



Strategic Instruction in Grade 9-10 Literature: Writing About Literature Module

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Specifically designed to target the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Reading Literature:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.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.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

This module features three **Tier 1 Stratagems** and two **Tier 2 Stratagems**, each featuring a specific form of essay writing. Each Stratagem includes ready-to-use DVT Power Point slides, DVT fillable PDF forms, DVT rubrics, and lesson plans, as well as samples of how teachers have used them.

Tier 1 Stratagems

The DEBATE Strategy



Features an argumentative writing strategy whereby a writer takes a position or forms a supposition about some aspect of a literary work and then defends the position with multiple reasons and/or forms of evidence while also addressing counter-arguments.

Literary Analysis



Features a strategy whereby writers use DVTs previously developed (e.g., *Character Analysis*, *Theme Analysis*, etc.) as a basic structure for converting to Expository essays designed to explain a key feature of a literary work.

Story Narrative



Provides the basic structure for planning and composing a work of fiction (e.g., designing features of protagonists and antagonists, setting set-ups, including physical descriptions and mood, unfolding conflict, tipping point, and resolution).

Tier 2 Stratagems

Opinion Writing



Features fundamentals of argumentative writing strategy whereby a writer takes a position or forms a supposition about some aspect of a literary work and then defends the position with multiple reasons and/or forms of evidence.

Personal Experience Narrative



Features a simple structure for organizing ideas for a writing a personal narrative essay (e.g., setting and situation set-up, Explaining key events with supporting details accompanied with an explanation of accompanying thoughts / reactions / feelings, Conclusion that addresses "What I learned about... myself, other people, and/or similar situations").

See sample DVTs from this module on the following pages

The DEBATE Strategy, pg. 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



Sample DVT from
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Define the topic / issue

WHAT is the topic or issue?

Was it morally right for George to kill Lennie before the lynch mob reached him?

WHAT background information do readers need to have a basic understanding of the **topic**? -OR- WHO should be concerned about the **issue**? WHY?

Premeditated murder typically receives the maximum punishment in the U.S.

31 states use capital punishment or the death penalty

Even though premeditated murder is there a time it could be morally right? R

Reference to a Bible scripture: For everything there is a season, and a time for everything... A Time to Kill (Ecclesiastes 3:2)

George is faced with the decision of letting his intellectually disabled friend, Lennie be torture and hanged by a lynch mob or protect him from that by giving him a painless and peaceful death

When George killed Lennie, it was an act of love

It was a morally right time to kill

Establish a clear position on the issue

My position is...

George did the kind, loving thing when he shot Lennie in the back of the head.

Back-up the position with reasons and supporting facts (weakest reason 1st, strongest reason last)

REASON (weakest)

Curley does not want to find Lennie and take him to the authorities. He just wants to find him and hang him.

George wants to kill Lennie in a merciful way.
They both take the law into their own hands

Supporting facts

Curley may even torture Lennie before hanging him. He says he just wants justice for his wife's murder, but it is more than that. Lennie's strength has intimidated him, so he wants to exert his power over Lennie in the name of justice.

George knows this about Curley.
Curley wants sadistic revenge. George just wants to protect Lennie from that

REASON (strongest)

Lennie can't be held accountable for his actions like most adults. His mind is like a child's. Allowing Curley and the lynch mob to hang Lennie is like allowing a 6-year old boy to be strung up.

Supporting facts

Today, Lennie would be given the appropriate support for his disability, and George would not have had the total responsibility for Lennie's behavior while trying to work. Since 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that the intellectually disabled can't be eligible for capital punishment.

The DEBATE Strategy, pg. 2

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.



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Acknowledge the opposition's position

Opposition's position is...

It was wrong for George to kill Lennie.

Tell why the opposition's position is incorrect (opposition's strongest reason 1st, weakest reason last)

1st REASON opposition might give... (strongest)

It is against the law to kill another person in cold blood.

Supporting points the opposition might provide ...

It does not matter what reasons George had, he committed murder. He should not have taken the law into his own hands.

COUNTER: Why this reason is faulty...

Curley and his men were not interested in upholding the law. George knew that they were not in a law abiding environment.

Facts that support your position and weaken the opposition's reason

George knew that killing Lennie could be a serious crime. but he was more concerned with doing the compassionate thing for his friend. He also knew that Curley might be glad that Lennie was dead. Curley was not concerned with following laws. That's why George took the risk to kill Lennie in a merciful way.

2nd REASON opposition might give (weakest)...

George could have helped Lennie escape instead of killing him.

Supporting points the opposition might provide ...

George could have left Lennie in a cave. Then, he could have steered Curley and his gang to ride in the opposite direction.

COUNTER: Why this reason is faulty...

Eventually, George would have had to go to Lennie. Lennie was too dependent on George to have lasted long without his help.

Facts that support your position and weaken the opposition's reason

Curley would not have let it go. He would have gotten more men to take up the search for Lennie, and he would have watched George's actions carefully.

End with a concluding statement that re-states your position

In conclusion...

It was morally right for George to kill Lennie because Lennie was not responsible for his actions as an intellectually disabled man. He was like a small child. Curley and his men would have tortured and killed him. George did a loving act by giving him a painless and peaceful death.

Literature Explanatory Essay Planner pg.1

Write informative/ explanatory texts in which they make clear the connections and distinctions between key ideas appropriate to the purpose; include formatting when useful to clarify ideas.

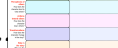

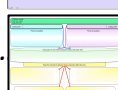


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STEP 1: Determine the purpose of the essay and associated DVT.

The essay will explain...


Key Ideas about a **Character**.

- ☐ Describe a character's qualities, actions, and role in the story  **Character Analysis DVT**
- ☐ Describe how a character's motivation affected his/her goals and actions and, in turn, how these affected the story  **Motivation Inferences DVT**
- ☐ Describe how a character interacted with other characters and why these interactions were important to the story  **Character Interactions DVT**

Key Ideas about the **Plot or Conflict**.

- ☐ Describe how the story was structured and the conflict was developed and resolved  **Story Structure DVT**
- ☐ Describe how the author used flashbacks to enhance the story's drama  **Flashback Analysis DVT**

Key Ideas about the **Theme**.

- ☒ Explain the story's theme and how it was developed, shaped and refined as the story unfolded; describe how the theme was conveyed through characters and scenes.  **T.H.E.M.E. Analysis DVT**

STEP 2: Plan the essay's introduction

Compose a sentence designed to create reader interest that will serve as the first sentence in the essay and addresses the essay's topic.

Does evil lurk within all of us? Is that why people commit acts of cruelty to loved ones?

While stating the name of the literary work and author, compose a sentence that indicates the topic of your essay.

One of the main topics in "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst is *the evil that lurks within*. Hurst uses this topic to communicate his message, or theme, *powerlessness leads to cruelty*.

Write sentences that summarize key information about the topic.

Throughout the story, Brother (the antagonist) says and does cruel things to Doodle (the protagonist). Each time Brother feels powerless, he lashes out at Doodle which causes him harm. Overall, the seed of cruelty seems to grow out of feelings of powerlessness, and that powerlessness takes over to the point of hurting others, even loved ones.

End the introduction with a sentence that reveals the purpose of the essay.

This important theme in "The Scarlet Ibis" can teach us that the consequences of committing acts of cruelty can be tragic for others and for ourselves.

Literature Explanatory Essay Planner pg.2

Write informative/ explanatory texts in which they make clear the connections and distinctions between key ideas appropriate to the purpose; include formatting when useful to clarify ideas.



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STEP 3: Plan the main body of the essay

1. Access the DVT that best matches the purpose of the DVT (see #1 on previous page).
2. Note ideas on the DVT (if the DVT has not already been developed).
3. Plan the order in which the ideas will be communicated.

NOTE: Although the ideas that appear on the DVT may already be in the best order due to the design of the DVT, sometime it may make more sense to communicate the ideas in a different order. Note numbers in each of the information boxes on the DVT to indicate the order you plan to follow when communicating the ideas.

STEP 4: Plan the essay's ending

At the bottom of many of the DVTs is a component for noting conclusions. If the DVT you are using to plan your essay includes this component, then use these ideas to when planning how the essay will end.

Summarize or make conclusions about the central ideas addressed in the essay.

In "The Scarlet Ibis" the topic of the evil that lurks within was very prevalent as well as the theme of powerlessness leading to cruelty.

The three main reasons that Brother felt powerless were loss of attention, a threatened self-image, and damaged pride. To feel powerful, Brother said hurtful things and committed cruel acts toward Doodle, his own sibling. His last act of cruelty may have caused Doodle's death.

Provide closure by giving the reader an important idea upon which to reflect.

In my opinion, James Hurst wants the reader to see that committing acts of cruelty can have tragic consequences. In this story, Brother lost his sibling and best friend, and he would be forever powerless to do anything about it.

STEP 5: Compose a draft of the essay, edit it using the Explanatory Essay Rubric, and revise as necessary.

Personal Experience Narrative Planner, pg.1

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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TITLE

The Ghost of Glendale

Is about...

an ill boy who hides his sickness in order to live a normal life, however, he is plagued by extreme shyness and cruel bullies.

SETTING Set-Up: Features you want to reveal about the SETTING where you had the experience

POINT IN TIME Starting in 1968, freshman year for the narrator

LOCATION Glendale High School

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

-Large but very overcrowded school

-In Southern part of town

-Students form one big mass in the halls

SITUATION Set-Up: What is happening that created the opportunity for the experience to occur

- Everyone, including the narrator, is walking down the halls like any other day.
- Narrator sees a student who stands out because of his unhealthy appearance: emaciated body, transparent skin
- The boy is backed up against the lockers and a popular boy in the Freshman class, Lance, was talking loudly to him
- Lance laughs at the boy and says he is a freak.
- Lance gives the boy the nickname, "Glendale's Ghost Freak." This reveals to the reader where the title came from as well as what the story is going to be about.

Personal Experience Narrative Planner, pg.2

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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Key Event + details

- Now second semester of 9th grade, Civics class
- Narrator goes in early and finds the emaciated boy there.
- Narrator sits by him and tries to talk, boy won't reply or look her in eyes
- Reader learns he is Scotty Burns
- He is very smart, getting all A's in the class, but teacher never calls on him.
- Narrator compliments Scotty on his grades but he doesn't say anything, simply smiles

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- Wanted to get to know Scotty but saw that he would not let his guard down for anyone, he has probably been bullied too many times
- Upset about the teacher's practice of not keeping the grades private, however, used that opportunity to praise Scotty for his high scores
- Realized Scotty never spoke

Key Event + details

- Now 10th grade outside cafeteria
- Lance and another huge boy yell at Scotty asking him if he wants Twinkies, call him names
- Scotty continues to walk away
- The two bullies throw Twinkies at him which strike Scotty roughly
- Scotty doesn't retaliate, only stops walking
- Another boy stands up for Scotty and stops the abuse

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- Appalled by the bullies open cruelty towards Scotty
- Can understand and sense Scotty's fear
- Prayed for the Assistant Principal to show up and stop the bullies
- Very thankful for Tim who ended the "fight", smiled at him in gratitude

Key Event + details

- Now early into the 11th grade, narrator is in Drama class
- Sirens are heard arriving at the school, ambulance pulls up, EMTs run inside with a stretcher
- The EMTs take out a covered figure on the stretcher
- Principal makes announcement that it was Scotty and he passed away, he reveals Scotty had serious heart condition, but still wanted to attend school, kept straight A's

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- Shocked and terrified by ambulance
- Very contemplative about Scotty and his choice to stay in school while dying
- Shame and guilt about not intervening in bullying towards him
- Makes personal vow to stand up for the bullied in the future

Conclusion is about... ☒ What I learned about myself ☒ What I learned about people ☐ What I learned about situations like this one

The narrator was able to give a speech about a person who was influential in her life. She chose Scotty because of the bullying he had endured. In the concluding paragraph, the narrator gives Scotty the title "Mockingbird" because he never caused anyone pain, but he was stifled and never allowed to be himself. The narrator reflects on how Scotty could have been brought so much wisdom if he had not been bullied into submission. The narrator gives Scotty credit for inspiring new courage within her. She says that bullying was not the only thing that wounded Scotty, her not standing up for him was also a wound. In her final conclusion, she says that to this day, she has kept her vow to not just accept cruelty towards others.

Opinion (4 Reasons + Evidence)

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence



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STORY

The Odyssey

Important TOPIC (e.g., author's writing style, plot, event, character, setting, theme, use of literary devices) associated with this story...

The Power of Cunning over Physical Strength

My opinion about this topic...

It is more valuable to be a strategic thinker than it is to be physically strong.

2 REASON

Shrewd thinking can get one out of dangerous places.

SUPPORTING DETAILS / EVIDENCE supporting my opinion...

Odysseus and his men still have to get out of the cave, so he uses his shrewd thinking. (Book 9)

The blind Polyphemus lets his rams out the next morning. Odysseus and his men ride out with them, tucked under their bellies.

1 REASON

Physically strong creatures can be overpowered by someone who is intellectually stronger.

SUPPORTING DETAILS / EVIDENCE supporting my opinion...

Odysseus knows that he can't physically overpower Polyphemus when he & his men are trapped in his cave, so he exploits his stupidity. (Book 9)

The Cyclops gets drunk. Odysseus says his name is "nobody". He blinds the Cyclops who screams that "Nobody" hurt him, so no help comes.

3 REASON

When a person relies on his mind over his muscles, he is accustomed to thinking before acting.

SUPPORTING DETAILS / EVIDENCE supporting my opinion...

When Odysseus meets Achilles in the Underworld, he praises him for his godly strength, but Achilles just relied on strength & fell to a trick.

(Book 11) Achilles doesn't care that he was revered for his strength. He tells Odysseus that being alive is a gift. He keeps his senses.

4 REASON

When outnumbered by younger, stronger enemies, strategic thinking can bring a victory.

SUPPORTING DETAILS / EVIDENCE supporting my opinion...

Odysseus devises a plan to destroy the suitors that have taken possession of his palace. (Books 19-20)

Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, enters the contest for Penelope. He wins & reveals himself. He, Telemachus, and servants slay the suitors.

CONCLUSION about my opinion...

Strategic thinkers can get out of dangerous places, outwit monstrous creatures, and win victories over younger, stronger, enemies in great numbers. Their planning prevents them from impulsivity. Cunning is more valuable than physical strength.

Personal Experience Narrative Planner, pg.1

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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TITLE

I Just Stood There

Is about...

A 9th grade boy who is bullied starting the first day of high school and lasting for several months until it ends in tragedy.

SETTING Set-Up: Features you want to reveal about the SETTING where you had the experience

POINT IN TIME Recently, the first day of 9th grade

LOCATION Roosevelt High School, El Paso, Texas

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- A reasonably large high school (the 9th grade has over 300 students)
- A public school with lockers in the hall

SITUATION Set-Up: What is happening that created the opportunity for the experience to occur

- First day of high school, before the first class
- I heard a loud, male voice ridiculing another student
- The boy is backed up against the lockers showing extreme fear
- A boy named Troy is making fun of him.
- Troy calls him an alien because he looks so different.
- Many students laugh at him
- I just stood there while the boy endures verbal humiliation

Personal Narrative Planner, pg.2

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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Key Event + details

- First day of 9th grade
- Thin boy is being bullied
- I watched as a boy named Troy ridiculed him
- Other students laughed at him
- I just stood there watching
- I saw him in the library and tried to talk to him, but he just scurried away

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- I was mortified by the bully "s actions, but I didn't do anything to stop it.
- I tried to be friendly in the library, but the boy did not respond. I was afraid that he thought I was one of the students who laughed at him.

Key Event + details

- Now a few days later
- I saw him bullied at an assembly
- Troy and other boys call him "Alien"
- He does not turn around or respond
- During the Pledge of Allegiance, Troy & other boys threw paper wads at him
- I stood there watching

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- I was shocked when Troy and other boys threw paper wads at him.
- I could feel his humiliation as they hit
- I just stood there watching, feeling sorry
- I didn't try to get a teacher to stop it

Key Event + details

- Now. Around Thanksgiving (9th grade)
- 9th grade is getting ready for a field trip to The Planetarium
- Troy yells at the boy, calling him Alien
- The boy does not turn around or respond.
- Troy throws a rock, hits him & causes him to fall, hitting the bridge of his nose on a step in the bus.
- He collapses and is rushed to a hospital
- Principal makes announcement: He died of a brain hemorrhage.

My thoughts / reactions / feelings about event

- I couldn't believe that Troy threw the rock at him
- I was stunned when he fell hard against the bus step.
- When the principal announced that the boy (Bobby Long) had died, I felt anguish, guilt, and overwhelming shame that I hadn't done anything to stop the bullying

Personal Narrative Planner, pg.2

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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Conclusion *is about a resolution of the conflict and/or personal reflection about the experience*

☒ What I learned about myself

☒ What I learned about people

☒ What I learned about situations like this one

I did a lot of reflecting about this experience. First, I thought about what a coward I had been. I was afraid to speak up to Troy and the others who made fun of Bobby. I should have alerted the assistant principal after the first episode of bullying. Bobby might still be alive if I had done that. That is something I will live with for the rest of my life.

The second thing I thought about was that people seem to do things in a crowd that they probably wouldn't do if they were by themselves. I knew some of the students who laughed at Bobby, but I do not think they would have laughed at him if they had been alone.

The last, and most important thing I thought about was the important lesson this experience had taught me. Bullying is never justified. It is cruel and harmful. It is wrong and needs to be stopped immediately. I made a solemn vow to myself that if I ever witnessed someone being bullied again, I would NOT just stand there.