment #2”
- “Criteria for a Good Discussion”
- T-chart comparing comprehension versus interpretive work

(a one-sentence answer to the question “What is the ‘it’ that hurts?”) and an explanation to back up the claim supported by textual evidence.

- » Inform students that they will add to these responses at the end of class, and that while you plan to read through these to see their ideas and their thinking, they do not need to worry about writing it perfectly at this time. This is *writing-to-think* work.
- » Walk around during this time to get a sense of students’ understanding of the text and task.
- After students have written for 10 minutes, take a few minutes to review the “Criteria for a Good Discussion.” (A copy-ready version can be found in the Appendix.) Explain to students that this session’s work period will be dedicated to a whole-group discussion of the question in “Interpretive Assignment #2.”

Sentence Stems

- I agree with _____ because...
- I disagree with _____ because...
- I don’t understand...
- Can you please explain...
- Can you tell me more about...
- What if...
- What you said makes me think/wonder...

- Explain that you, as the teacher, will NOT be participating in the discussion. Instead, you will be charting the ideas and references that students focus on in their conversation. Help students to understand that they should be having an “adult-like” discussion, where they don’t necessarily have to raise their hands, but rather can wait for the right moment to jump into the discussion to make a point.
- If students have a hard time with this, you may once again consider introducing the “Sentence Stems.” But try conducting a discussion at least once before introducing the stems. Many groups of students won’t need them.

WORK PERIOD

- Ask students to take a moment to gather their notebooks and their copies of the story.
- Tell students that they will have 20 minutes to complete their class discussion. (*Twenty minutes seems to be the right amount of time to allow a class of 30 students a chance to talk. Sometimes, when you are first beginning whole-class discussions, you might begin with less time—10 minutes, for example. After a while though, classes are often able to sustain them for 30–40 minutes.*)
- To begin the discussion, revisit the interpretive question with the class. Then, invite the students to begin the discussion. Using the board, a typed document on display, or chart paper, quietly chart students’ ideas (and corresponding text references) as they share. Many ideas will be similar, so not every idea needs to be recorded, but try to capture the gist of the different ideas without adding your own thoughts. If students have not referenced the text, you might ask something like, “What in the text makes you think that?” Otherwise, try as much as possible to remain quiet and release the conversation to the students.



Scorable Moment: Formative

Take notes on a seating chart to keep track of who says what so you can assess their discussion efforts.



Criteria For a Good Discussion

What are students saying and doing during discussion?

Students are...

- Mindful of group/classroom norms.
- Contributing ideas to the group discussion.
- Supporting ideas with specific moments in the text.
- Referring to specific page numbers, line numbers, or quotations in the text to support their arguments.
- Using sentence stems.
- Listening to each other's ideas and building on them.
- Questioning each other's ideas.
- Pausing after someone is finished speaking.

Students are not...

- Disregarding group/classroom norms.
- Sitting silently and disengaging from the discussion.
- Drifting to off-topic conversations.
- Making generalizations that are not supported in the text.
- Dominating the conversation.
- Being rude, or using disrespectful language.
- Displaying anger when somebody doesn't agree with them.
- Interrupting someone who is talking.

- Work hard to get comfortable with periods of silence. Make it the job of the students to end the silence, not the job of the teacher. You may jump into the conversation to do any of the following, but do NOT attempt to answer the question yourself, or to steer students toward looking at a particular piece of the text, or considering a certain answer. Also, resist the temptation to praise students' ideas. Instead, do one of the following:
 - » Let students know when they have 5 minutes left.
 - » Encourage students who have not spoken up, when there are only a few minutes left, to take this opportunity to speak.
 - » Direct students' attention to specific items on the "Criteria for a Good Discussion" chart.

Scaffolds and Modifications

- Speaking and Listening: Discussion norms, goal-setting, turn-and-talk, posing questions, course correction.



CLOSING MEETING

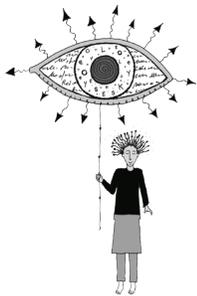


- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to take 3-5 minutes to make any additional notes or changes to the responses they wrote at the beginning of class. Their initial notes, coupled with their notes after the discussion, should help you understand their thinking about the text and how their thinking has grown or changed. Students should consider some of the following:
 - » Add notes, references, or ideas from the discussion that you had not considered in your earlier writing. These might add to or expand your initial ideas, or they might be new or different ideas entirely—it is perfectly acceptable to have changed your mind during the discussion.
 - » Include notes on at least one other perspective from the discussion that you could use as a counterclaim when you write about this text.
- Then, review the T-chart the class helped generate during Session 5 (how interpretation is different from comprehension work).
- Next, ask the class to answer individually in writing the following “step-back” questions about doing interpretive work:
 - » What new things did you learn about forming interpretations from our discussion today? Was there anything different in your experience this time, compared to the interpretive work with the first text?
 - » What are the major differences between comprehension work and interpretive work?
- Be sure to add any new items to the T-chart as students share their responses.

**Scorable Moment:
Formative**



- ELAR.8.1 (A, B, D)
- ELAR.8.5 (A, B, C, E, G, H)
- ELAR.8.6 (B, C, E, J)
- ELAR.8.10 (A)
- ELAR.8.11 (C)



SESSION 10

Studying Drafts, Composing Drafts

AGENDA

- Students will study effective interpretive writing.
- Students will see examples and non-examples of
 - » Clearly stated interpretive positions.
 - » Compelling explanations that are grounded in the text.
 - » Exemplary phrases, transitions, citations, and other writing moves.
- Students will learn about the importance of demonstrating an authoritative interpretive disposition in their writing—in other words, “sounding like you know what you’re talking about.”
- Students will write their interpretive papers about “It’s That It Hurts.”

Teaching Note: Prior to this session, pull together a set of interpretive papers on “Everyday Use” from “Interpretive Assignment #1.” To do this, look for places where students interpret, or attempt to interpret, the text or look for interesting fragments of interpretive work that will help you illustrate the following items:

- Clearly stated positions/interpretive statements.
- Compelling explanations grounded in specific passages in the story.
- Elegant phrases, transitions, or citations, including phrases used to reference or cite a passage from the story.

Learning Objectives

- Students will clarify the traits of strong interpretive/argument writing after examining samples of student work.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic features of an argument as they draft a response to the interpretive question.

Guiding Questions

- What does good interpretive writing look like?
- In what ways are you becoming smarter about writing interpretive papers?

Materials

- Examples of interpretive writing for study
- Charts showing exemplary moves for interpretive writing
- “Interpretive Assignment #2: ‘It’s That It Hurts’”
- “Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing” (optional)
- “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing” (optional)

The First Ten Minutes

Reserve the first 10 minutes for independent reading (or on occasion, alternate with vocabulary, writing fluency, or error journal work).



The easiest way to conduct the work in this session is to project excerpts of papers on the board or screen. As always, be sure to obtain permission from students to use their work.

The work in this session has strong connections to Session 1-B from *Writing Text-Based Arguments*. Teachers who wish to adapt the work for a different writing focus are encouraged to review that session (or others from the same guide) for ideas.

FOCUS LESSON

- Tell the class that the purpose of this focus lesson is to hold a discussion with the class about effective interpretive writing.
- Review the basic principles for good interpretive writing:
 - » A claim that answers the question.
 - » Text evidence that supports your claim.
 - » An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position.
 - » A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.
- Tell students that you want them to help you consider excerpts from student responses to “Interpretive Assignment #1.” The aim is to exit this work with a clearer sense of what good interpretive writing is like. Options for facilitating this conversation might include the following:
 - » Show students an interpretive statement and ask them “What would make this interpretation more compelling?”
 - » Show students an interpretive statement with a so-so explanation and ask students to help you revise it.
 - » Show students a well-written passage that needs help with citations and ask students to help you revise it.
 - » Show the class an almost-interpretive statement and ask the class to help you phrase it so it’s clearer, then list notes to explain the interpretation.
- One of the most difficult things for students to acquire is the ability to sound like they are delivering a compelling interpretation. This might be termed an “authoritative interpretive disposition.” In all of the scenarios you consider with students insist that they do the following: Act as if they are an expert. *How would an expert write that? What does an expert sound like? How does an expert cite sources? Ask them to “try on” this persona during this work.*
- During this conversation, be sure to guide students to make use of the story and their notes.
- Use this focus lesson time to walk students through one model. Encourage them to take notes and to copy examples into their notebooks.
- Consider creating chart-sized versions of exemplar papers or passages, or a digital collection of moments that illustrate exemplary moves. These charts should be marked and annotated and posted so that students can reference them during the interpretive writing work ahead.

WORK PERIOD

- Distribute copies of “Interpretive Assignment #2: Writing About ‘It’s That It Hurts.’” (See Appendix for copy-ready version.)
 - » If you are using the “Checklist for Interpretive/Argument Writing” and/or the “Rubric for Interpretive/Argument Writing” be sure to review these tools and any area you may be focusing on in particular.
 - » Remind students that the task sheet provides a few possible interpretations of the story. These are provided in this foundational unit as a scaffold to the writing task, particularly the requirement that students “make reference to alternative positions.” There is no requirement that students use these claims—in fact, interpretations generated from class discussion may be more compelling—but any of these would be appropriate to argue, or to use as a counterclaim.
- Take a minute to review, once again, the criteria for a good interpretation listed on the assignment sheet:
 - » A claim that answers the question.
 - » Text evidence that supports your claim.
 - » An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position.
 - » A response to other possible arguments or counterclaims.
- Remind the class that there isn’t a simple right or wrong answer to the question. Each student should aim to form an interpretation and to explain that interpretation by linking it to specific passages in the story.
- This is an excellent time to have students review their earlier writing and the feedback they received from their first paper. You may even wish to ask students to set specific goals for this paper using a reflection similar to the following:

"In my last paper, one thing I did well was _____. In this paper, my goal for improvement is to _____."
- Give students this time to write their interpretive papers in response to the assignment for “It’s That It Hurts.” This is independent work. Remind students that during this work they should refer to the story and their notes, such as the quick write from Session 9, the assignment sheet, the checklist, and any charts the class generated in this or the previous sessions.
- **Check for understanding:** Use this time to confer with students about this work. Consider whether common student questions, difficulties, or errors merit a focus in either the next session or during the next writing task. If you set a particular focus in your writing expectations, observe students’ performance in this area.



Argument
Interpretive Assignment #2
Writing About "It's That It Hurts"

For this assignment you will write an argument about "It's That It Hurts" that answers the question in the box below. It will sound familiar to you because you participated in a discussion about it in the previous session's work:

The first line in the story is "It hurts a lot"
and the title is "It's That It Hurts."
What is the "it" that hurts?

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Here are a few:

- The "it" is that his father will be disappointed.
- The "it" is the shame of discrimination, specifically of being unfairly expelled after fighting "a couple of our boys."
- The "it" is a big realization about the nature of the world he lives in and his place in it.

Your job is to think through the possible answers—both the answers listed above as well as those that you generate on your own or with the class—and choose the one you think is best. Then write a compelling, 1-2 page argument that supports your answer.

Use your "Checklist for Argument Writing" to help you remember everything you must include in your writing, and be sure to draw on all of your discussion notes and class charts as you write. These are valuable resources that will help you complete the assignment.

When you finish writing, make sure your argument includes

1. A claim that answers the question;
2. Support for the claim with evidence from the text;
3. An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position; and
4. Commentary on potential counterclaims or alternate positions.

Citing Evidence

When you refer to a specific line or moment from our unit texts, make sure you quote it accurately and tell what page and line number the quotation or moment is from. Here's an example of a sentence in which a line from the text is quoted:

As he reflects on the fight, the narrator writes that he doesn't "remember any more how or when I hit him but I know I did" (p. 22, line 125).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. There are double quotation marks around the part that Walker wrote.
2. The quotation is copied exactly as Walker wrote it.
3. The page and line numbers the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses *after* the last double quotation marks but *before* the period.

CLOSING MEETING

- Ask students to turn in their papers. (*Students who do not finish their paper during class time should complete the assignment for homework.*) Tell students that you will review their drafts, and with permission, photocopy excerpts to consider with the class later on. Remind the class that the main purpose of this unit is to introduce students to interpretive reading, thinking, talking, and writing.
- Ask students to comment on the ways the focus lesson work influenced their writing. Specifically, ask them to reflect on what it felt like to try out or use academic language and academic moves: Was it hard? Easy? What did it feel like?

Teaching Note: Giving good feedback is both important and, at times, difficult. Not all feedback is effective, and some is even counterproductive. We encourage teachers to keep in mind some of the following recommendations:

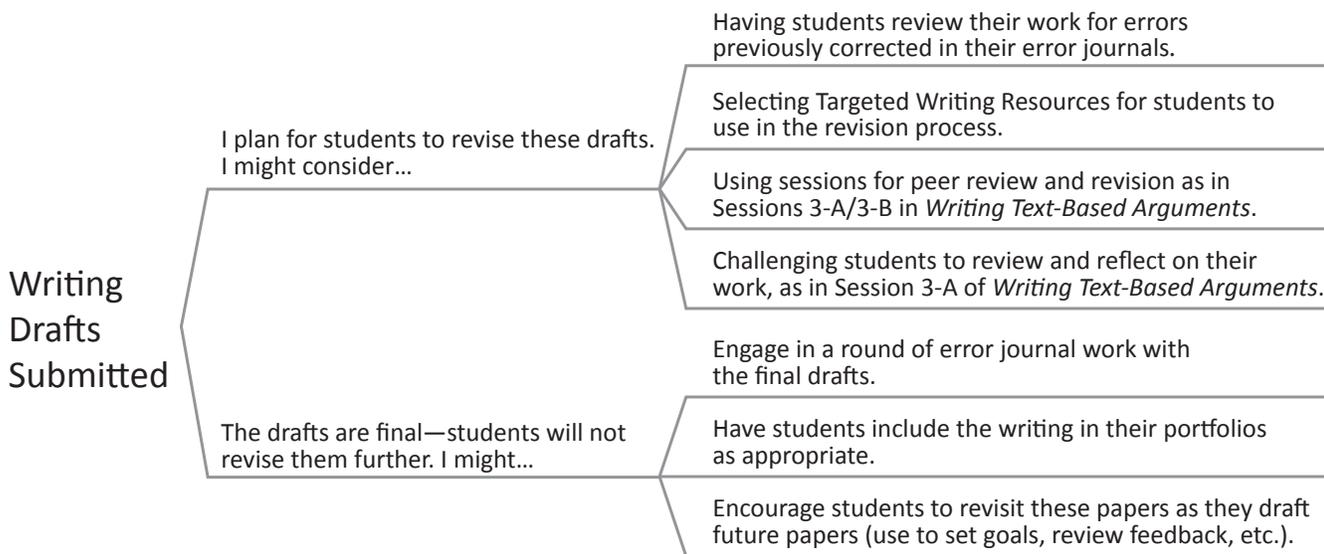
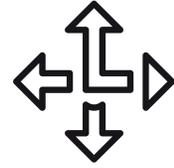
1. Jan Chappuis (2009) writes that good feedback “limits corrective information to the amount of advice the student can act on,” which may vary between students. Too much feedback can be overwhelming and difficult to process, in addition to being quite time-consuming to produce.
2. Give feedback while students have a chance to act on it. Feedback returned along with a final grade is often ignored.
3. If you are pointing out a strength, describe specifically what the student has done well. (“This introduction gives me a clear understanding of your focus.”)
4. For intervention feedback, be clear about the need. Comments can be focused on describing what is present, on posing a question, or on making a clear recommendation—as long as you don’t *solve the problem* for the student. Consider the following:
 - a. “These sentences all begin with the same phrase.”
 - b. “Can you think of some different ways of beginning these sentences?”
 - c. “Try rearranging or combining some of these sentences to add variety.”

Instead of simply saying “repetitive” or offering new sentence starters for the student, each of these comments gives the student a clear, manageable thought problem to solve.

In addition, a rubric and checklist for interpretive/argument writing are included in *Rubrics for Writing*. Be sure to read the “Wise Use of Inquiry By Design Rubrics for Writing” (also in *Rubrics for Writing*) if you decide to use this tool. For more in-depth guidance on incorporating the interpretive/argument rubric as part of classroom work, consult *Writing Text-Based Arguments*.

Next Steps for Student Writing

Student writing presents the teacher with many choices for how to respond. If the writing is intended to produce a polished draft, it is usually appropriate to allow students opportunities for review, reflection, and feedback before scoring the final product. Research indicates that as soon as a grade or score appears on a piece of writing, students focus on the grade rather than on the feedback, and that feedback is most effective when students have an opportunity to modify or change their work as a result (Wiliam 2018).



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- Heitin, Liana. "Should Formative Assessments Be Graded?" Education Week. November 11, 2015.
- William, Dylan. *Embedded Formative Assessment*. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press, 2018.

Appendix

Criteria for a Good Discussion

Interpretive Assignment #1: Writing About “Everyday Use”

Interpretive Assignment #2: Writing About “It’s That It Hurts”

Scaffolds and Modifications: Descriptions and Use

Criteria For a Good Discussion

What are students saying and doing during discussion?

Students are...

- Mindful of group/classroom norms.
- Contributing ideas to the group discussion.
- Supporting ideas with specific moments in the text.
- Referring to specific page numbers, line numbers, or quotations in the text to support their arguments.
- Using sentence stems.
- Listening to each other's ideas and building on them.
- Questioning each other's ideas.
- Pausing after someone is finished speaking.

Students are not...

- Disregarding group/classroom norms.
- Sitting silently and disengaging from the discussion.
- Drifting to off-topic conversations.
- Making generalizations that are not supported in the text.
- Dominating the conversation.
- Being rude, or using disrespectful language.
- Displaying anger when somebody doesn't agree with them.
- Interrupting someone who is talking.

Argument
Interpretive Assignment #1
Writing About "Everyday Use"

For this assignment you will write an argument about "Everyday Use" that answers the question in the box below. It will sound familiar to you because you participated in a discussion about it in the previous session's work:

At the end of the story, Maggie smiles—"But a real smile, not scared."
Why isn't Maggie scared anymore?

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Here are a few:

- Because for the first time, her mother stood up to Dee on her behalf.
- Maggie realizes that her life is not inferior to her sister's.
- She's no longer afraid of her sister because she understands that she (Maggie) has inherited her family's legacy.

Your job is to think through the possible answers—both the answers listed above as well those that you generate on your own or with the class—and choose the one you think is best. Then write a compelling, 1-2 page argument that supports your answer.

Use your "Checklist for Argument Writing" to help you remember everything you must include in your writing, and be sure to draw on all of your discussion notes and class charts as you write. These are valuable resources that will help you complete the assignment.

When you finish writing, make sure your argument includes

1. A claim that answers the question;
2. Support for the claim with evidence from the text;
3. An explanation that shows how that evidence supports your position; and
4. Commentary on potential counterclaims or alternate positions.

Citing Evidence

When you refer to a specific line or moment from our unit texts, make sure you quote it accurately and tell what page and line number the quotation or moment is from. Here's an example of a sentence in which a line from the text is quoted:

Near the end of the story, Mama describes a dramatic scene, saying, "I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands and dumped them into Maggie's lap" (p. 20, lines 400-404).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. There are double quotation marks around the part that Walker wrote.
2. The quotation is copied exactly as Walker wrote it.
3. The page and line numbers the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses after the last double quotation marks but before the period.

Argument
Interpretive Assignment #2
Writing About "It's That It Hurts"

For this assignment you will write an argument about "It's That It Hurts" that answers the question in the box below. It will sound familiar to you because you participated in a discussion about it in the previous session's work:

The first line in the story is "It hurts a lot"
and the title is "It's That It Hurts."

What is the "it" that hurts?

There are many possible correct answers to this question. Here are a few:

- The "it" is that his father will be disappointed.
- The "it" is the shame of discrimination, specifically of being unfairly expelled after fighting "a couple of our boys."
- The "it" is a big realization about the nature of the world he lives in and his place in it.

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As he reflects on the fight, the narrator writes that he doesn't "remember any more how or when I hit him but I know I did" (p. 22, line 125).

Please notice three things about this example:

1. There are double quotation marks around the part that Walker wrote.
2. The quotation is copied exactly as Walker wrote it.
3. The page and line numbers the quotation comes from is placed in parentheses *after* the last double quotation marks but *before* the period.

Scaffolds and Modifications: Descriptions and Use

For English learners (ELs) and other students needing additional support.

Some strategies referenced below direct the reader to additional information in the *Amplifications for English Language Learners* guide. We wish to clarify that all strategies below, whether they include this reference or not, may be used with any learner as appropriate.

Reading

- **Annotating** – This basic but highly useful strategy is incorporated into nearly all Inquiry By Design reading tasks. During an initial reading, students are frequently asked to mark anything that seems interesting, confusing, or important. These annotations can form the basis for follow-up conversations during comprehension work, either with partners and small groups or as a whole class. After a first read, it is often helpful to have students reread and annotate with a purpose or question in mind: “Find and mark moments in the text that may help you answer this question.”
- **Charting (comprehension)** – After completing comprehension tasks, teachers are often directed to collect student thinking on a chart (paper or digital) visible to the whole class. This chart remains an access point to the text throughout the unit. Charting a retelling or other basic comprehension tasks is always an appropriate scaffold, whether or not the directions explicitly call for it.
- **Chunking** – Whenever a text is either especially long or especially complex, chunking is an excellent and highly adaptable scaffold. In the simplest approach, a teacher might pause at one or two moments in the first reading to give students a chance to annotate the section read, or even have students turn and talk with a neighbor for two minutes to check for understanding. Below are a few other variations of chunking work:
 - **Chunking and retelling** – After a complete reading of the text, ask students working in small groups to first break the text into discrete chunks (3-5 is often optimal) by looking for places the author changes ideas, focuses, settings, etc. In poetry, chunks can often (but not always) be separated by stanzas or end punctuation. After this, ask students to reread the chunks in their group and write a 1-2 sentence summary of each individual chunk. We do not recommend a jigsaw approach in which students are only responsible for understanding a small portion of the text.
 - » Students can also write down questions specific to each chunk during this work.
 - » After this, you might chart a whole-class retelling based on each group’s summaries.
 - **Chunking (interpretive)** – Even after comprehension work has been done, chunking can still be helpful. As students tackle interpretive work, they may find more success examining the text one chunk at a time for relevant ideas or evidence.
- **Critical vocabulary review** – When providing written instructions to students, especially groups that include English language learners, be sure to take time to both preview and review notes, handouts, copies of readings and rubrics etc. The content language as well as the language of instruction must be accessible; unpack key terms and instructions deliberately. Other considerations include the language of the genre, the language of assessment (e.g., terms in rubrics and checklists), and any domain-specific language in the readings. In addition, teachers must watch for and attend to figurative language and the use of idioms or idiomatic expressions. See the *Amplifications for English Language Learners* and the *Building Vocabulary* guide for more information.
- **Graphic representations** – As with chunking and retelling, this approach works well for long or complex texts. After a read-through, allow students time to review the text in small groups and generate a graphic representation of the story or ideas. Be loose in your requirements—students could create a simple flow chart or they could draw a six-panel cartoon sketch. Keep

it simple, too: It is important that students remain focused on the text and its ideas, rather than on the artistry of their work.

- Modeling reading strategies – During a read aloud, you may model a particular reading comprehension strategy that fits your students' needs. At select moments during the reading, let students hear your thinking process as you, for example, work to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word through context, or as you try to summarize a somewhat confusing passage. Frame your thinking as an example of what readers do in their minds as they monitor their own understanding of a text. Use selectively.
- Partnered/group reading – This strategy encompasses methods such as *whisper reading*, *ping-pong reading*, *choral reading*, and *echo reading*, all described in *Amplifications for English Language Learners*. In these methods, students read along (or read aloud, individually) with a partner, teacher, or group in a structure that scaffolds their work and maintains a safe environment. Note that these methods do not include “round-robin reading” or “popcorn reading,” which are methods we do not endorse.
- Read aloud, second read aloud – The first read aloud of a text is meant to provide all readers with a clear, sensible first experience with the text. Students almost always reread the text independently to complete the cycles of work. However, in some cases you may wish to provide a second read aloud, emphasizing that the first read is just a chance to listen for the general plot or ideas, and the second reading presents an opportunity to focus and annotate more deliberately. You may choose to have students share some of their initial observations, questions, or notes after the first read so students can listen for these details in the second read. This is especially useful with poetry and with particularly dense texts.
- Search and study – The search and study, typically introduced in *Reading and Writing About Informational and Literary Nonfiction*, is an excellent tool when interacting with texts full of unfamiliar technical vocabulary or which otherwise include a lot of context-dependent ideas or references. Texts heavy in scientific or historical references are good choices for a search and study. Consult the above-mentioned unit for more detail, but essentially, the search and study process involves students rereading the text to identify difficult moments or ideas, planning how they will figure those moments out (by rereading, discussing with a partner, or looking up information), and providing time and resources for students to seek out the information they need. Afterward, students share what they learned with the class.
- Question charts – During and after a reading, encourage students to note moments they have questions about. After completing comprehension work, check whether students still have questions and gather them on a chart, where you can determine whether they are appropriate for a search and study, for discussing during the whole-class interpretive discussion, for a turn-and-talk, or simply a quick answer.

Speaking and Listening

- Charting (discussion) – As with comprehension work, charting is a useful practice in any discussion. By jotting down students' ideas and text references, you keep the focus on their thinking and work, provide a helpful scaffold for the conversation and the writing afterward, and keep a running list of claims that students can develop or oppose.
- Course correction – If students begin developing ideas based on factually inaccurate information (not simply a different interpretation than your own) and other students have not already corrected course, push students back into the text with prompts like, “Many of you have been saying _____. Where do you see that in the text?” If students respond with continued and unlikely interpretations, you might prompt additional ideas by asking, “Are there any simpler explanations?”
- Discussion norms – Before assuming students cannot successfully carry on small- or whole-group discussion, be sure that norms and expectations have been made clear. As with many strategies, we recommend building a list of norms with student input. Quickly review these norms as you transition into any small- or whole-group activity.

- Discussion protocols – This broad category includes all manner of formal discussion structures, such as Socratic seminars and fishbowl discussions. A web search will reveal many more. Inquiry By Design always encourages teachers to work toward the goal of having students lead natural, unstructured conversations about texts. However, whether because of a specific instructional goal or simply for occasional variety, you may wish to look up and try out different protocols. Our cautions here are simply that you be sure that the hard work of critical thinking and analysis is always the students’ work to do, and that you remember that any protocol is meant to be a temporary scaffold on the path to a larger and different goal.
- Goal-setting and reflection – Using the class’s established discussion norms or another source (such as the “Seven Norms of Collaboration,” easily found online), provide students a moment to review the expectations and identify a goal (for example, “I know I need to work on pausing after others speak so that they can finish their thinking before I jump in, so I will focus on that in the discussion today”). They should write this down, so that after the discussion they can reflect on how they met their goal. This practice is always appropriate and can lead to consistent improvement in discussions, in addition to providing insights into students’ own view of their strengths and needs.
- Posing questions – While we typically recommend that teachers decrease their role in classroom discussion, allowing students to own as much of the thinking and the overall process as possible, sometimes students need additional questions to build momentum. Rather than directing these questions toward a predetermined response (as in, “Take a look at p. 15 and tell me what the narrator says about the topic there”), use questions that may help simply reframe the task or a part of the larger question or that identify gaps in the conversation that students may not have noticed. Some examples might include
 - “We’ve been talking a lot about the ending of the story, but is there anything else in the story that might help us think about this question?”
 - “Here are the ideas we’ve been discussing so far. Who can add to or push back on any of these?”
 - “Is there an alternative explanation? Is there any other way of seeing this?”
 - When pressing for more information or ideas, try questions like these:
 - » “Can you tell me more about that?”
 - » “What makes you think that?”
 - » “Where do you see that in the text?”
 - » “Does that make us wonder about anything else?”
 - » “What questions do you still have about the text/characters/topic?”
- Quick writes – In preparation for small- or whole-group discussion, ask students to take a few minutes (anywhere from 3-10 minutes, depending on how much information they are processing) to develop their thinking about the topic in question. Let them know that this is writing-to-think work, not something that will be scored for its grammar and punctuation. At the same time, be sure to emphasize the importance of this thinking: Writing forces us to commit our ideas into specific words and phrases in a logical order. Many times, we do not fully know what we think until we have to put it into words.
- Repetition and recasting – Rather than an occasional intervention, this should be a common practice in any classroom with English learners, so you will not see this intervention marked in the margins. Especially for ELs, repetition is key to augmenting comprehension when language is spoken. Retelling is an important way for ELs to recall, verbally capture, and communicate their comprehension. Syntax is developed; vocabulary is practiced; and structures are made visible by the student. Recasting involves mirroring back and building upon what ELs have said using standard English (modeling pronunciation, standard grammar, oral expression, and adding academic vocabulary etc.). This allows ELs to hear and affirm what they have stated, but also points them toward higher levels of proficiency. See *Amplifications for English Language Learners* for examples and more information.
- Return to text – Sometimes when a discussion has lost its way, students need a moment to review the text and any annotations they have made. Prompt students to take 1-3 minutes to review the text with the topic in mind, looking for moments that may either build on ideas already discussed, or introduce new ideas into the conversation.

- Sentence stems/frames – While there are some lists included in our units and countless sentence stem lists to be found online, you may instead wish simply to generate a list of ideas from the students themselves. “What kinds of phrases might be helpful for us when we want to know more about somebody’s idea? What about when we disagree with them? Or when we want to add new information to the discussion?” Encourage students to rely on these less and less over time as natural conversation becomes more productive.
- Strategic pairing – English language learners need structured opportunities to interact with language in purposeful ways. Verbalization is an important part of language learning, and the recurring work in pairs, trios, and small groups allows the creation of intentional interactions for ELs. There are many ways to group ELs, and language proficiency levels are a crucial consideration. The recommended grouping will depend on both the content and language demands of the task. The goal is to improve access, engagement, and, ultimately, achievement. Some of the ways ELs can be grouped include
 - » Pairing ELs with a student of higher English-language proficiency.
 - » Pairing ELs with another EL who shares the same home language, so they may converse and process linguistically first in their native language, then in English.
 - » Pairing ELs with a non-EL peer.
 - » Pairing ELs with a strong ELA anchor partner.
 - » Grouping Beginning (Emerging) ELs.
 - » Grouping Beginning (Emerging) and Intermediate (Expanding) ELs.
 - » Grouping Advanced (Bridging) with advanced ELA students.
 - » Grouping Advanced (Bridging) ELs with a lower English-proficiency level student.
 - » No Grouping – Expecting Advanced (Bridging) ELs to complete the task at a level comparable to English proficient peers.

See *Amplifications for English Language Learners* for more information on strategic pairing.

- Turn and talk – When a discussion has faltered completely and the silences are not only frequent but long and unproductive, give students a moment to turn and talk with a neighbor. They might share their ideas about the question, share additional questions they have about the text or topic, or think of additional information that can be brought back to the whole group. After about two minutes, reconvene as a whole group to unpack students’ thinking and set a new course for the discussion.

Writing

- Checklists for writing – Inquiry By Design’s *Rubrics for Writing* guide includes a variety of student checklists appropriate for different genres of writing. Whether or not their use is indicated specifically in the teacher manual and whether or not you decide to use the rubric itself, the checklists are always appropriate tools when students are writing in one of the indicated genres.
- Error journal – See *Constructing an Error Journal* for detailed information. When student writing shows a need for improved grammar and punctuation, be sure your class is engaged in regular opportunities to edit and revise their work, to seek out and understand writing mistakes (rather than simply making a teacher’s recommended corrections), and to track their ongoing errors for future reference and self-editing.
- Fluency practice – See *Developing Fluency in Writing* for more detailed information. This is not a one-time intervention but an ongoing practice. Essentially, regular low-stakes writing practice will help students become more detailed and fluent writers, which is a prerequisite for successful writing within particular genres. If student writing is frequently too brief and undeveloped, focus on implementing the work outlined in *Developing Fluency in Writing* (or similar work).

- Minimalist graphic organizers – Be extremely cautious about using graphic organizers or writing frames that do the thinking and planning work for students. If the organizer incorporates mandatory sentence starters and requires specific amounts and types of sentences (“Text evidence #1; Explanation #1; Text evidence #2; Explanation #2; etc.), it is likely to lead to extremely formulaic writing. More concerning, it is also likely to focus students’ attention on filling out a form rather than on engaging earnestly with the text and ideas, and the resulting writing will tell you less about their actual writing needs and more about their ability to “fill in the blanks.” When necessary, seek out organizers that help develop student thinking (like Venn diagrams) or that remind students of the expectations but provide a great deal of freedom and choice in how to meet them.
- Modeling – For detailed information and lesson plans on modeling specific writing strategies, see the introduction and Session 1-A of each of the guides for genre writing found in *Book 2: Form*. Modeling and the use of student exemplars (below) function on the understanding that telling students what to do can never be as effective as showing them. When introducing a new skill or expectation (for example, the use of counterclaims or the proper introduction of quoted text), use a display the whole class can see to model how this is done. Walk students clearly through your own thinking and the choices you make as you execute this skill. If it makes sense, follow your own modeling by creating another example with class input, then having students practice on their own (the I Do/We Do/You Do format). Modeling also plays an important role for English learners, who need to see and hear concrete information around expectations of a task. It is important to launch ELs into the process in a way they can understand, depending upon proficiency level. It is important for teachers to use meta-modeling, in order to make their thinking visible as they model or share. See *Amplifications for English Language Learners* for examples and more information.
- Peer review and feedback – For detailed information and lesson plans for peer review and feedback, see sessions 3-A and 3-B of each of the guides for genre writing found in *Book 2: Form*. Students benefit from having a second reader of their work, teachers benefit from improved drafts, and the classroom culture benefits from everyone’s increased exposure to student writing and a wider audience for each task.
- Quick writes – See above note under “Speaking and Listening.” This same low-stakes, writing-to-think work can be used prior to drafting a paper. If desired, students can use these quick writes to have a short conversation with a peer about their central ideas and the support for them. Also, if students completed a quick write prior to a whole-class discussion, you may ask them to return to the quick write after the discussion to add new ideas or alternative claims in preparation for writing.
- Sentence frames (writing) - Each formal genre contains its own language (e.g., argumentative versus informational) and is yet another linguistic layer all students, particularly English learners, must negotiate. Often, ELs have a clear idea mentally before they begin writing, but need a structure provided as a way to launch. The use of sentence frames, sentence stems, and paragraph frames are one way to provide concrete support. For example, in the genre of argument, teachers can offer ELs sentence frames to scaffold their use of academic English language in writing claims and counterclaims. See *Amplifications for English Language Learners* for more information.
- Student exemplars – For detailed information and lesson plans for the effective use of student exemplars, see the introduction and session 1-B each of the guides for genre writing found in *Book 2: Form*. When you would like students to see many possible options in how to execute a skill, or when you would like them to develop a clearer sense of quality in that skill, select a set of student papers or examples that demonstrate it. Ask students to review the paper(s), identify the moments that apply, and reflect on their traits and quality. After students have completed this work, chart observations and learnings as a class so students can put these ideas to work in their own writing.



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