

9th Grade Common Core Alignment

Writing an Analytic Essay

Writing analytic essays are a necessary skill for higher education and which secondary students should begin to build. This unit plan gives teachers tools to aid students in understanding the basic structure of a five-paragraph essay, developing a thesis statement and editing their work. It also provides easy rubrics for teacher evaluation of student work.

This process is aligned to English Language Arts Common Core Standards for 9th grade and utilizes the rich resource of *Dream of a Nation*. *Dream of a Nation* is a high Lexile level (1340), non-fiction text which aptly supports the Common Core emphasis on text range, quality and complexity. All *Dream of a Nation* chapters and articles are applicable for this Unit Plan. The standards addressed are the following:

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| Please see end of the lesson for Common Core Standards Alignment.  Learning Outcomes:   * Students will gain understanding of a topic related to a current social, political, environmental or economic issue found in *Dream of a Nation*. * Students will complete further research on the topic independently, take effective notes on the topic, and synthesize the information they research into a five-paragraph essay, centered on an original thesis statement. * Students will create an outline prior to writing and will edit multiple drafts of their essay, as well as their peers’ essays, prior to submitting a final, polished essay for evaluation.   Teacher Planning:  This is a unit plan. Depending on length of class time and student reading and writing ability this unit can take from two to five weeks. Students need to have read at least three articles from *Dream of a Nation*. The more articles students have read the more opportunity there is for them to choose a topic that genuinely interests them. Strategies for helping students understand readings are located in the [teacher resources section of our website](http://dreamofanation.org/educators/curriculum-resources/lesson-modules/).  Unit Plan: Essay Writing using *Dream of a Nation*   1. **What is an Essay?**     After students have read one or several chapters from *Dream of a Nation* discuss the differences between analytic writing and creative writing. Students can use *Dream of a Nation* articles as their basis for analytic writing and prior readings as their basis for creative writing. Students should be guided to make the following distinctions between Analytic and Creative writing:  **Creative Analytic**  **-Follows a “story” structure (beginning-middle-end) -Provides information/ analysis**  **-Uses sensory descriptions and images to engage all the -Analyzes ideas, relationships,**  **senses patterns**  **-Is used often in the early grades to learn about the -Uses a predictable structure**  **craft of literary, descriptive writing -Is logically organized**  **-Can be fictitious; no are facts necessary -Must contain factual evidence**  Give students the handout, How to Write an Essay, which explains the elements in a traditional, five paragraph essay.   1. **What is a Thesis?**   Introduce the idea that all analytic writing is centered around one key idea—the thesis. A thesis statement:  **-tells the reader the significance of the subject (subject is identified in the title).**  **-it tells the reader what will be proven/ addressed/ explained in the rest of the paper.**  **-a thesis is an interpretation of a question or subject, not the subject itself. The subject, or topic, of an essay might be World War II or Moby Dick but the thesis offers a specific interpretation of the war or the novel.**  **-makes a claim that others might dispute.**  **-is usually articulated in the beginning of the essay and presents the argument to the reader. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of the author’s interpretation.**  Encourage the students to go back to their favorite article in *Dream of a Nation* and identify the thesis of that article. They can share their ideas with the class and compare theses. Students should be encouraged to find the thesis of several articles for practice and compare these theses with their peers. |
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| **3. Writing a Thesis**  Students should understand that a thesis is their interpretation of an idea. It is a claim that they make that others could argue against and their purpose in writing is to defend their claim using facts. In order to help students write a strong thesis they first have to decide their topic and their position. They should choose an article because they like the topic and choose their position based on whether they agree or disagree with the author. They can use more than one article to flesh out their topic or provide support or contrast for their position. In addition, they need to determine whether they will argue this claim is true all the time or some of the time and have a list of at least three reasons why this claim is defensible. Once they have this information they can use this thesis generator to help them construct a thesis:  <http://johnmcgarvey.com/apworld/student/thesiscreator.html>  **4. Gather Facts**  Once students have a solid thesis to guide their reading. Have them re-read their article(s) and take notes. Use the Trash or Treasure method of note taking instruction: <http://mrjhlibrary.pbworks.com/f/Reading+for+Information+T+%26+T+note+taking+jansen.pdf> They should organize the information they take down on this graphic organizer: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/idearake.pdf> Coach them to only write down information which directly supports their thesis. |
| **5. Write an Outline**  Prior to their first draft have students complete an outline in which they organize the information they have gathered in their note taking. The outline that comprises the second half of the How to Write an Essay handout should be used when writing the rough draft in order to keep their organization logical.  **6. Writing, Editing and Revising**  After students have written their essay have them first, review their own work using the Essay Self Review Handout. Coach them to read their essays aloud to themselves as this will help them catch the most obvious mistakes. After they have revised their own work, have them pair up and review a partner’s essay using the Essay Peer Review Handout. Once they think they’re done have them go through the Revising and Editing Guide and highlight the necessary components. Make sure in their final essay they cite their sources. Use <http://www.easybib.com/> or, Purdue Owl. This could also be a good opportunity for a lesson on understanding citations and plagiarism: <http://www.copyrightkids.org/> |
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| **7. Evaluation**  Use the Essay Rubric for evaluation of student work. Partial points can be awarded for each category. Make a bulletin board of student essays to celebrate their skills!  Please send *Dream of a Nation* examples of your students’ finished essays and suggestions for improvement of our Unit Plan. We appreciate your feedback and insights. |
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Common Core Information Reading Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/1/) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/3/) Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/9-10/8/) Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

Common Core Writing Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/a/) Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/b/) Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/c/) Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2d](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/d/) Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2e](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/e/) Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2f](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/2/f/) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/2/) Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/3/) Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/4/) Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Common Core Language Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/1/) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/1/a/) Use parallel structure.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/1/b/) Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/2/) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/2/a/) Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/2/b/) Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/2/c/) Spell correctly.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.3a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/3/a/) Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., *MLA Handbook*, Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*) appropriate for the discipline and writing type.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/6/) Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.