



Constructed Response Handouts for MAACCE Conference

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Steps for Drafting a Constructed Response

Although the steps for drafting a constructed response may look simple, the process requires numerous skills (and strategies) to produce effective writing. Often, instructors use a graphic organizer to assist students in drafting the information necessary to complete their answer.

1. **Read** the passage and question
2. **Unpack** the prompt (identify key words)
3. **Rewrite** the question and turn the question into a thesis statement
4. **Collect** relevant details from passage
5. **Organize** details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
6. **Draft** an answer
7. **Re-read** and **edit/revise** the answer making sure all parts of the question are answered

Adapted from WritingFix - <http://writingfix.com>

Unpacking Prompts

The article presents arguments from both supporters and critics of Daylight Saving Time who disagree about the practice's impact on energy consumption and safety.

In your response, analyze both positions presented in the article to determine which one is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the article to support your response.

Type your response in the box below. You should expect to spend up to 45 minutes in planning, drafting, and editing your response.

Do	What

Close Reading of Excerpt

Implementing TIPP? – A Pre-reading Strategy

Elements	Notes
T – Title What do the title, subheadings, and layout tell me about this text?	
I – Introduction What is included in the introduction?	
P – Paragraphs What information is included in the first sentence of each paragraph?	
P – Photographs What do the photographs, maps, charts, tables, illustrations tell me?	
?? – Questions What questions do I have about this text?	

**Close Reading
Paraphrasing Graphic Organizer**

Paragraph/Lines/Subheadings	My Paraphrase
My Thoughts	

Adapted from Zollman (2009)

Create a Thesis Statement

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

Sample Thesis Frames

The general argument made by _____ in his/her work _____ is that _____.

Although _____ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that _____, _____ supports/provides the clearest evidence _____.

A key factor in both _____ can be attributed to _____.

When comparing the two positions in this article, _____ provides the clearest evidence that _____.

Looking at the arguments regarding _____, it is clear that _____.

In discussion of _____, one controversial issue has been _____ believes that _____. On the other hand, _____ asserts that _____ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of _____.

Explain the Evidence

Teach students how to identify evidence through direct quotes, paraphrase the information, and explain how the evidence supports the claim/thesis.

Claim	Using a Direct Quote (What direct quote supports the claim?)	Paraphrasing (How can you rewrite the direct quote in your own words?)	Explanation (How does the evidence support the claim?)

Putting It All Together - Constructed Response Organizer

Before you begin to draft your response, you may wish to organize your ideas by completing the following graphic organizer. Then, you'll be ready to draft your answer.

Prompt/Questions:	
Restatement of question in your own words	
Thesis statement/claim	
Detailed body of evidence that supports answer. Be sure to include enough details to answer the question. Make sure that all details address the questions and are not off-topic.	
Restated question Concluding thoughts	

Revise and Edit

Extended Response Answer Guidelines – RLA Test

Please use the guidelines below as you answer the Extended Response question on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test. Following these guidelines as closely as possible will ensure that you provide the best response.

- 1. Please note that this task must be completed in no more than 45 minutes.** However, don't rush through your response. Be sure to read through the passage(s) and the prompt. Then think about the message you want to convey in your response. **Be sure to plan your response before you begin writing.** Draft your response and revise it as needed.
- 2. As you read, think carefully about the argumentation presented in the passage(s).** "Argumentation" refers to the assumptions, claims, support, reasoning, and credibility on which a position is based. Pay close attention to **how the author(s) use these strategies to convey his or her positions.**
- 3. When you write your essay, be sure to:**
 - **determine which position presented** in the passage(s) is **better supported** by evidence from the passage(s)
 - **explain why the position you chose is the better-supported one**
 - **remember, the better-supported position is not necessarily the position you agree with**
 - **defend your assertions with multiple pieces of evidence** from the passage(s)
 - **build your main points thoroughly**
 - **put your main points in logical order** and tie your details to your main points
 - **organize your response carefully** and consider your **audience, message, and purpose**
 - **use transitional words and phrases** to connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas
 - **choose words carefully** to express your ideas clearly
 - **vary your sentence structure** to enhance the flow and clarity of your response
 - **reread and revise your response** to correct any errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation

Extended Response Rubric Overview

Trait 1 – Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence

- Argument
 - Creation of argument
 - Evidence – use of text citations to support created argument of source text(s)
- Validity
 - Assessment of the argument in source text(s)
 - Analysis of the issue
- Integration
 - Integration of claims, explanations and textual evidence
 - Connection of purpose to prompt

Trait 2 – Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure

- Ideas
 - Development (reasoning)
 - Elaboration of ideas
- Progression
 - Progression (flow) of ideas
 - Connection of details to main ideas
- Organization
 - Structured to convey message
 - Transitional devices
- Words
 - Appropriate word choice
 - Advanced vocabulary application
- Awareness
 - Demonstrated to audience and purpose
 - Form of writing – objective rhetorical and persuasive

Trait 3 – Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions

- Conventions – Application of standard English (e.g., homonyms/contractions, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, placement of modifiers, capitalization, punctuation)
- Sentence Structure
 - Variety
 - Clarity
 - Fluency (e.g., correct subordination, avoidance of wordiness, run-on sentences, awkwardness, usage of transition words, appropriate usage for formal structure)
- Errors
 - Mechanics and conventions
 - Comprehension based on errors

Materials from GED Testing Service®

Sample Lesson Plan for Constructed Response

Module: Reasoning through Language Arts

Lesson Title: Are Cell Phones Safe? Creating a Constructed Response

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Read two nonfiction articles that provide a pro and con side to an issue
- Analyze the article and develop an effective extended response using the various steps (e.g., unpacking a prompt, developing a thesis statement, identifying evidence, organizing the response, drafting an answer, editing and revising the draft)

Prerequisite Skills Common Core State Standards	Reasoning through Language Arts 2014 GED® Assessment Targets
Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1a)	Identify the main assumptions and underlying premises in an argument and evaluate the support for that belief. (R.8.6)
Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2b)	Determine the details of what is explicitly stated and make logical inferences or valid claims that square with textual evidence. (W.1)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4)	Produce an extended analytic response introduce the idea(s) or claim(s) clearly; create an organization that logically sequences information; develop the idea(s) or claim(s) thoroughly with well-chosen examples, facts, or details from the text; and maintain a coherent focus. (W.2)
Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1)	Write clearly and demonstrate sufficient command of standard English conventions. (W.3)
Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.2)	

Materials

- Computers for word processing (if possible)
- *Are Cell Phones Safe? - Handout*
- *Cell Phones Are Hazardous - Handout*
- *Extended Response Templates*

Instructional Plan

Overview

In this lesson, students will read a nonfiction article that presents a pro and con side to an issue. Students will analyze the article, select a position and develop an extended response that supports the position with evidence. This lesson is developed to be used over multiple class periods in order for students to have adequate time to complete each step of the process.

Process

Begin the lesson by asking students how many of them use cell phones on a regular basis. Discuss whether or not they have concerns over the safety of a cell phone. Share with students that over the next few class periods, they will be reading about the safety of cell phones and will use the information read to draft an extended response.

Prior to having students read the article, review the steps to drafting an effective constructed response:

1. Re-read the passage at least once, then re-read the question carefully to determine what is being asked.
2. Rewrite the question in your own words to make sure that you know exactly what is being asked. Then, turn that question into a topic sentence for your answer.
3. Go back to the passage and collect the needed information. Make sure you get the relevant details (if the question asks for 3 details, make sure you find 3 details).
4. Organize the details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
5. Write (or keyboard) your answer.
6. Re-read your answer to make sure you answered all the parts of the question.

Adapted from WritingFix - <http://writingfix.com>

Share with students that over the next class periods, they will be drafting a constructed response similar to what they will experience on the GED® Reasoning through Language Arts test. For each step of the process, model for students how to use each of the graphic organizers.

Worksheets are provided for each of the initial steps. After unpacking the prompt, crafting a thesis statement, identifying pertinent evidence, and organizing their information, students may wish to word process their draft. Make sure that students edit and revise their final copy before submission.

Have students share their final product with the class. Discuss the effectiveness of each writing sample and how each effectively addresses the prompt.

Sample Debriefing Questions

Have students answer the following questions regarding the revising and editing activity:

- Why did you feel the position you chose was the better-supported one?
- What was your claim or thesis statement?
- How did you defend your position with evidence?
- What strategies did you use when revising and editing your draft?

- Did you use personal pronouns? Why or why not?
- What was the easiest part of the assignment for you? The most difficult?
- How do you use constructed response writing in your daily life? At the workplace?

Assessments/Extensions

1. Have students identify different topics in which they are interested that have a pro and con side. Provide students with time to debate the different sides of the topic. Discuss how this is the type of process that they will be using when creating their extended responses.
2. Access additional reading materials that highlight topics where there are both a pro and con side taken. One source of articles for use in the classroom is the Pro/Con.org website at <http://www.procon.org>. Have students read the articles or provide an annotated version as shown in this lesson. This type of activity can be used for both the writing process, as well as the teaching of nonfiction text.
3. Teach students to use the Reasoning through Language Arts rubric to score their writing samples so that they understand what traits are viewed as effective writing.
4. Brainstorm examples of constructed response from real-life situations so that students better understand the purpose of constructed response as a life-long communication skill.

Prompt

The articles present arguments from both supporters and critics of cell phone usage who disagree about possible safety issues with regards to an increase in brain tumors and cancer. In your response, analyze both positions presented in the articles to determine which one is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the articles to support your response. Type your response in the box below. You should expect to spend up to 45 minutes in planning, drafting, and editing your response.

A Few Websites to Get You Started!

Aspen Institute. Materials for teaching close reading skills that are tied to standards. This site also provides leadership materials. <http://www.aspendri.org/portal/Home>

Free Resources for Educational Excellence. Teaching and learning resources from a variety of federal agencies. This portal provides access to free resources. <http://free.ed.gov/index.cfm>

PBS Teacher Source. Lesson plans and lots of activities are included in the teacher section of PBS. <http://www.pbs.org/teachers>

Purdue University's OWL. One of the most extensive collections of advice about writing found on the web. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

RAFTS Northern Nevada Writing Project. The project includes print materials that may be purchased, as well as access to RAFTS prompts that can be generated electronically. <http://www.unr.edu/educ/nnwp/index.html>

ReadWriteThink. From the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, this site has classroom resources and professional development activities in the area of integrated reading, writing, and thinking skills. <http://www.readwritethink.org/>

National Council for Teachers of English. This site provides lessons and strategies for teaching nonfiction text. <http://www.ncte.org/kits/nonfictionlessons>

ProCon.org. A website that provides both sides of the argument. Useful for use in teaching argumentative writing. <http://www.procon.org/>

Purdue University's OWL. One of the most extensive collections of advice about writing found on the web. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

RAFTS Northern Nevada Writing Project. The project includes print materials that may be purchased, as well as access to RAFTS prompts that can be generated electronically. <http://www.unr.edu/educ/nnwp/index.html>

Teaching That Makes Sense. A K-12 site with lots of free resources and graphic organizers from Steve Peha. <http://ttms.org/>

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- Common Core State Standards – <http://corestandards.org>