



Argumentative Writing Prompts and Strategies

A supplement to
Holocaust and Human Behavior, 2017 edition

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to use lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate. For more information about Facing History and Ourselves, please visit our website at www.facinghistory.org.

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource is to support you, the teacher in a Facing History and Ourselves classroom, as you help your students become stronger analytical thinkers and writers. It includes materials to supplement the *Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book with a formal argumentative essay. Visit www.facinghistory.org/hhb to get a copy of the book or explore the digital edition.

The materials include the following:

- an overview of current research about argumentative writing that was used to inform this work
- specific writing prompts
- thinking/writing strategies appropriate for both history and language arts classrooms

We do not expect that you will use every strategy in every section. That would be time-consuming and redundant. Each section includes many strategies that target similar thinking and writing skills. We encourage you to choose one or several in each section that best fit your students' needs.

The strategies are organized into sections labeled by the types of thinking. The sections are organized into three main groups:

- strategies to use *to introduce the writing prompts*
- strategies to use *to collect and analyze evidence*
- strategies to use *while writing a formal essay*

TEACHING WRITING IS TEACHING THINKING

Helping students express themselves has always been central to Facing History’s mission and curriculum. Writing—exploratory, formal, playful, provocative—helps students to engage self and others and to deepen their understanding about important historical content and themes. Teaching writing will empower you to engage students both with the big ideas of history and with the power of their own minds.

Fundamentally, teaching writing is teaching thinking. That is something Facing History teachers already value. We hope you will find that this resource enhances and extends your existing expertise.

Thinking and Writing

Thinking and writing have rich connections; one does not precede the other. As historian Lynn Hunt says, “Writing means many different things to me but one thing it is not: writing is not the transcription of thoughts already consciously present in my mind. Writing is a magical and mysterious process that makes it possible to think differently.”¹ This is equally true whether one “writes” the old-fashioned way (putting pen to paper) or composes and reworks ideas with the use of electronic technologies.

About the Writing Prompts

Fundamentally, if students are to be strong writers, they need to be strong analytical thinkers. And they need content worth thinking about.² We had this in mind when designing the specific writing prompts. Note that the prompts

- serve as essential questions for students to revisit throughout a unit;
- correspond to aspects of the Facing History journey;
- engage students ethically, intellectually, and emotionally;
- address core concepts—such as significance, causation, agency, evidence, and continuity and change—that allow students to build historical understanding;

Patterns of Thinking Students Use When Crafting Written Arguments

This resource is divided into seven sections, based on patterns of thinking that historians (and other scholars) use when analyzing content and crafting written arguments. The goal is to support students in their thinking and in the clear expression of that thinking for a specific purpose and audience. This approach differs considerably from the generic and outdated concept of “the” writing process.

1 Lynn Hunt, “How Writing Leads to Thinking (And Not the Other Way Around),” *The Art of History, Perspectives Online*, February 2010, <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2010/1002/1002art1.cfm>.

2 George Hillocks, *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* (Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Conference on Research in English, 1986).

A. Understanding the Prompt

In order to write a strong essay, students need to know what they are being asked to think about and need to have something to say.³ One challenge for many student writers is that they lack sufficient understanding of the content. As Joan Didion once stated, “I write entirely to find out what I’m thinking, what I’m looking at, what I see, and what it means.”⁴ The strategies in Section A are designed to help students engage with the big moral issues they will write about formally later. Note that many of the strategies in Section A *are* writing—early, exploratory, messy writing to help students formulate and develop lines of thought.

B. Gathering and Analyzing Evidence

The strategies in Section B help students think about *what* they are reading and learning. Historical reasoning requires students to focus on evidence, perspective, and interpretation.⁵ By careful and close reading of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, students begin to develop their own arguments. They learn to examine evidence carefully to determine whether it is accurate, credible, and persuasive.⁶ Note that these strategies help students engage with the evidence, and they *precede* the work of actually synthesizing the evidence and crafting a thesis statement.

C. Crafting a Thesis and Organizing Ideas

Much of historical thinking and writing involves forming strong arguments or interpretations based on the core concepts in history: Why does this matter? How did this happen? What motivated people in the past to think and act in the ways they did? How do we know what we know? How was this past situation similar to present-day situations? Fundamentally, the strategies in Section C help students learn to sort out “What is *my* perspective on this issue?” Note that we placed crafting a thesis *after* students have many opportunities to examine the evidence. A recent study found that college professors express concern that many students leap to writing a thesis before they have explored their ideas in sufficient detail.⁷ Here, crafting a thesis and organizing ideas are paired as a way to help students begin to integrate, synthesize, and categorize their ideas.

D. Proving Your Point through Logical Reasoning in Body Paragraphs

Argumentative essays typically have one central argument (the thesis or central claim) and multiple smaller arguments in which the author presents a claim or reason, cites evidence, and offers analysis. This analysis, technically called a warrant, is the glue holding claims and evidence together.⁸ In this section, we include strategies to help students practice orally linking claims, evidence, and analysis. We also include ways to help students learn more flexible ways to present those ideas so their writing feels fresh, not formulaic.

³ Hillocks, *Research on Written Composition*.

⁴ Joan Didion, “Why I Write,” *New York Times Magazine*, December 5, 1976, 270.

⁵ Chauncey Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension and Summary: Learning to Read and Write in History by Focusing on Evidence, Perspective, and Interpretation,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 41, no. 2 (2011): 212–249.

⁶ Chauncey Monte-Sano, “Disciplinary Literacy in History: An Exploration of the Historical Nature of Adolescents’ Writing,” *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 19, no. 4 (2010): 539–568.

⁷ Stevi Quate, ed., “Lessons Learned: A Report of the DASSC Writing Inquiry Project,” June 1, 2011, <http://writinginquiry.wikispaces.com/file/view/Lessonslearned.pdf>.

⁸ Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruszkiewicz, *Everything’s an Argument*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001), 95.

E. Framing and Connecting Ideas in Introductions and Conclusions

Facing History aims for students to make connections between history and the choices they make in their own lives. We believe that students are most engaged when they are stimulated intellectually, emotionally, and ethically. When writing a formal/academic argumentative essay, students demonstrate that they can make these big conceptual connections mostly in the opening and closing paragraphs. In this section, we include strategies that support students in first *making* those connections to the here and now and then expressing those connections in ways that are clear and compelling to their audience.

F. Revising and Editing to Impact Your Audience

Students can substantially improve their logic and expression when they receive clear, specific, constructive feedback.⁹ They also become better readers of their own writing when they analyze and critique others' writing—both “mentor texts” from the real world¹⁰ and their peers' writing. During the revising stage, students clarify, reorganize, and strengthen the content of their paper. This section provides two sorts of strategies to revise or “rework” earlier writing: peer feedback and self-assessment. While Facing History sees the importance of copyediting one's writing to address grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors, in this resource we emphasize the broader challenges of helping students effectively develop and express their reasoning.

G. Publishing/Sharing/Reflecting

Thinkers write for many purposes; the purpose of formal writing is to express an idea to an audience. It is important to end the writing process with an opportunity for students to share what they wrote with their peers or an outside audience. In this section, we include strategies and suggestions for how students can make their thinking public. We also include ways that students can think about what they learned about the topic and about themselves as writers.

⁹ Richard Beach and Tom Friedrich, “Response to Writing,” in *Handbook of Writing Research*, ed. C. A. McArthur, S. Graham, and J. Fitzgerald (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 222–234.

¹⁰ Katie Wood Ray, *Study Driven: A Framework for Planning Units of Study in the Writing Workshop* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006).

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: RESEARCH AND DIRECTIONS IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

The following document is meant to help you understand current trends and directions in the research around teaching argumentative writing in history. Facing History and Ourselves is concerned with many aspects of a learner's identity—from moral philosopher to analytical thinker to ethical decision maker to historical reasoner—and recognizes the need for our students to become profound thinkers and writers. The following information is intended to help you consider how to support your students in this journey.

I. What We Want for Our Students as Thinkers and Writers

Growth Mindset and Writers' Dispositions

Recent research by Dweck¹¹ indicates that people can hold two different beliefs, or “mindsets,” about intelligence: the “fixed” mindset (in which people believe they either are smart or stupid, good or bad at specific skills) and the “growth” mindset (in which people believe they can get better at things and are always learning). Facing History and Ourselves fully embraces the growth mindset; we hope to encourage students and teachers to see students through that lens.

Experts in the field of writing instruction indicate that in order for students to succeed as writers in college and careers, they need certain dispositions, perhaps even more than specific skills. These dispositions include curiosity; engagement; appreciation of craft; ability to reflect, analyze, synthesize, and revise; willingness to give and receive feedback; persistence in moving beyond the self; and valuing reading and writing as powerful tools for inquiry.¹²

When teaching writing, help students know that all writers are always learning and growing. Writing is *not* something you either “can” or “can’t” do, something you are either “good at” or “bad at.” Support and celebrate students’ curiosity, persistence, and willingness to reflect on their own thinking and writing. Given Facing History’s focus on intellectual, social, and moral development, we encourage teachers to “teach the writer, not the writing.”¹³ Help them learn about themselves as writers in ways that allow them to transfer that learning to future writing tasks and other life challenges.

Argument

Students demonstrate their strong analytical thinking by crafting oral and written arguments.

11 Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2008).

12 Quate, “Lessons Learned” and “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing,” CWP, NCTE, and NWP, January 2011, <http://wpacouncil.org/files/framework-for-success-postsecondary-writing.pdf>.

13 Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).

The most commonly referenced model for written argument was developed by Stephen Toulmin.¹⁴ Toulmin described six key elements/concepts with which an argument can be analyzed and constructed.¹⁵

Claim: the statement you are asking others to accept

Grounds: the basis of persuasion; the data, evidence, and reasons

Warrant: the link or “glue” that holds the evidence and claim together¹⁶, explaining how and why the evidence helps prove the claim

Backing: the additional support for the warrant

Qualifier: indicates strength of the leap from claim to warrant; may limit universality of the claims

Rebuttal: acknowledgment of counterarguments; typically includes own claims, grounds, warrants

Persuasion is a *subset* of argument, in which authors intentionally use rhetorical devices to compel their readers.¹⁷ There are different types of argument, including those based on facts and reason, character, and values. Facing History emphasizes both reasoning and empathy when crafting written arguments and wants students to find their voice and claim their power by being able to argue for a point of view. At the heart of argument is the relationship between claims, grounds (evidence), and warrants (analysis). Students may better understand the kind of thinking you want them to do if you show them this visual and teach them the “language” of argument. Many students struggle when learning to craft effective analysis/warrants. Students need to make explicit to their audience how the evidence supports the claim, rather than expecting readers to infer.

Critical Thinking

To be engaged citizens, students need to be able to analyze, question, and critique texts.¹⁸ At Facing History, we encourage teachers to use learning-centered teaching strategies that nurture students’ literacy and critical thinking skills within a respectful classroom culture.

As defined by experts in the field of literacy,

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze a situation or text and make thoughtful decisions based on that analysis. Writers use critical writing and reading to develop and represent the processes and products of their critical thinking. For example, writers may be asked to write about familiar or unfamiliar texts, examining assumptions about the texts held by different audiences. Through critical writing and reading, writers think through ideas, problems, and issues; identify and challenge assumptions; and explore multiple ways of understanding.¹⁹

14 Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

15 “Toulmin’s Argument Model,” accessed October 22, 2011, http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/toulmin.htm.

16 Lunsford and Ruskiewicz, *Everything’s an Argument*, 95.

17 Lunsford and Ruskiewicz, *Everything’s an Argument*.

18 M. McLaughlin and G. DeVoogd, “Critical Literacy as Comprehension: Expanding Reader Response,” *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 48, no. 1 (2004): 52–62.

19 “Framework for Success,” CWP, NCTE, and NWP.

Teachers can help writers develop critical thinking by providing opportunities and guidance to

- read texts from multiple points of view;
- write about texts for multiple purposes, including (but not limited to) interpretation, synthesis, response, summary, critique, and analysis;
- craft written responses to texts that put the writer's ideas in conversation with those in a text;
- evaluate sources for credibility, bias, quality of evidence, and quality of reasoning;
- conduct primary and secondary research using a variety of print and nonprint sources;
- write texts for various audiences and purposes that are informed by research (e.g., to support ideas or positions, to illustrate alternative perspectives); and
- generate questions to guide research.²⁰

Facing History has always emphasized critical thinking as a cornerstone of civic engagement. One can only engage with society if one asks the hard questions and views issues from many angles.

Historical Reasoning (“Disciplinary Literacy”)

Students in Facing History classrooms have myriad opportunities to develop their general analytical thinking skills. They also have an opportunity to develop more specific “historical reasoning.”²¹

Literacy scholars have begun to focus on this idea of “disciplinary literacy”: the advanced, specialized literacies required for one to read, write, and think about specific content in ways most valued by a given academic discipline²² and that advance disciplinary understanding.²³ Monte-Sano has researched the disciplinary literacy specific to “historical writing” (when students write arguments about historical events) and states the following:

- “Historical reasoning involves reading evidence from the perspective of those who created it and placing it into context. Such contextualization is central to history, in that historians may only interrogate artifacts from the past”;²⁴
- “In constructing historical arguments, writing is often inextricable from a disciplinary way of thinking and working with evidence. According to history experts, the use and framing of evidence in historical writing indicate key aspects of disciplinary reasoning, including recognizing biases in sources, comparing evidence, situating evidence in its context, and taking into account different perspectives and multiple causes”;²⁵
- Strong use of evidence in historical writing includes the following “benchmarks”²⁶:

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension.”

²² Elizabeth Birr Moje et al., “Integrating Literacy Instruction into Secondary School Science Inquiry: The Challenges of Disciplinary Literacy Teaching and Professional Development,” accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~moje/pdf/MojeEtAlScienceLiteracyTeachingStrategies2010.pdf>, and Timothy Shanahan and Cynthia Shanahan, “Teaching Disciplinary Literacy to Adolescents: Rethinking Content-Area Literacy,” *Harvard Educational Review* 78, no. 1 (2008), 40–59.

²³ Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension,” 218.

²⁴ Monte-Sano, “Disciplinary Literacy in History,” 541.

²⁵ Monte-Sano, “Disciplinary Literacy in History.”

²⁶ Benchmarks of strong use of evidence developed by Monte-Sano, based on prior thinking of Wineburg (199) as found in Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension,” 213. Monte-Sano, “Disciplinary Literacy in History.”

- » **Factual and interpretive accuracy:** offering evidence that is correct and interpretations that are plausible
- » **Persuasiveness of evidence:** including evidence that is relevant and strong in terms of helping to prove the claim
- » **Sourcing of evidence:** noting what the source is and its credibility and/or bias
- » **Corroboration of evidence:** recognizing how different documents work together to support a claim
- » **Contextualization of evidence:** placing the evidence into its appropriate historical context

Facing History materials invite and require strong historical reasoning, since students are required to examine evidence carefully, consider the assumptions and bias of specific authors or sources, and consistently come to strong interpretations about historical events.

II. What This Means for Our Teaching

Teach Writing Processes

Anyone who has written—whether composing with traditional pen and paper or with the use of electronic technologies—knows that writing is messy, complex, and anything but linear. Students engage in myriad cognitive activities as they write.

Scholars no longer think of “the” singular linear writing process. Rather, the process is multifaceted and recursive.²⁷ As stated recently in the framework prepared by three leading writing organizations:

Writing processes are the multiple strategies writers use to approach and undertake writing and research. Writing processes are not linear. Successful writers use different processes that vary over time and depend on the particular task. For example, a writer may research a topic before drafting, then after receiving feedback conduct additional research as part of revising. Writers learn to move back and forth through different stages of writing, adapting those stages to the situation. This ability to employ flexible writing processes is important as students encounter different types of writing tasks.²⁸

Students need to learn to toggle back and forth between the messy thinking and putting that thinking into a coherent and clear written form. They also need to practice key rhetorical concepts to help them understand *why* they are writing. They need help thinking about concepts such as audience, purpose, context, and genre.²⁹ We see this writing as a crucial part of the journey of a Facing History student; it is a process where students test their assumptions and routinely reevaluate their ideas, thinking critically about the information they are studying and communicating these thoughts to the world around them.

Use Inquiry; Embed Authentic Experiences and Explicit Instruction

Overall, Facing History takes an inquiry approach: the curriculum is designed to engage students

²⁷ Gert Rijlaarsdam and Huub van den Bergh, “Writing Process Theory: A Functional Dynamic Approach” in *Handbook of Writing Research*, ed. Charles A. MacArthur, Steve Graham, and Jill Fitzgerald. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 51.

²⁸ “Framework for Success,” CWP, NCTE, and NWP.

²⁹ Ibid.

in the moral and philosophical questions regarding historical events and individual choices within a developmental context. Researchers have found that a similar “inquiry-based” mode of writing instruction has the greatest effects on student achievement.³⁰ Basically, this means that the teacher provides clear and specific objectives about the writing, chooses rich materials to engage students in the *thinking* that sits underneath the writing, and creates activities like small-group problem-centered discussions that invite high levels of peer interaction. This inquiry mode is in contrast to both the “presentation” mode (lecturing students on how to write) and the “natural process” mode (learning writing by doing, with little explicit instruction).

In the field of writing research, scholars debate how people learn language forms—such as argumentative writing—that are not their primary discourse.³¹ Some argue that secondary discourses can’t be taught and are best learned “through experience by participating in situated use of particular language forms.” Others argue that language is best learned “through tutelage and explicit instruction in its structures and forms.”³²

The middle ground asserts that “language is best learned through a combination . . . of [authentic] experience and explicit instruction” about the specific techniques or “moves” writers make.³³ As Lisa Delpit states, “Merely adopting direct instruction is not the answer. Actual writing for real audiences and real purposes is a vital element in helping students to understand that they have an important voice in their own learning process.”³⁴

To honor inquiry and authenticity, Facing History has created essential questions directly linked to the writing prompts that help frame students’ inquiry for the unit. We have built in many opportunities for students to engage in the thinking related to writing in small-group problem-solving/inquiry contexts. And we include strategies for explicit teaching of argument and historical reasoning, and how to transfer that thinking into a final written essay.

Model and Provide Mentor Texts

Just as students benefit from seeing more skilled athletes or musicians as they are learning a sport or instrument, students benefit from seeing real writers at work as they learn to write argumentative essays. In the field of writing instruction, this includes both the use of “mentor texts”³⁵ and use of teacher or peer models of *how* you are crafting a piece of writing.

Fundamentally, the use of mentor texts invites students to “notice and name” the particular techniques a writer has used to have an effect on an audience. Students come to understand more about the criteria for good writing from actually *analyzing* good writing than from simply reading a rubric. Reading others’ writing through this lens helps students think about the writer’s purpose, and the *ideas* presented in the piece, and then to think about the specific techniques the writer used to have an impact on the reader. In this resource, we include examples of argumentative essays that your students can read, analyze, critique, revise, and emulate.

30 Hillocks, *Research on Written Composition*.

31 Gee, J. P. “The social Mind: Language, Ideology, and Social Practice,” Series in Language and Ideology (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1992).

32 Victoria Purcell-Gates, Nell K. Duke, and Joseph A. Martineau, “Learning to Read and Write Genre-Specific Text: Roles of Authentic Experience and Explicit Teaching,” *Reading Research Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (Jan/Feb/March 2007), 8–45, and Steven Graham, “Strategy Instruction and the Teaching of Writing: A Meta-Analysis,” in *Handbook of Writing Research*, ed. C. A. McArthur, S. Graham, and J. Fitzgerald (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006). 222–234.

33 Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau, “Genre-Specific Text,” 8.

34 Lisa D. Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People’s Children,” in *Landmark Essays in Basic Writing*, ed. Kay Halasek and Nels P. Highberg (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 2001).

35 Katie Wood Ray, *Study Driven*.

Students also benefit from seeing writers in process. Studies indicate that when teachers show students how they cope with problems as writers, students make gains. By modeling for students how you actually move through the challenges of writing an argumentative essay, you offer students metacognitive language of self-assessment and revision.³⁶

Feedback and Self-Assessment

Facing History has designed assignments that invite alternative perspectives, and thus invite students to revise their thinking.³⁷ In order to do so, students need clear, specific, constructive feedback. Students need to communicate clearly and respectfully with peers about how they might improve their writing. And ultimately, students need to become metacognitive, conscious of their own writing choices and challenges and able to independently self-assess and improve their own writing.

Scholar Brian Cambourne found that children most easily acquire early facility with oral and written language when certain “conditions” exist.³⁸ One of those conditions is “response”: listening to students’ thinking, welcoming their comments and questions, and extending their use of written and oral language.³⁹ The same is true for adolescents. Students need to know that their thinking is valued. They also benefit from specific response.

There is some disagreement in the field about whether a “direct” stance (telling students what to fix) or an “indirect” stance (telling students your actual thinking about their thinking) helps writers improve more. Some specific findings regarding feedback on student writing include:⁴⁰

- Written comments are often too vague or global.
- Students value audio-taped comments, which seem more authentic, as if the reader is in dialogue with the writer.
- All students, particularly English-language learners, benefit from one-on-one conferences about their writing. Conferencing helps students verbalize their thoughts, helps teachers introduce specialized vocabulary, and allows teachers to ask probing questions to help students clarify their thinking.
- Peer feedback is helpful if peers are taught to provide specific, descriptive feedback and have good process skills to collaborate.
- Students like teachers to correct their errors (since it is more efficient) but need to learn to correct their own.

In Facing History classrooms, students are encouraged to revise their thinking as well as their writing. Teachers can support students as thinkers and writers by responding authentically to their ideas and by giving specific recommendations on how to convey those ideas more effectively. They can also help peers learn to do this with and for one another.

Conclusion

³⁶ Beach and Friedrich, “Response to Writing,” 227.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Brian Cambourne, *The Whole Story: Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (Jefferson, MO: Scholastic, 1988).

³⁹ Elizabeth Lilly and Connie Green, *Developing Partnerships with Families through Children’s Literature*, 2004 ed. (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2004), 5.

⁴⁰ Beach and Friedrich, “Response to Writing.”

As TedSizer stated in the introduction to the book *The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools* by Suzanne Plaut, “Literacy . . . is the fuel for freedom.” Plaut herself goes to say that literacy is “a social imperative . . . [which] enables students to have a voice, take a stand, and make a difference. In other words, it gives them power.”⁴¹

We believe that by teaching argumentation and critical thinking in your classroom through the lens of writing, thinking, and discussion, you will be giving students tools to access freedom, power, and civic agency.

In the curriculum materials that follow, we have tried to find intersections between Facing History and Ourselves pedagogy, analytical thinking, and argumentative writing to help you on your journey as a Facing History teacher.

⁴¹ Suzanne N. Plaut, *The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools: Creating a Culture of Thinking* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009).

PROMPTS AND STRATEGIES

ARGUMENTATIVE PROMPTS

Prompt #1

In the spring of 1945, as the war finally came to an end, the world at last confronted the atrocities the Nazis had committed. Alan Moorehead, a British journalist, wrote the following after visiting a concentration camp:

“With all one’s soul, one felt: This is not war. Nor is it anything to do with here and now, with this place at this one moment. This is timeless and all mankind is involved in it. It touches me and I am responsible. Why has it happened? How did we let it happen?”

Reflect on responsibility and the Holocaust. Alan Moorehead says that “all mankind is involved in it.”

Given your study of the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust, support, refute or modify his statement in a formal argumentative essay. Introduce a precise claim, and develop it fully, using relevant and sufficient evidence from *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and other related texts from your Facing History and Ourselves unit. In your writing, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and establish clear relationships among your claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Prompt #2

In the documentary *Witness to the Holocaust*, Miles Lehrman, a Holocaust survivor, writes,

“A perpetrator is not the most dangerous enemy. The most dangerous part is the bystander because neutrality always helps the killer.”

Given your study of the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust, support, refute or modify his statement in a formal argumentative essay. Introduce a precise claim, and develop it fully, using relevant and sufficient evidence from *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and other related texts from your Facing History and Ourselves unit. In your writing, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and establish clear relationships among your claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Prompt #3

In a period of twelve years, Germany went from an emerging democracy to a dictatorship that eventually committed genocide.

What factors contributed to this transition? Which factors were most significant?

Throughout your *Holocaust and Human Behavior* unit, you studied the choices of individuals, groups, and nations made during this historical time period. In a formal argumentative essay, answer the questions above. Introduce a precise claim, and develop it fully, using relevant and sufficient evidence from *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and other related texts from your Facing History and Ourselves unit. In your writing, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and establish clear relationships among your claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

SOURCE LIST

The three writing prompts and accompanying materials are written to be used in conjunction with our resource *Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Below is a list of sources from that resource that we think are particularly useful for students to use with the writing prompts. **You can find all of these materials at www.facinghistory.org/prompts-strategies/links**

Please note: as you teach this history in its entirety, you will want to bring in more materials from *Holocaust and Human Behavior* than are mentioned in this list. The materials listed here are meant to help isolate evidence students may want to use when writing their essays.

Chapter 2: We and They

READING 16: Anti-Judaism before the Enlightenment

VIDEO: The Ancient Roots of Anti-Judaism

READING 17: From Religious Prejudice to Antisemitism

Chapter 3: World War: Choices and Consequences

READING 6: The Brutal Realities of World War I

READING 14: Negotiating Peace

Chapter 4: The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy

READING 2: Rumors of Betrayal

READING 3: Creating a Constitutional Government

READING 4: In Search of Meaning

READING 7: The Beginning of the Nazi Party

READING 17: Youth and Belonging in the Weimar Republic

READING 18: A New Economic Crisis

READING 20: Hard Times Return

READING 21: Hitler in Power

FEATURED COLLECTION: The Weimar Republic: The Fragility of Democracy

VIDEO: Hitler's Rise to Power: 1918–1933

Chapter 5: The National Socialist Revolution

READING 4: Outlawing the Opposition

READING 5: Enabling Dictatorship

READING 6: Storm Troopers, Elite Guards, and Secret Police

READING 14: Learning to Be a Good German

READING 19: No Time to Think

READING 23: Do You Take the Oath?

VIDEO: Hitler's Rise to Power: 1933–1934

Chapter 6: Conformity and Consent in the National Community

READING 5: The Nuremberg Laws

READING 6: Women and the National Community

READING 8: Visual Essay: The Impact of Propaganda

READING 12: Joining the Hitler Youth

READING 17: “Heil Hitler!”: Lessons of Daily Life

READING 19: Schooling for the National Community

Chapter 7: Open Aggression and World Responses

READING 9: Beyond Any Nation's Universe of Obligation

READING 10: The Night of the Pogrom

READING 11: Opportunism during Kristallnacht

READING 12: A Family Responds to Kristallnacht

READING 13: Thoroughly Reprehensible Behavior

READING 14: A Visitor's Perspective on Kristallnacht

READING 15: World Responses to Kristallnacht

READING 20: The Voyage of the *St. Louis*

VIDEO: “Kristallnacht”: The November 1938 Pogroms

Chapter 8: A War for Race and Space

READING 4: Bystanders at Hartheim Castle

READING 6: The War against Poland: Speed and Brutality

READING 8: Colonizing Poland

READING 10: The War on Jews in Poland

VIDEO: Hitler's Ideology: Race, Land, and Conquest

Chapter 9: The Holocaust

READING 3: Reserve Police Battalion 101

READING 4: A Matter of Obedience?

VIDEO: Obedience: The Milgram Experiment

READING 7: Establishing the Killing Centers

READING 9: Auschwitz

READING 11: A Commandant's View

READING 16: Difficult Choices in Poland

READING 19: A Basic Feeling of Human Dignity

READING 21: Protests in Germany

READING 22: Deciding to Act

READING 23: Le Chambon: A Village Takes a Stand

READING 24: Diplomats and the Choice to Rescue

READING 28: What Did the World Know?

Chapter 10: Judgment and Justice

READING 6: Obeying Orders

READING 7: The Technology of Mass Murder

READING 9: The Business of Slave Labor

READING 12: Choices that Define Us

READING 13: Moral Luck and Dilemmas of Judgment

STRATEGIES TO USE TO INTRODUCE THE WRITING PROMPTS

A. UNDERSTANDING THE PROMPT

Use these strategies **before** starting the unit.

In order to write a strong essay, students need to know what they are being asked to think about and need to have something to say.¹ One challenge for many student writers is that they lack sufficient understanding of the content. As Joan Didion once stated, “I write entirely to find out what I’m thinking, what I’m looking at, what I see, and what it means.”² The strategies in Section A are designed to help students understand the historical content and big ideas that they will write about in a formal essay.

The prompts serve as essential questions for students to revisit throughout the Facing History unit. Each prompt corresponds to an aspect of the Facing History journey; engages students ethically, intellectually and emotionally; addresses core concepts in history—such as significance, causation, agency, evidence, and continuity and change—and demands text-dependent analysis. Teachers can choose one prompt as the big idea for the unit or let students choose which prompt to write about. Teachers are also encouraged to break down the prompts even further if working with English-language learners or other students who may need more scaffolding.

Note that many of the strategies to help students understand the prompt *are* writing—early, exploratory, messy writing to help students formulate and develop lines of thought. Other strategies are oral, since most students also benefit from having multiple opportunities to “talk through” their ideas with peers.³

1 George Hillocks, *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* (Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Conference on Research in English, 1986).

2 Joan Didion, “Why I Write,” *New York Times Magazine*, December 5, 1976, 270.

3 Martin Nystrand, Adam Gamoran, and William Carbonaro, “Towards an Ecology of Learning: The Case of Classroom Discourse and Its Effects on Writing in High School English and Social Studies” (Center on English Learning & Achievement, Report Number 11001, 1998), accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www.albany.edu/cela/reports/nystrand/nystrandtowards11001.pdf>.

STRATEGY 1. Dissecting the Prompt

WRITING FOCUS: Understanding the writing prompt

RATIONALE

Students need time both to understand what they are being asked to write about and to practice writing about a topic to learn what they think. Dissecting a prompt gives them experience with both the thinking and the decoding of a prompt. Understanding the prompt is the first step in writing a formal essay. Included in each prompt is an overarching essential question that can be used throughout and beyond the unit of study. If you choose to use the essential question, we suggest starting with that and then transitioning into the specific prompt. Otherwise, do the activity below with the specific writing prompt.

PROCEDURE

1. Print out the prompt or the essential question in larger font and tape it to the center of a piece of paper.
2. Ask students, in pairs, to dissect the prompt. As they read the prompt, direct them to make the following notations:
 - Circle words you do not know or understand in the context of the prompt.
 - Star words that seem to be the central ideas of the prompt.
 - Underline all of the verbs that represent what you, the writer, are supposed to do.
 - Cross out any extra information that does not seem specifically relevant to the writing task.
3. Next, ask students to do a **Think, Pair, Share** with the prompt. Individually, students should try to answer the prompt or essential question simply based on their “gut reaction” or personal philosophy. If possible, ask students to try to support their current thinking with an example from history or their own life. After a few minutes, ask each pair to share their thinking with each other. Finally, ask students to share a few opinions or ideas with the larger group.
4. Before moving on, ask students to write the essential question and/or the writing prompt in their interactive notebooks. As they have new thoughts about the prompt throughout the unit, they can make notes to themselves.

STRATEGY 2. Defining Key Terms

WRITING FOCUS: Clarifying important vocabulary in the context of the prompt and the history

RATIONALE

In all the prompts, the way a student defines key terms will determine their opinion. In an argumentative essay, word choice and definition is highly important in creating a clear and cohesive argument. The quality of students' essays will depend on how well they understand both the prompt in its entirety and the key vocabulary within the prompt. When writing an argumentative essay in particular, students need to individually decide how they are defining key terms.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students review the words they starred in the Dissecting the Prompt activity (**Strategy 1**). Ask students to write their own definition for each of the starred words.
2. Use **Reproducible 2.1** to help students interact with the key word more deeply.
3. After completing the two activities, ask students to revisit their first definitions. Has anything changed? Tell students that their current definition is a *working definition* for the unit. It is possible they will alter their definitions of key terms as they study the history of the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust.



REPRODUCIBLE 2.1 What Does It Mean To Be Responsible?

Step 1: Brainstorm at least five ways to complete the statement “I am responsible for”. . .

Step 2: To what extent do you agree with these ideas about responsibility? Rank each statement from 1 to 5.

Responsibility means participating in your community.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Responsibility is defined by the individual. Only you can decide what you are responsible for.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Being responsible means weighing the consequences of my actions.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Laws define what I am responsible for.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If I join a club or a group, I become responsible for the actions of that organization.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

All nations are responsible when there is a global injustice.

← _____ →

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Step 3: Define responsibility in your own words by giving examples of each...

Responsibility means. . .

Individual responsibility is...

Group responsibility is...

National responsibility is...

STRATEGY 3. Defining Key Concepts: The Universe of Obligation

WRITING FOCUS: Clarify important concepts in the prompt

RATIONALE

In all the prompts, students will need to define key terms such as responsibility, bystander or choices. To understand each of these in the context of the history, a larger activity around identity, community and choices will help students to have more nuanced arguments. The quality of students' essays will depend on how well they understand both the prompt in its entirety and the key concepts within the prompt.

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the theme of community by asking student to consider following quote on community and obligation. Display the following quote without attribution:

"I love my daughters more than my nieces,
my nieces more than my cousins,
my cousins more than my neighbors.
But that doesn't mean that we detest our neighbors."

2. Use the **think, pair, share** process to debrief this quote.

3. With a larger group, focus a discussion on the following questions or themes:
 - What is this person's vision of community?
 - In what ways does this vision of community make sense?
 - Does this vision make you at all uncomfortable? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the idea of a hierarchy of caring. What happens if we expand this hierarchy out to include people like us in the form of race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs, profession, clubs, schools, etc.? Who would you save from a burning building first? Who are we obligated to and in what ways?

Introduce the idea of a universe of obligation. In Chapter 2 of *Holocaust and Human Behavior*, sociologist Helen Fein defines this important concept as the circle of individuals and groups "toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for [amends]."¹

5. Now read entire quote (from *The New Yorker*, April 28, 1997):

I love my daughters more than my nieces, my nieces more than my cousins, my cousins more than my neighbors. But that doesn't mean we detest our neighbors. The fact of being Francophile doesn't require being xenophobic. The fact that I prefer the French does not mean that I detest the English. I like them less than the French - over all. Because it could

¹ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.

happen that I like an Englishman better than a Frenchman, individually, or a Senegalese more than an inhabitant of Saint-Cloud. It depends on his quality, on his affinities with me, on his opinions, and all that. But I think that it's very difficult to make people understand.

6. Before discussing the quote further, identify the author of the quote, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Founder and President of The National Front, a French far-right political party. For more information about Le Pen, view the [Anti-Defamation League's website](#).
7. Using think-pair-share, re-examine the entire quote now, and with the context of Le Pen's political viewpoint. Return to a larger group discussion, and revisit the concept of the universe of obligation.
8. Pass out the Universe of Obligation Activity Sheet (**Reproducible 3.1**). Instruct students to fill out a map of their own universe of obligation. Tell them that they won't be asked to share their maps, but they will talk about the process they went through to make choices.
9. Lead the class through a discussion about creating individual universe of obligation maps. Some discussion starters are:
 - How did you make choices about who to assign where?
 - Was it difficult to complete the map? Why or why not? Which circle made you stop and think the most?
 - How did creating the map change the way you think about community? Which communities from your life did you represent on the map? How do they connect to your identity?



REPRODUCIBLE 3.1 The Universe of Obligation

How a group defines its membership matters. Belonging can have significant advantages; being excluded can leave a person vulnerable.

How the members of a group, a nation, or a community define who belongs and who does not has a lot to do with how they define their universe of obligation. Sociologist Helen Fein coined this phrase to describe the group of individuals within a society “toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for amends.”¹ In other words, a society’s universe of obligation includes those people who that society believes deserve respect and whose rights it believes are worthy of protection.

A society’s universe of obligation can change. Individuals and groups that are respected and protected members of a society at one time may find themselves outside of the universe of obligation when circumstances are different—such as during a war or economic depression. Beliefs and attitudes that are widely shared among members of a society may also affect the way that society defines its universe of obligation. For instance, throughout history, beliefs and attitudes about religion, gender, and race have helped to determine which people a society protects and which people it does not.

Although Fein uses the term to describe the way nations determine membership, we might also refer to an individual’s universe of obligation to describe the circle of other individuals that person feels a responsibility to care for and protect.

—Excerpted from the reading “Universe of Obligation” in *Holocaust and Human Behavior*

¹ Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 4.



REPRODUCIBLE 3.1 The Universe of Obligation

In **Circle 1**, write your name.

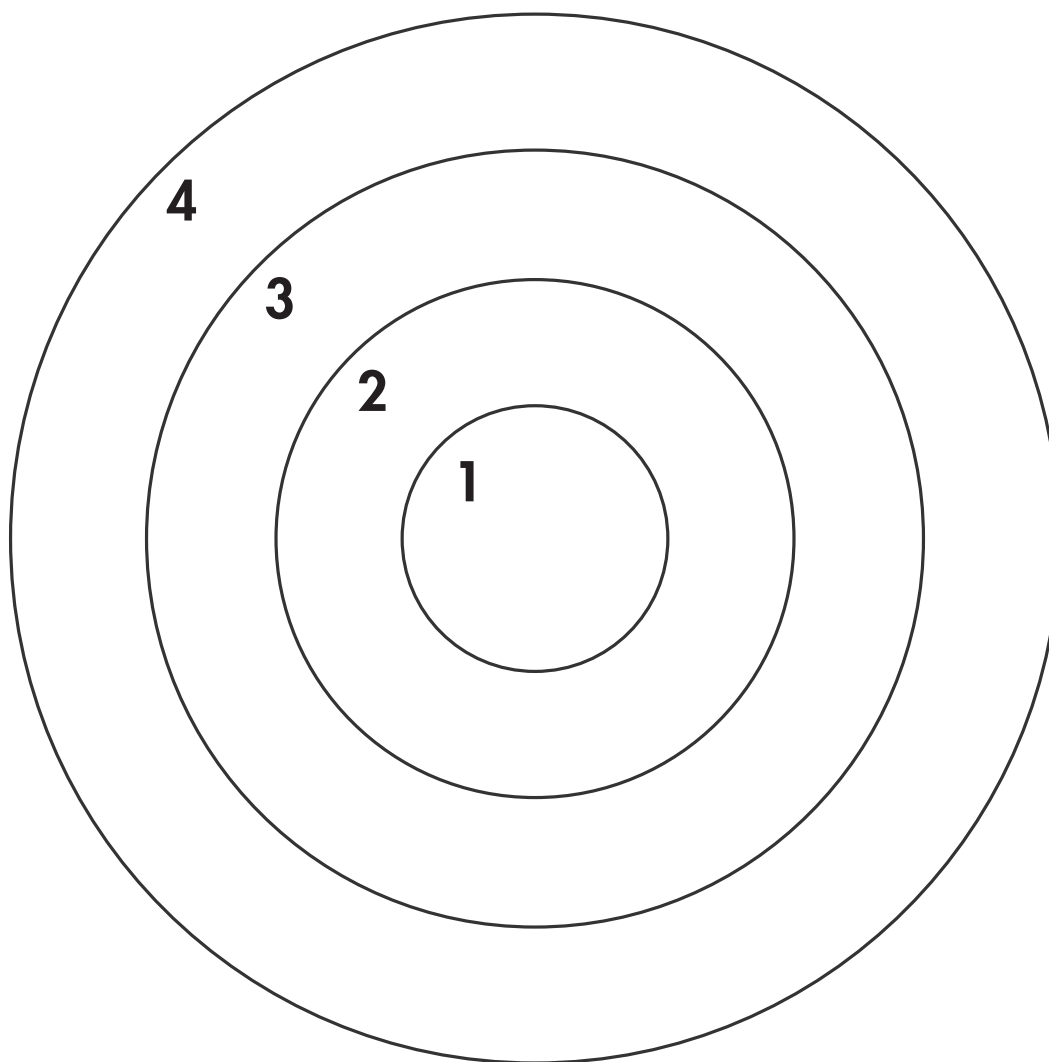
In **Circle 2**, write the name of the people to whom you feel the greatest obligation—for example, people for whom you'd be willing to take a great risk or put yourself in peril for (you don't have to write actual names).

In **Circle 3**, who are the people on the next level?

That is people to whom you have some obligation, but not as great as in circle 2.

In **Circle 4**, who are the people on the next level?

People to whom you have some obligation, but not as great as in circle 3.



STRATEGY 4. Anticipation Guides: The Roles We Play

WRITING FOCUS: Develop opinions about discipline-specific topics

RATIONALE

Having students share responses to controversial statements can engage students with the writing prompt and help them think about the topic in a nuanced way. Students can return to these same statements after their study of the Holocaust to see how learning this material has reinforced or shifted their earlier beliefs.

PROCEDURE

1. Start by asking students to do two journal writes on the following questions:
What factors motivate a person to help someone else?
What factors hold a person back from helping someone else?
Discuss thoughts together in pairs or as an entire group.
2. Next, define several key terms for students. Include the terms perpetrator, bystander, upstander and collaborator. Suggested definitions are found in **Reproducible 4.1**.
3. Next, pass out the anticipation guide. Ask students to read each statement and decide if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement. They should circle their response and then write a brief explanation for their choice.
4. After students have filled out their guides, organize the room into four corners. Each corner should have one of the following four signs: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.
5. Read each statement aloud and ask students to stand in the corner that best represents their current thinking. After students move, ask them to talk to others in their corner to explain their thinking to each other.
6. Next, ask each corner to share their ideas with the rest of the class. As one corner disagrees with another, encourage students to respond directly to each other's statements and have a mini-debate about the prompt. If, due to the debate, students' ideas changes, tell them they are free to switch corners.
7. After the four corners activity, leave students with this journal question: *What conclusions can you make about the complexity of the roles we play in society?*



REPRODUCIBLE 4.1 Anticipation Guide: The Roles People Play

Read the statement in the left column. Decide if you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. Circle your response.

| Statements | | Your opinion | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|--|
| 1. All choices have consequences. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 2. The biggest problem in society is not the perpetrators but the bystanders. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 3. A person can be a bystander without knowing it. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 4. Everyone has the potential to commit injustice. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 5. Being an upstander requires sacrifice or alienation. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 6. It's possible to cause injustice and not realize it. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 7. My lack of knowledge about a topic excuses me from being a perpetrator, collaborator or bystander. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 8. It is possible to be a bystander and a perpetrator at the same time. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |
| 9. You are not a bystander if a large group of people is also ignoring the injustice at hand. | SA Explain: | A | D | SD | |

Sample Definitions to Use Before Anticipation Guide and Four Corners Activity

When using these definitions with students, it is important to stress that individuals and groups do not fit into solely one category. Instead, they slip in and out of these roles throughout their lives and because of extenuating circumstances. Further, individuals may even play more than one role at the same time. The goal of starting with concrete definitions is to begin a conversation; we expect that the definitions about roles people play will grow and stretch as students study identity, choices and the history of the Holocaust.

- **Perpetrator:** those who commit crimes and other acts of injustice or violence
- **Collaborator:** someone who has a part in aiding or assisting a perpetrator in committing crimes or acts of injustice or violence
- **Bystander:** a person or group that sees unacceptable behavior but does nothing to stop it
- **Resister:** those who refuse to go along with or accept injustice
- **Upstander:** an individual, group, or nation who acknowledges injustice and takes steps to stop or prevent it
- **Rescuer:** a person who attempts to save victims of violence

STRATEGY 5. Journal Suggestions

WRITING FOCUS: Students need multiple opportunities and angles to think about and explore a topic before writing a formal essay.

RATIONALE

The act of writing helps us figure out what we think. Journaling is one of the most natural ways for students to learn more about themselves as thinkers, writers, and historians. By writing in a journal, students have many opportunities to try out their thinking. As you move through the unit, giving students the opportunity to reflect and practice their thinking will help students generate stronger opinions and ideas when they begin formal writing.

PROCEDURE

Use the sample journal prompts during a class period or as homework. We recommend using at least two per week for the duration of the unit. Students can refer back to their journals as a reservoir of their own thinking and of evidence that they may use when writing their essay.

- Think of a time when you decided to take responsibility for something. What did it mean to “take responsibility”? Were you successful in your efforts? Why or why not?
- What do you already know about the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust? What films or books have you seen or read on the subject? What have these sources told you about “what happened” and “why it happened”?
- How do people decide to whom they feel a sense of responsibility?
- Are individuals responsible for their crimes if they have obeyed the laws of their nation? Or are there higher laws? If so, what are those laws?
- What do people have to do and value in order for democracy to survive? What can people do or believe that makes democracy weaker?
- How did the Nazis define membership in the 1930s Germany? What role did this play in their rise to power?

STRATEGIES TO USE TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE EVIDENCE

B. GATHERING AND ANALYZING EVIDENCE

Use these strategies **during** the unit.

Once students understand the prompt and have begun to form opinions on the broad issues, they are ready to dig into the historical content. The strategies in this section help students think about *what* they are reading and learning. Historical reasoning requires students to focus on evidence, perspective, and interpretation.¹ By closely investigating a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, students begin to develop their own arguments.

One of the challenges in supporting students-as-writers and students-as-historians is in helping them understand how to work with evidence. Specifically, they need practice offering accurate and persuasive evidence, considering the source and credibility of the evidence, and citing sufficient and contextualized evidence that demonstrates their understanding of the historical period.²

These activities help students engage with the evidence, and they *precede* the work of actually synthesizing the evidence and crafting a thesis statement. Students are not yet expected to begin their formal essay. The purpose of this section is to have students thinking critically about the relationship between the historical content in the *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* unit and the writing prompt.

This section includes both written and oral strategies. Discussions let students build their own understanding and “rehearse” their thinking before writing³; even the strongest students are challenged to revise and refine their thinking when their peers offer opposing views. Discussions also let teachers listen in to gauge how well the group or specific individuals understand the content, in order to provide clarification or differentiated support as needed.

1 Chauncey Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension and Summary: Learning to Read and Write in History by Focusing on Evidence, Perspective, and Interpretation,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 41, no. 2 (2011): 212–249.

2 Chauncey Monte-Sano, “Disciplinary Literacy in History: An Exploration of the Historical Nature of Adolescents’ Writing,” *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 19, no. 4 (2010): 539–568.

3 Martin Nystrand, Adam Gamoran, and William Carbonaro, “Towards an Ecology of Learning: The Case of Classroom Discourse and Its Effects on Writing in High School English and Social Studies” (Center on English Learning & Achievement, Report Number 11001, 1998), accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www.albany.edu/cela/reports/nystrand/nystrandtowards11001.pdf>.

STRATEGY 6. Evidence Logs and Index Cards

WRITING FOCUS: Students collect evidence to defend their argument

RATIONALE

Students need a central place to organize and revisit the textual evidence they collect. This will help them to create a clear and coherent thesis. As students study history, they will interrogate primary sources to find evidence to answer at least one of the prompts. Collecting evidence will allow students to weigh the possible sides of the argument and eventually craft a thesis that they are able to defend. Having the evidence in a central location or structure helps students review the history and pick clear and relevant reasons to support their thinking.

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce one or several of the evidence logs to your class before you start studying the history. Explain that as you study different documents and watch different historical footage, students will record textual evidence to use in their formal essays. Explain that the goal throughout the unit is to collect evidence from multiple perspectives and keep it in their interactive notebooks to use throughout the unit. Students will then later review the variety of evidence and use it both to determine and support their argument.
2. As they collect evidence, make sure that students are recording the details of each primary or secondary source. Model for students the type of information they need to include about each source (author, title, publisher, date, page, type of source). You might want to keep a poster on the wall to remind students or give them a handout they can tape into their notebooks. Helpful resources for you and students include (both of these sites post information about MLA and APA styles):
 - [Cornell Library Citation Management Page](#)
 - [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\): Research and Citation](#)

Note: Included in this section are two evidence logs. We anticipate and hope that you will modify, adapt, and create evidence logs to best fit the needs of your particular students and classroom context.



REPRODUCIBLE 6.1 Sample Evidence Log

| What happened? | Who was involved? | What role(s) did people play? | How does this connect to the prompt? | Source information (Document name, who said it, date, etc.) |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |



REPRODUCIBLE 6.2 Generic Evidence Log

Writing Prompt:

| Doc # | Citation | Summary (What information from this source addresses the writing prompt?) | Information about author/creator | Source rank (1–3) |
|-------|----------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |



REPRODUCIBLE 6.3 Index card

Front of the card contains information such as:

What information from this source addresses the prompt?

Back of the card contains information about the source such as:

Source

Citation:

Quality of source (1-3):

Why did you give it this ranking?

STRATEGY 7. Annotating and Paraphrasing Sources

WRITING FOCUS: Students learn to search and annotate texts for evidence.

RATIONALE

In order to craft strong arguments about historical events, students need to understand primary and secondary source documents. Careful reading is integral to powerful writing. Annotating text—by underlining key words or writing notes, questions, and margin notes to oneself—often helps students with this close and careful reading. This careful structured reading, in turn, has been found to lead to improved writing.⁴ Students learn to make notes that address the validity and bias of evidence, the perspective of the source, and their own interpretation.⁵

PROCEDURE

Note: Annotating can and should occur throughout the unit. Below is a procedure you might use to introduce the purpose of annotating and to get started. Students will need regular practice, reinforcement, and feedback on their annotations in order for this type of careful reading to become routine.

1. Show students sample annotations—your own or from other students.
 - Ask students what they see.
2. Ask students why they think historians annotate as they read. Discuss the value of the following:
 - a way of “talking to the text”⁶ and having a dialogue with yourself⁷ as you read
 - a way to slow down your thinking as you read hard text, so you read more closely, “thoughtfully, mindfully, intentionally”⁸
 - an opportunity to sort out the material: what you understand and what is still puzzling⁹
 - a way to keep track of your thinking as you read so you can revisit and use that thinking later when you are debating or when you are writing your essay
3. Model annotating a short primary source document in front of the class. Be sure you model both simple summarizing/paraphrasing and more complex critical thinking as you read. Options:
 - Circle or underline key words; tell students why these seem important.
 - Put a question mark by ideas you don’t understand or find puzzling.
 - Summarize key historical events and ideas: Does this make sense? What does this say? What does this mean?

⁴ Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension,” 224.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Shoenbach, 1999, as found in Monte-Sano, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 238.

⁷ Case study teacher in Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension,” 225.

⁸ Case study teacher in Monte-Sano, “Beyond Reading Comprehension.” Pseudonym of teacher is Lyle; real name not given.

⁹ Ibid.

- Write phrases or sentences that express your reactions and interpretations.
 - Note the author's intentions and assumptions.
4. Give students a short text to annotate on their own or in small groups.
 - Circulate to give them feedback on their annotations.
 - After they have read and annotated, have students compare their annotations.
 - » What did you write?
 - » How did it help you?
 - » How were your peers' annotations different?
 5. Ask students to annotate throughout the unit.
 - Periodically remind them of the essential question and writing prompt as a way to help them focus their thinking as they read. What should they be paying attention to?
 - Check their annotations.
 - Give students feedback. Write your own thinking back to them or talk with students about their margin notes. What strikes you? What ideas seem worth pursuing?
 - Remind students that they should use these margin notes when they write their essays.

VARIATION

Students annotate electronically using online tools or software.

STRATEGY 8. Collecting and Sharing Evidence

WRITING FOCUS: Find additional evidence from historical documents and peers to support an argument.

RATIONALE

Students need to interrogate and investigate multiple primary sources and ideas to stimulate their thinking and find evidence for their argument. Teachers can also use these strategies as a way to have students share their work with peers. Students will practice being active listeners or readers—an essential skill for learning new information.

Below are three possible strategies: Gallery Walk; Give One, Get One; and Two-Minute Interview. Choose the one that best suits your students and classroom.

A. Gallery Walk

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Start by organizing primary source documents around the classroom, either on walls or placed on tables. The most important factor is that the texts are spread far enough apart to reduce significant crowding.
2. **Instruct Students on How to Walk Through the Gallery.** You might want them to take informal notes, use a graphic organizer, or create an evidence bank as they view the “gallery.” You may also want them to interact with the documents by writing questions, defining terms, or adding information to a document.
3. **Debriefing the Gallery Walk and Journal Writing.** Spend some time reviewing what students posted and recorded to make sure information is accurate. It is also important to give students the opportunity to ask questions about items in the Gallery Walk that may be confusing.

B. Give One, Get One

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Ask students to divide a sheet of paper into two vertical columns. Label the left side “Give One” and the right side “Get One.”
2. **Response to the Question.** Ask students to respond to a question such as “Do you think the United States bears some responsibility for what happened in Europe in the 1940s? Why or why not?” Students should write their ideas on the left-hand column on their paper. They do not need to write complete sentences; responses can be in list form.
3. **Give One, Get One.** Tell students to walk around and find a partner. Each partner “gives,” or shares, items from their list. For example, Partner A shares his/her responses until Partner B hears something that is not already on his/her list. Partner B writes the new response in the right column on the paper, along with Partner A’s name. Once Partner B has “gotten” one, the roles switch. Students repeat this process with other peers until time runs out.

C. Two-Minute Interview

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Ask students to create a list of questions they have about the historical case study or the evidence they have collected. Alternatively, you can ask students to respond to a question such as “Do you think bystanders can shape society by their inaction? Why or why not?” (Use **Reproducible 8.1** to help students organize their thinking during this activity.)
2. **Two-Minute Interviews.**
 - a. Divide the class in half randomly. Place chairs in two long rows, facing each other. Students will sit facing each other.
 - b. Tell students that they will have two minutes to interview each other. One row of students will ask the questions, listen carefully, and take notes. The other row will answer.
 - c. After two minutes, have one row of students move down so that everyone has a new partner to share evidence or ideas with. Continue this activity until you feel that students have gathered enough evidence or shared enough ideas to generate a full-class discussion.

Debriefing All Three Strategies

After each of these strategies, you will want to debrief in a class discussion and/or a journal write. See guidelines for discussion in the box below. Prompts for journal writing include:

- How might you respond to the essay prompt now?
- What did you learn today? How does this information relate to the essay prompt?
- What else do you want to know?

Teacher's role:

As the students share their ideas, keep notes. Pay particular attention to:

- patterns of insight, understanding, or strong historical reasoning
- patterns of confusion, historical inaccuracies, facile connections, or thinking that indicates students are making overly simplified comparisons between past and present

The goal is for students to share text-based evidence effectively and accurately. The following categories can guide you, the teacher, as you listen to your students' discussion. Listen for:

- **Factual and interpretive accuracy:** offering evidence that is correct and interpretations that are plausible
- **Persuasiveness of evidence:** including evidence that is relevant and strong in terms of helping to prove the claim
- **Sourcing of evidence:** noting what the source is and its credibility and/or bias
- **Corroboration of evidence:** recognizing how different documents work together to support a claim
- **Contextualization of evidence:** placing the evidence into its appropriate historical context¹⁰

As students debrief, weave in feedback. Affirm their insights. Highlight strong historical reasoning and text-based arguments. Choose one or two misconceptions about the content to address. Point out areas where students may want to reevaluate the ways they are connecting past and present.

¹⁰ Monte-Sano, "Beyond Reading Comprehension."



REPRODUCIBLE 8.1 Two-Minute Interviews

| Question I asked | Person I interviewed | Notes/thoughts/new questions that I now have |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

STRATEGY 9. Evaluating Evidence

WRITING FOCUS: Students will sort and sift through evidence to prepare to write their essays.

RATIONALE

Students need to be able to evaluate evidence in order to craft a strong argument. Scholars focused on historical reasoning note that evidence-based interpretations are central to the discipline.¹¹ Historians must be able to source evidence (noting author's intentions, assumptions, and motivations), contextualize evidence (situating a historical document in the time and place in which it was created), and corroborate evidence (comparing multiple historical documents to help one make sense and determine acceptable facts).¹² They must also determine what evidence is most persuasive and how to account for evidence that conflicts with their central claim. The strategy below is a hands-on way to get students to begin to sort and sift evidence, determining what it means and why it matters.

PROCEDURE

1. In advance:
 - Draft a claim that the class will work with. It could be an answer to one of the prompts, or it could be some other claim related to the unit that is independent of the specific formal writing prompts. Things to keep in mind include:
 - a. It must be arguable: something that could be true but isn't necessarily true.
 - b. It must be a claim that requires students to grapple with evidence.
 - Gather a variety of evidence from the Facing History unit: texts, photographs, primary sources, etc. Include:
 - a. some evidence that could be used to help prove the claim
 - b. some evidence that could be used to help disprove the claim
 - c. some evidence that could be used either way, depending on the interpretation
 - d. some evidence that is simply irrelevant to the claim

Note: *If you choose to use their evidence logs, try to photocopy them before the class so that students can cut each piece of evidence onto a separate strip of paper. The physical act of manipulating evidence is key to the effectiveness of this activity.*

2. In class:
 - As you begin this activity with students, explain some things that historians consider when working with evidence:
 - Factual accuracy:** How do we know the evidence is correct?
 - Relevance:** To what extent does this evidence relate to the topic/question at hand?
 - Persuasiveness:** Is this evidence powerful in convincing us of the claim?

¹¹ Ibid., 236.

¹² Wineburg as found in Monte-Sano, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 13.

Source: Where does the evidence come from? How credible is the source? What biases exist?

- On the board, write the claim the class will work with.
 - Distribute the collected evidence to table groups or ask them to take out their evidence logs.
 - Invite them to “sort and sift” the evidence they might use to help prove the claim. Different table groups may sort and sift differently, which is appropriate. They could organize the evidence by what proves and disproves the claim, by what is relevant or irrelevant to the activity, etc. The goal is for students to be able to justify/explain the decisions they make.
 - After the task, debrief the activity using some of the following prompts:
 - a. How has this activity helped them think about this specific evidence?
 - b. What did they learn by doing this activity that they might apply when choosing and analyzing evidence in their own argumentative writing?
 - c. Reiterate the criteria historians tend to use when working with evidence:
 - » accuracy
 - » relevance
 - » persuasiveness
 - » source
3. After the activity and throughout the rest of this unit, have students evaluate the evidence they collect by going through this sorting and sifting activity. Remind students that their essays will be much stronger if they choose strong, specific, and appropriate evidence to defend their claims.

STRATEGY 10. Relevant or Not?

WRITING FOCUS: Using this strategy, students will be able to distinguish between evidence that is relevant to support an argument and evidence that is not relevant to support an argument.

RATIONALE

After students collect evidence, they need to evaluate which evidence best suits their needs. One important step in learning how to support an argument (in speaking or writing) is determining which evidence to use. The purpose of this strategy is to help students distinguish between relevant and irrelevant evidence so that they can make appropriate selections for their essays.

PROCEDURE

1. **Modeling.** In this exercise, students will identify evidence that is relevant to prove a particular claim. This activity is most effective if students have a basic command of the concept of relevance. Therefore, we suggest modeling this process with a few examples. You can start with a non-history-based example like this one and then test students' understanding on a history-based example.

Examples

Claim: *Cell phones should not be allowed in school.*

Which of the following pieces of evidence address the above claim?

- a. Cell phones distract from the learning environment. Students who text or play games on their phones during class do not hear directions or miss learning important content.
- b. Many students today bring cell phones to school.
- c. Cell phones are more affordable now than they were in 2000.
- d. In surveys, some students report using their cell phones to cheat on exams.

Ask students which of the four pieces of evidence are *not* relevant to proving this claim.

Here are some ideas to bring up during a discussion of this question:

- “a” and “d” are both relevant to the claim.
- “b” provides accurate information but is irrelevant to proving the claim.
- “c” may or may not be accurate. It is also irrelevant to the claim.

Historical claim: The civil rights movement demonstrates that the strategy of nonviolence is an effective way to challenge injustice.

Which of the following evidence addresses the above argument?

- a. Challenging injustice was one of the goals of the civil rights movement.
- b. During Freedom Summer, protesters used nonviolent methods to help blacks register to vote.
- c. On March 7, marchers in Selma organized a nonviolent march to Montgomery to protest against voter discrimination against African Americans. Even when the protesters were fired at with tear gas and were beaten with batons, they did not

retaliate with violence. This strategy effectively gained sympathy from the American public for their cause, motivating President Johnson to submit Voting Rights legislation to Congress one week later. (*Eyes on the Prize*, “Bridge to Freedom”)

- d. “This method was made famous in our generation by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who used it to free India from the domination of the British empire.” (Martin Luther King, Jr. in the article “Nonviolence and Racial Justice,” 1957)

Ask students which of the four pieces of evidence is NOT relevant to proving this argument. Here are some ideas that you might bring up during a discussion of this question:

- While “a” may be correct, it is not relevant to proving the argument. This is the kind of statement that might go into the introduction, however.
 - “b” could be used, but is not sufficient on its own. The statement is accurate but it does not prove how nonviolence was effective at challenging an injustice (e.g. expanding voting rights for African Americans).
 - “c” exemplifies relevant evidence: it describes an example of nonviolence and then explains how it helps effectively combat an injustice during the civil rights movement (e.g. voter discrimination).
 - “d” provides an example of when nonviolence helped confront injustice, but it is an example from India.
2. **Group Work.** Continue to have students practice this exercise individually or in groups. Provide historical claims for students, and have each individual or group come up with three pieces of evidence that might be used to support the claim. Two of these selections should represent relevant evidence—evidence that addresses the particular argument. One of these selections should be accurate and credible but not relevant to proving that particular argument. Explain to students that they will present their argument and three pieces of evidence to the whole class (or to another group) and that the audience will have to determine which evidence is relevant and which is irrelevant.

STRATEGY 11. Learning to Infer

WRITING FOCUS: Infer from primary and secondary sources.

RATIONALE

Inference requires students to take something from the text, combine it with some existing background knowledge, and make a new connection. Show them how you do this as a more expert historian. In order to write convincingly about primary and secondary source documents, students must first be able to interpret those documents. Students need support in moving beyond the literal meaning in the texts to making inferences about significance. Teaching students how historians infer, naming that process for them, and giving them opportunities to practice inferring orally will help prepare them to transfer that skill to their written historical analysis.

This strategy is more inquiry-based, allowing students to first make inferences and then learn the formal concept of inference. Research indicates that both authentic inquiry and explicit instruction help students as writers. Be sure you balance out this inquiry strategy with some of the strategies in this same section that offer more explicit instruction.

PROCEDURE

1. Give students a real-world scenario that requires them to infer. (Do not name inference yet for your students.) For example, share a tidbit of gossip or something from a current event.
2. Using that real-world example, name what they did when they inferred. Ask:
 - What was the text or data?
 - What was their background knowledge?
 - How do they automatically put the two together for the “aha” that is inference?
3. Model how you infer as a historian.
 - Read or write up some data.
 - Tell them your background knowledge.
 - Show them how you put the two together to make an inference or interpretation.

The options below show two specific scaffolds to teach students how to infer. Choose one to use with your students.

OPTION A:

*It says . . . I say . . . And so . . .*¹³

| It says . . . (the text or data) | I say . . . (my background knowledge) | And so . . . (put the two together to make an inference) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

OPTION B: INFERENCE EQUATION¹⁴

I notice + I already know = So now I am thinking . . .

I notice

(the text or data)

+ I already know

(my background knowledge)

= So now I am thinking

(put the two together to make an inference)

I notice . . .

+ I already know . . .

= So now I am thinking . . .

¹³ Kyleen Beers, *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do* (Heinemann, 2003).

¹⁴ Inference equation developed by Nicole Frazier, former social studies teacher at Manual High School, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO, 2008.

STRATEGY 12. Assessing Source Credibility

WRITING FOCUS: Students practice media literacy by determining which sources they can trust for credible, accurate, and persuasive evidence.

RATIONALE

Especially now that students have access to a limitless amount of information posted on the Internet, it is critical that they develop strong media literacy skills. As students gather information, they need to evaluate the credibility of their sources. What perspective does this source represent? Why should this source be trusted? What makes this source more or less credible than other sources? Resources that provide additional information about source evaluation include:

- [Project Look Sharp](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\): Evaluation Sources of Information](#)

PROCEDURE

1. **Brainstorm.** Students may not be aware of how often they practice evaluating sources. For example, they might hear a rumor and know not to believe the information. You can begin this exercise by asking students to respond to the question: How do you decide when to trust what you see, hear, or read? Record a list on the board of criteria they use or steps they take to determine if a source is credible.
2. **Create a Checklist.** Based on students' responses and your additional ideas, create a checklist students can use to determine if a source is trustworthy. Items on the checklist might include:
 - Information can be backed up by another source or sources.
 - Author/creator is an expert on the topic.
 - Author/creator experienced the situation firsthand.
 - Information is published by a credible institution (a business that could get into a lot of trouble if it printed inaccurate information), such as a major newspaper, PBS, Library of Congress, a major museum, etc.

You can also make a checklist for possible reasons not to trust a source, such as:

- It has an anonymous author or creator and there is no way to determine if the author is an expert on this subject.
- Information is not published by an organization; it's unclear who else stands by this information.
- Information in this source contradicts much of the information you have read elsewhere.
- No references are provided for this information; there's no way to find out if this information is true or false.

3. **Group Work.** Pass out documents and have groups or pairs evaluate the same source or sources and then compare their rankings. You might use the sample source evaluation form (**Reproducible 12.1**).
4. **Individual Work and Assessment.** For homework, you can ask students to find and evaluate a source on their own. Completed source evaluation forms will tell you the degree to which students have mastered this skill.

You also might wish to have a discussion about the credibility of Wikipedia, a source that many students are quick to use, as it comes up first in many search-engine results. Wikipedia puts neutrality and reliability alerts on some of its pages. Key questions to ask students might be:

- What does the phrase “the neutrality of this article is disputed” mean? Why is that important to think about as you collect evidence?
- How do you know when you can trust the information on Wikipedia?
- Where else might you go to verify an idea listed on Wikipedia?



REPRODUCIBLE 12.1

Source Evaluation Form: Why Should You Trust This Source? Why Shouldn't You Trust This Source?

Part 1: Basic Source Information

| |
|---|
| Author/creator: |
| Year published/created: |
| Published by: |
| Type of source (newspaper, photograph, article, law, etc.): |
| Other information about this source: |

Part 2: Rank the Trustworthiness of This Source: _____

3 = very trustworthy, 2 = trustworthy, 1 = some reservations, 0 = not trustworthy

Checklist

- ☐ Author/creator is an expert on the topic.
- ☐ Author/creator experienced the situation firsthand.
- ☐ Information is backed up by several other sources (includes citations and/or you have seen similar information in other credible sources).
- ☐ Information is published by a credible institution (a business that could get into a lot of trouble if it printed inaccurate information), such as a major newspaper, PBS, Library of Congress, a major museum, etc.

Part 3: Bias/Perspective

What do you know about the author/creator of this source?

What bias or perspective does this source represent? What is the creator in favor of or against?

What are the strengths of this source? What information can the author/creator reliably present? (Examples: A zoologist would be a more reliable source about elephants than a dentist.)

STRATEGY 13. Successful Online Research

WRITING FOCUS: Students analyze and collect evidence to defend their argument.

RATIONALE

Students need to understand how to most effectively search for relevant, trusted information on the Web. As students study history, they will interrogate primary and secondary sources to find evidence that will allow them to eventually craft a thesis that they are able to defend. Being able to use advanced searching techniques will ensure students are able to access the latest and most useful information.

PROCEDURE

We highly recommend you use the following resources to help you create online research activities in your classroom:

- **Teaching History With Technology from EdTech Teacher.** This web page gives a wealth of information about online research in the history classroom. It includes a list of student-friendly search engines and links to collections of primary sources. In addition, there are video tutorials about advanced Google searches, evaluating source credibility, and creating online bookmarks with students.
- **Google Lesson Plans.** Google has created lesson plans to help students learn how to search effectively with Google. There are beginner, intermediate, and advanced lessons available.

STRATEGIES TO USE WHILE WRITING FORMAL ESSAYS

C. CRAFTING A THESIS AND ORGANIZING IDEAS

*Use these strategies **after** the unit.*

Once students have had an opportunity to engage with the evidence, they can begin to integrate, synthesize, and categorize their ideas. In this section, teachers can challenge students to sort out “What is *my* perspective on this issue?”

Much of historical thinking and writing involves forming strong arguments or interpretations based on the core concepts in history: Why does this matter? How did this happen? What motivated people in the past to think and act in the ways they did? How do we know what we know? How was this past situation similar to present-day situations? The prompts are designed to engage students in these big questions.

Note: We placed crafting a thesis *after* students have had many opportunities *throughout* the unit to examine and understand the evidence. A recent study found that college professors express concern that many students leap to writing a thesis before they have explored their ideas in sufficient detail.¹ Here, crafting a thesis and organizing ideas are paired, as a way to help students begin to integrate, synthesize, and categorize their ideas.

¹ Stevi Quate, ed., “Lessons Learned: A Report of the DASSC Writing Inquiry Project,” June 1, 2011, <http://writinginquiry.wikispaces.com/file/view/Lessonslearned.pdf>.

STRATEGY 14. Taking a Stand on Controversial Issues: Speaking and Listening Strategies

WRITING FOCUS: Students will practice using evidence to make and defend an argument.

RATIONALE

Speaking and listening strategies give students early practice with explaining how evidence supports their position. These strategies also support students' critical thinking, since students consider an issue from multiple perspectives. Engaging in speaking and listening can be an effective writing exercise before an essay assignment because it brings out arguments for or against a thesis. It can also be effective after writing a first draft of an essay; often, a classroom discussion will clarify thinking and help a student locate the part of their argument to revise.

Because these strategies involve sharing opinions, often in a passionate way, set a contract before this activity. Reiterate your class rules about respect for the opinions and voices of others; call for them to be honest but not insulting. Readdress ways to constructively disagree with one another, and require that when offering their opinion or defense of their stance, they speak from the “I,” rather than from an accusatory “You.”

A. Barometer

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Place “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” signs at opposite ends of a continuum in your room. Or you can post any statement and its opposite at two ends of a continuum. Any argument or thesis statement can be used for this activity. Give students a few minutes to respond to the prompt in writing before you ask them to “take a stand.”
2. **“Take a Stand.”** Ask students to stand on the spot of the line that represents their opinion, telling them that if they stand on either extreme they are absolute in their agreement or disagreement. They may also stand anywhere in between the two extremes, depending on how much they agree or disagree with the statement.
3. **Explain Positions.** Once students have lined up, ask them to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are. Encourage students to refer to evidence and examples when defending their stance. If students are persuaded to change their opinion, ask them to move along the continuum to show their new thinking.

B. SPAR (*Spontaneous Argumentation*)

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Divide class in half. Assign one side to be the *pro* position and the other side to be the *con* position. Have students move their desks so they are sitting opposite an opponent. Write a debatable proposition on the board.
2. **Brainstorm Arguments.** Give students one to two minutes to write down their arguments and evidence for or against the proposition.
3. **Opening Statements.** The students will be “SPARring” with the person sitting across from them. Each student (*pro* and *con*) presents a **one-minute opening statement** making his/her case while the other listens quietly and takes notes.
4. **Discussion.** Give students 30 seconds to prepare ideas for what they want to say to their opponent. Invite each side to engage in a **three-minute discussion** during which they may question their opponent’s reasoning or examples or put forth new ones of their own.
5. **Closing Statements.** Give students 30 seconds or one minute to prepare a closing statement. *Each* student presents a **one-minute closing statement** while the other listens quietly, and then the roles reverse.

C. Final Word

This strategy is a way for students to talk without having the competitiveness that can accompany debate in the classroom.

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Divide students into groups of four and have them position themselves so that they are in a circle.
2. **Prompts.** Create a list of claims for students to respond to or ask students to write their own claims (thesis statements).
3. **Sharing in Small Groups.** Ask each group to choose someone to begin. The first few times that you do “Final Word,” remind students of the procedure before you officially begin. The first student has 30 seconds to respond to the claim or share their thesis statement. After 30 seconds, the person to the right of the first student has a chance to react to the thesis. This student can choose to respond to the first student or simply give their own information. After 30 seconds, the third student speaks, following the same rules. Continue the process with the fourth student. After the fourth student, the first student now gets to have the “Final Word.” He or she receive an additional 30 seconds to respond to the comments of the group, to argue for their point, or to summarize the thoughts of the group. In the next round, a different student should begin.

A FEW NOTES:

- No students should speak when it is not their turn to talk. The goal is for each student to have 30 seconds that are entirely theirs.
- If a student doesn’t talk for their entire 30 seconds, the group should wait for the time to run out before the next person begins.

Debrief

After any of these activities, engage your class in a discussion. Questions to ask include:

- What were the arguments for and against the issue?
- What did you learn during the activity? How does this information relate to the essay prompt?
- What value is to be gained from students arguing positions with which they don't agree?
- What were the strongest arguments? Which arguments were the weakest? What role does evidence play in creating an argument?

Teacher's role:

As students share their ideas, keep notes. Pay particular attention to:

- patterns of insight, understanding, or strong historical reasoning
- patterns of confusion, historical inaccuracies, facile connections, or thinking that indicates students are making overly simplified comparisons between past and present

The goal is for students to share text-based evidence effectively and accurately. The following categories can guide you, the teacher, as you listen to your students' discussion. Listen for:

- **Factual and interpretive accuracy:** offering evidence that is correct and interpretations that are plausible
- **Persuasiveness of evidence:** including evidence that is relevant and strong in terms of helping to prove the claim
- **Sourcing of evidence:** noting what the source is and its credibility and/or bias
- **Corroboration of evidence:** recognizing how different documents work together to support a claim
- **Contextualization of evidence:** placing the evidence into its appropriate historical context²
- As students debrief, weave in feedback. Affirm their insights. Highlight strong historical reasoning and text-based arguments. Choose one or two misconceptions about the content to address. Point out areas where students may want to reevaluate the ways they are connecting past and present.

² Monte-Sano, "Beyond Reading Comprehension."

STRATEGY 15. Building Arguments through Mini-Debates

WRITING FOCUS: Students will practice using evidence to make and defend an argument.

RATIONALE

*This strategy helps students work with two key components of Toulmin's model of argument: **claim and evidence**.* They are not yet being asked to provide analysis or a “warrant” explaining how the evidence proves the claim/reason.

PROCEDURE

1. Create a list of items, with or without your students, which could be used to answer the prompt.
2. Write each item on a separate index card.
3. Divide the class into groups or pairs. Pass out one card to each group. Together, each group is responsible for preparing an argument connecting the subject of their card to the prompt. They should
4. After each pair or group has filled out its card, hold a mini-debate in the classroom. Pick a card at random and ask the pair with that card to provide evidence for this topic. The rest of the class should listen to the evidence and try to argue against it. Continue the mini-debates until most or all students have had a chance to defend the topic they were assigned.
5. After this exercise, ask students to write in their journals and note the three pieces of evidence that they found most compelling in the discussions. They may use this in their papers later on.

STRATEGY 16. Linking Claims and Evidence with Analysis

WRITING FOCUS: Analyze evidence.

RATIONALE

Analysis/explanation is the link or the “glue” that holds the evidence and claim together,³ explaining how and why the evidence helps prove the claim. The ability to analyze evidence is central to the study of history; students need to read data or source documents and be able to form interpretations or conclusions. Students benefit from opportunities to analyze and explain evidence orally, as “thinking,” before trying to put that thinking into more formal written form in the body paragraphs of their essays. Students need to learn how to craft “warrants,”⁴ a basic explanation of how their evidence proves their claim. One good way for them to learn this is to give them various pieces of evidence and various claims and have them practice connecting the two.

PROCEDURE

This strategy is best used immediately after the Building Arguments strategy.

1. After completing the card activity, ask students to link the claims with the evidence. Which evidence proves which claims? Use a three-column chart to record answers. (See **Reproducible 16.1.**)
 - *Left: Claims.* Teacher completes in advance, listing claims students need to prove.
 - *Middle: Evidence.* Students complete first. They either paste in evidence that has been cut up into strips or write in evidence they gather themselves.
 - *Right: Analysis.* Students complete last. This is where they explain *how* the evidence in the middle connects or proves the claim on the left.
2. Ask them to justify their choices, using the following prompts:
 - What does this piece of evidence prove? What makes you say that?
 - How does this piece of evidence prove X? Explain your thinking.
 - What else might this evidence prove?
 - Why is this evidence important?
 - What does this evidence show?

³ Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruszkiewicz, *Everything's an Argument*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), 95.

⁴ Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958).



REPRODUCIBLE 16.1 Three-Column Chart Linking Claims, Evidence, and Analysis

| CLAIM | EVIDENCE | ANALYSIS ← → (How does the evidence prove the claim?) |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>(Teacher provides the claim.)</i> | <i>(Student first finds evidence to support the claim.)</i> | <i>(Student then links the evidence with the claim.)</i> |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

STRATEGY 17. Thesis Sorting

WRITING FOCUS: Students will identify several possible thesis statements that address the same essay prompt and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each.

RATIONALE

This strategy promotes critical thinking, since in crafting a thesis students are required to put their own ideas in conversation with the text. Sometimes a prompt directs students to one obvious thesis statement when there are actually other more nuanced arguments they could make. The purpose of this activity is to help generate the possible arguments that could be made based on the same prompt and for students to understand the elements of a successful thesis.

PROCEDURE

1. **Make Sure Students Understand the Prompt.** See the **Dissecting the Prompt** strategy on page 22.
2. **Brainstorm Options.** This could be done as a small group or a whole-class activity. Before having students do a thesis brainstorm for the first time, you might want to model it using a different prompt.
3. **Students Practice Writing Excellent, Good, and Weak Thesis Statements.** After you feel that students understand how to write a thesis, put them into groups of two or three. Ask them to write three thesis statements on different slips of paper. One thesis should be excellent, one good, and one intentionally weak. Before this step, you might want to review the criteria for a good thesis. In general, a good thesis:
 - takes a clear stance on an issue,
 - addresses *all* elements of the prompt, and
 - can be defended with evidence.

An especially strong thesis presents an especially original argument and/or articulates a nuanced or more refined argument.

4. **Students Categorize and Sort Thesis Statements.** After each group has practiced writing different thesis statements, pass out a list of thesis statements that you have already written. We recommend cutting these up so that each statement is on a separate strip of paper. Make sure your list includes excellent, good, and weak theses. You can also include some of the statements that students just wrote in their groups.

In the same groups, ask students to try to categorize the thesis statements into the categories of excellent, good, and weak. Make sure they are using some of the above criteria to make their decisions.

After the groups are finished, ask students to walk around the room and visit other groups' categories. Tell students to notice how different groups interpreted or categorized the same thesis statements.

5. **Debrief and Assessment.** When students return to their original lists, have a class discussion about what they noticed. Where in the class does there seem to be disagreement? confusion? consistency? What is the difference between an excellent, good, and weak thesis statement?

During the discussion, make sure you correct any clear misunderstandings about thesis statements.

As an informal assessment, ask groups to pick two thesis statements in the weak and good categories. Tell the group to edit each thesis statement so that they feel it can move up one category (from weak to good or from good to excellent).

STRATEGY 18. Tug for Truth

This strategy is adapted from and used with the permission of Project Zero.⁵

WRITING FOCUS: Students practice evidence-based reasoning skills.

RATIONALE

This strategy encourages students to reason carefully about the “pull” of various factors that are relevant to a question of truth. It also helps them appreciate the deeper complexity of matters of truth that can appear black and white on the surface.

PROCEDURE

This strategy builds on students’ familiarity with the game of tug-of-war to help them understand the complex forces that “tug” at either side of a question of truth. The strategy uses a rope or a diagram to represent pulls toward true or false in evaluating a claim. The tug-of-war is between true and false. Help students think about the various factors that tug at one side of the rope or the other, as well as other considerations related to the issue.

1. Identify a question of truth—a controversial claim that something is true or false—where you know there is some evidence on both sides that students can bring forward.
2. Ask students if they have an opinion about it.
3. Draw a tug-of-war diagram on the board (or tape a piece of rope on the wall and use self-stick notes to make it more dramatic). Explain that students can add two kinds of things. One is evidence—tugs in the yes or true direction or in the no or false direction. The other thing to add is a question about the tug-of-war itself, a question that asks for more information or about “what if”—if we tried this or we tried that, what would the results be?
4. Finish the lesson by asking students what new ideas they have about the question of truth:
 - Can we decide now?
 - Do some people lean one way and some the other?
 - Is the best answer in a “gray area”—most of the time true but not always, or true half the time?

⁵ “Introduction to Thinking Routines,” accessed October 22, 2011, http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/VisibleThinking1.html

STRATEGY 19. Refuting Counterarguments

WRITING FOCUS: Students learn to write and challenge counterarguments.

RATIONALE

In order to write a strong argumentative paper, students need to both anticipate and refute counterarguments to their thesis. This strategy asks students to focus specifically on counterclaims that others may have when reading their ideas. It also promotes critical thinking, since considering and refuting counterarguments requires students to consider an issue from multiple points of view.

PROCEDURE

1. In the tenth grade, students are required to include a counterargument in their essay. Using an argument the class has brainstormed, show students how someone might respond with a counterargument.
2. Then have the class help you refute this counterargument, drawing on historical evidence. You might want to do this twice before asking students to refute counterarguments on their own.
3. Students can use **Reproducible 19.1** to practice working with counterarguments. They can complete worksheets with a partner.
4. Students begin with their own worksheet by completing row 1.
5. Then, they switch with their partner and complete row 2.
6. Next, they switch back and complete row 3.
7. Finally, they end with their partner's paper when completing row 4.
8. At the end of this exercise, students can discuss which of the arguments on the page is the strongest and why. This strategy can also be used to help students prepare for a SPAR debate (see **Strategy 14**).



REPRODUCIBLE 19.1 Sample Counterargument Worksheet

WORD BANK

Useful language to use when making and refuting counterarguments

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------|------------|---------|
| Nevertheless | Some might believe | But | Even so | Despite |
| On the one hand | On the other hand | While | It is true | Yet |
| In contrast | To some extent | Although | Admittedly | However |
| It might seem that | What this argument fails to account for | | | |

1. Argument

This thesis is true because
...

2. Counterargument

Yet some people argue . . .

3. Refutation

But . . .

4. Response

On the other hand . . .

D. PROVING YOUR POINT THROUGH LOGICAL REASONING IN BODY PARAGRAPHS

*Use these strategies **after** the unit.*

Once students have identified and organized their thesis, arguments, and evidence, they are ready to begin crafting these ideas into coherent paragraphs.

Argumentative essays typically have one “central” argument (the thesis or central claim) and multiple smaller arguments in which the author presents a claim or reason, cites evidence, and offers analysis. This analysis, technically called a “warrant,” is the glue holding claims and evidence together. In this section, we include strategies to help students practice linking claims, evidence, and analysis orally. We also include ways to help students learn more flexible ways to present those ideas so their writing feels fresh, not formulaic.

Many teachers offer students a mini-lesson on an aspect of writing, such as outlining or using transitions, and then give them class time to apply these lessons to their own writing. One of the challenges in supporting students-as-writers is in giving them enough freedom to find their own voice and providing sufficient structure to help them craft a thoughtful, thorough, well-organized essay. Some students will benefit from having clear guidelines, such as graphic organizers to complete, especially if this is their first experience writing a formal, argumentative essay. Students who already understand the basic components of an essay may not need these supports.

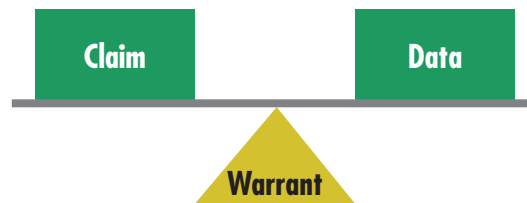
STRATEGY 20. Claims, Data, and Analysis

WRITING FOCUS: Analyze evidence in writing.

RATIONALE

Strong body paragraphs include claims, evidence or “data,” and analysis or “warrants”.⁶

Writers can visualize these three components as a balancing scale. The three components can be put in any order; students need not perceive this as a “formula” to follow.



The ability to analyze evidence is central to the study of history; students need to read data or source documents and be able to form interpretations or conclusions. Once students have had many chances to practice analyzing and explaining evidence orally, they can begin to put their thinking into a more formal written structure: the body paragraphs of their argumentative essay.

We want students to move away from formulaic body paragraphs (in which they always introduce a claim first, then cite evidence, and then explain how the evidence proves the claim). Once students understand Toulmin’s model for argument—in which one states a claim, provides evidence, and then explains *how* the evidence proves the claim—they can start to mix and match these three elements more flexibly.

PROCEDURE

1. Show students an example of a strong analytical paragraph.
2. Discuss the ideas in the paragraph. What is the author claiming? Proving? Then discuss how the author crafts their argument.
3. On chart paper or on your computer projected to a Smartboard, draw the balancing scale. Label the two scales “claim” and “evidence.” Label the fulcrum “analysis/warrant.” Put this chart somewhere that allows you to refer back to it in the coming weeks.

⁶ Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

4. On a big strip of paper, or on your computer projected to a Smartboard, write a simple real-world claim for which you can cite evidence. (Perhaps use a claim that says something positive about the students as a group—e.g., “This class is very responsible”—or about some current event/issue at school. You could also use an example from your current Facing History unit or a previous unit they all will remember.)
5. Next, ask students to cite evidence to prove the claim (e.g., “We come to class prepared,” “We ask questions when we need help”). Write the evidence on a separate big strip of paper or in a different color on your computer.
6. Then, ask them to provide warrants to link the evidence to the claim (e.g., “Students who are responsible know that it is their job to understand the material and aren’t shy about asking for help if they are confused. That’s how you get smarter”). Again, write this on a third big strip of paper or in a third type color on your computer.
7. Physically manipulate the three strips, or cut and paste on the computer, to show students the various ways these three sentences could be linked. After you show each variation, ask students to talk with a partner about whether they think this variation makes sense, is effective, etc. After all three, ask students to talk about which was best and why. They should be able to determine that there is in fact no “best”—just different ways of including these various components of an argument.
8. Ask students to do the same thing for a claim for their essay and have a partner critique it.

EXTENSION

After trying out different kinds of analysis, try writing your sentence strips in different orders. What do you gain or lose from each structure?

1, 2, 3 (claim, evidence, analysis)

2, 1, 3 (evidence, claim, analysis)

3, 1, 2 (analysis, claim, evidence)

(See **Reproducible 20.1**)



REPRODUCIBLE 20.1 Claims, Evidence, and Analysis

Here are different ideas for how you can link claims and evidence with analysis.

- Make an inference. (*It seems that because of _____ , _____ happened.*)
- Give an opinion. (*The decision to do _____ was dangerous because . . .*)
- Give a reason. (*He made this choice because . . .*)
- Give an effect. (*Because of this decision . . .*)
- Explain the importance. (*This is significant because . . .*)
- Compare and contrast with something. (*This is different from _____ because . . .*)
- Make an “if, then” statement. (*If this happened, then . . .*)
- Make a connection to another event or to ideas, past or present. (*This is similar to . . .*)

STRATEGY 21. Using Exemplars (or Mentor Texts)

WRITING FOCUS: Students will be able to identify the different parts of successful formal argumentative writing.

RATIONALE

Using models or mentor texts engages students actively in inquiry, helping them to envision what strong writing looks and sounds like and to construct criteria for their own writing.

PROCEDURE

1. **Locate Exemplars.** Both student and “expert” (professional) writing can be used as exemplars. Students can read entire essays or only one paragraph. Exemplars you might use include writing by your students; your own writing; and professional writing, such as newspaper editorials.
2. **Active Reading of Exemplars.** Often it is easier to recognize qualities of effective (and ineffective) writing when texts are read aloud. Ask a volunteer to read the exemplar aloud while the rest of the class marks up the text. Students can underline main ideas and place question marks near sentences that are unclear. You might ask students to distinguish between evidence and analysis of this evidence.
3. **Evaluating Exemplars.** Whether students are reading one exemplar or several, it helps to give them a rubric they can use to evaluate the writing. Ideally, this is the same rubric that will be used to evaluate their writing. By participating in a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of writing, students gain a deeper understanding of what they should aspire to produce in their own writing.
4. **Reflective Journal Writing.** Possible prompts for reflection include: What makes some writing better than other writing? What lessons from this exercise will you apply to your own writing?

VARIATION

Fill in the Essay: To help build particular writing skills, you could distribute incomplete exemplar essays to students and ask them to fill in the missing parts. For example, you could have students read several body paragraphs and then ask them to write an introduction or conclusion for that essay. Or you could give students an exemplar with only claims and evidence and ask them to add analysis.

STRATEGY 22. Using Graphic Organizers to Organize Writing

WRITING FOCUS: Students will organize main ideas, evidence, and analysis before they begin writing.

RATIONALE

Graphic organizers can help students put their ideas in a logical order and notice where they need more information. You might have all students complete a graphic organizer before writing (or typing) their essays, or you might make this an option for students. By breaking a whole paper into smaller, clear tasks, graphic organizers are especially helpful for students who are unfamiliar with formal essay writing or who struggle with organizing ideas in writing.

One of the challenges in supporting students-as-writers is in giving them enough freedom to find their own voice and providing sufficient structure to help them craft a thoughtful, thorough, well-organized essay. We know that most educators teach students of varying abilities and therefore need several different avenues into an assignment. The graphic organizers that follow are suggestions to use with some of your students who may need extra scaffolds to outline a writing assignment. Some students will benefit from having clear structures, such as graphic organizers to complete, especially if this is their first experience writing a formal, argumentative essay. Students who already understand the basic components of an essay may not need these supports.

PROCEDURE

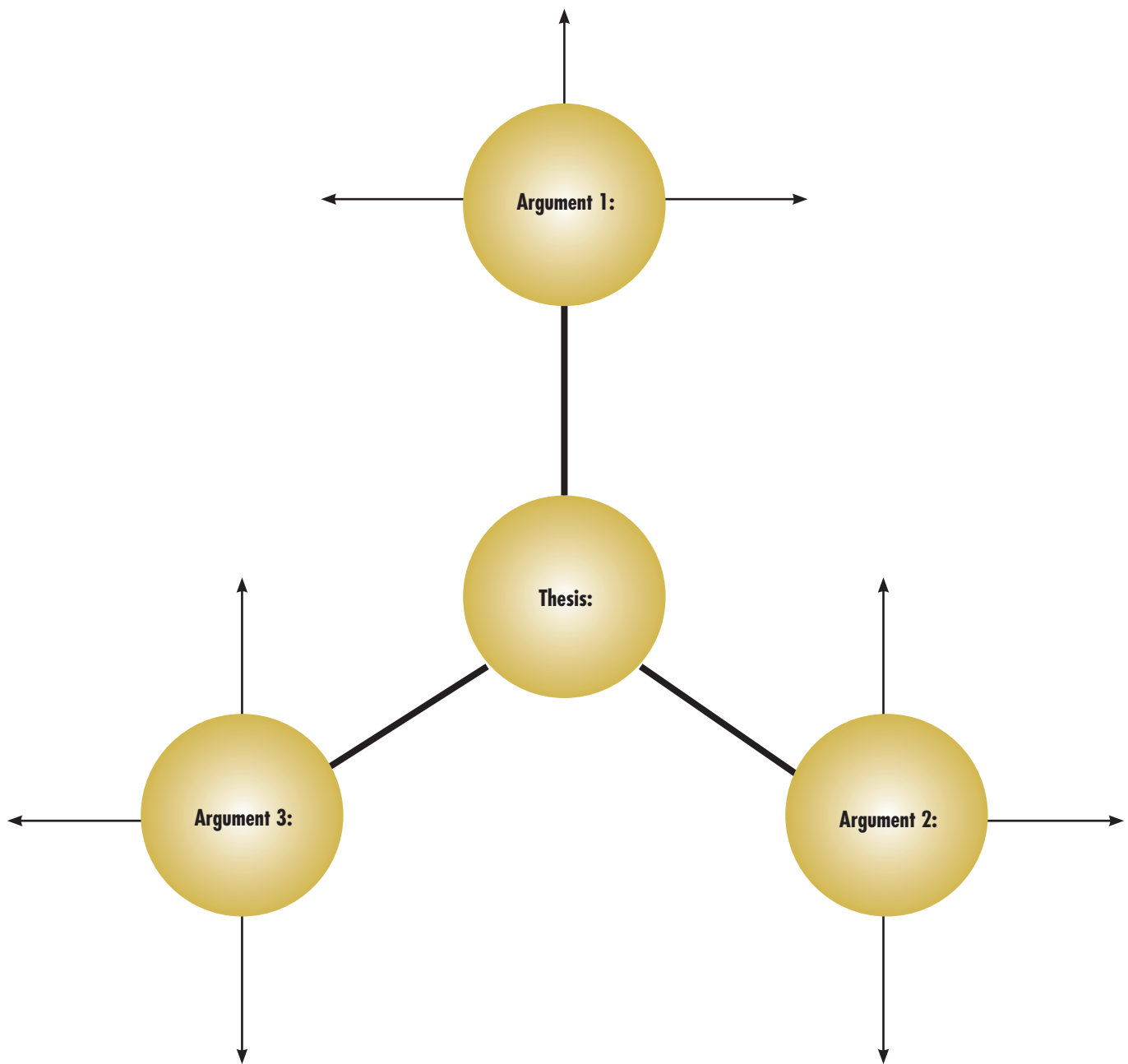
1. **Select a Graphic Organizer to Use.** There are many ways to visually organize an essay. Some samples are included here as Reproducibles, or you can also find other examples on the Web, including the [Sandwich Graphic Organizer](#) and the [Persuasion Plan](#). A graphic organizer provided in this packet uses the MEAL structure to help students organize their ideas:
 - Main idea (argument)
 - Evidence that supports that main idea
 - Analysis to explain how the evidence proves the main idea
 - Link between the argument and the thesis statement
2. **Model How to Complete It.** You might show students what an organizer looks like that is complete, or you can complete an organizer together with students. Most teachers only require students to write words and phrases on their graphic organizers, not complete sentences. Whatever you decide, be sure to communicate this to students.
3. **Students Complete the Graphic Organizer in Class and/or at Home.** Often it can help students to have a partner review their work and help them when they get stuck.

4. **Review Graphic Organizers before Students Begin Writing or Typing Their Essays.**
Often teachers sign off on students' outline or graphic organizer before students proceed to the writing phase. If students begin the writing with clearly organized ideas, they are less likely to be frustrated with the task of crafting coherent sentences.



REPRODUCIBLE 22.1. Sample Concept Map Graphic Organizer

Directions: Fill in the circles with your thesis and arguments. Connect relevant evidence to each argument.





REPRODUCIBLE 22.2

Outlining Your Essay: Graphic Organizer for Body Paragraph (with feedback sheet)

OUTLINE FOR BODY PARAGRAPH # _____

THESIS (The purpose of my paper is to prove . . .):

ARGUMENT (This thesis is true because . . .):

| Evidence to support argument (with citation): | Analysis: <i>This evidence supports my argument because . . .</i> |
|--|--|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

(Optional)

COUNTERARGUMENT (*Some people argue . . .*):

| Evidence to refute counterargument (with citation): | Analysis: <i>This evidence refutes the counterargument because . . .</i> |
|--|---|
| | |

Feedback on Body Paragraph Outline

Author's name:

Editor's name:

This is for feedback on body paragraph # _____

Clarity of argument: _____ points

_____ Argument supports thesis statement. (1 point)

_____ Argument does not support thesis statement. (0 points)

Strength of evidence: _____ points

_____ Includes two or more pieces of relevant, high-quality evidence. (3 points)

_____ Includes one piece of relevant, high-quality evidence. (2 points)

_____ Evidence provided but does not support argument or is not high-quality—not from sources we have used in class or other approved source. (1 point)

_____ Relevant counterargument is refuted with evidence. (1 point)

_____ No evidence provided. (no points)

Citing sources: _____ points

_____ Cites all sources appropriately. (2 points)

_____ Cites sources but does not always follow proper format. (1 point)

_____ No citations. (no points)

Analysis: _____ points

_____ Clearly explains how evidence supports argument. (2 points)

_____ Explains how some, but not all, evidence supports argument. (1 point)

_____ Does not explain how evidence supports argument. (0 points)

Suggested next steps:

STRATEGY 23. Sentence-Strip Paragraphs

WRITING FOCUS: Students will learn to organize their thinking into paragraphs.

RATIONALE

This strategy can be used to help students organize introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs. It has students moving around sentences on slips of paper to help them learn how to organize their ideas in a paragraph. It also should remind students of the earlier analysis activities that they used when crafting their thesis and organizing their ideas.

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Divide students into groups of four or five. Cut strips of paper and give each group at least ten. This activity could also be done with students working individually or in pairs.
2. **Write Sentences on Strips of Paper.** Students write one sentence on each strip. The type of paragraph you focus on for this activity will determine what you ask groups to write on their slips. For example, if you are using this activity to help students write introductory paragraphs, you would want one group to record possible hooks for the essay, another group to record sentences that would go in the background section, and another group to record possible thesis statements. If you are using this activity to help students write body paragraphs, you might assign a group a particular argument and have them record possible evidence on separate strips of paper.
3. **Share Strips.** Students can either tape their strips to a large piece of paper or leave them on their table.
4. **Build a Paragraph.** Individually or in groups, have students go around the room looking for ideas to help build their paragraphs. Sometimes teachers have students tape the selected strips in order to create a paragraph. Students can also record the sentences or ideas they want to use on a graphic organizer, such as their Inverted Pyramid (see **Strategy 24**).
5. **Fill in Gaps.** After students build a paragraph with sentence strips, ask them to fill in gaps with new sentences. Gaps might include transition words linking one idea to the next or analysis that explains how evidence connects to the main idea of the paragraph. Sentence starters you might use to help students add analysis statements include:
 - *This evidence shows that . . .*
 - *Therefore . . .*
 - *These examples demonstrate . . .*
 - *Because _____, then _____.*
 - *Clearly, this suggests that . . .*
 - *This evidence is an example of . . .*
 - *This reveals that . . .*

VARIATION

Using Exemplars: To help students practice organizing ideas, you can cut an exemplar essay, such as the one included in the Using Exemplars teaching strategy, into sentence strips and then have students place these sentences in an order that makes sense.

E. FRAMING AND CONNECTING IDEAS IN INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

*Use these strategies **after** the unit.*

As students develop their argument, it is also important that they keep the “So what?” question in mind. A central mission of Facing History is to help students make connections between history and the choices they make in their own lives. We want them not only to engage with the evidence logically but also to engage emotionally and ethically, considering implications for the present and the future.

When writing a formal essay, students demonstrate that they can make these big conceptual connections mostly in the opening and closing paragraphs. In this section, we include strategies that support students in first *making* those connections to the here and now and then expressing those connections in ways that are clear and compelling to their audience.

STRATEGY 24. Introductions: Inverted Pyramid

WRITING FOCUS: Students will write an organized introductory paragraph, including a hook, background information, and thesis.

RATIONALE

The Inverted Pyramid is a structure that represents how an introductory paragraph is typically organized. This strategy helps students understand the content that needs to be included in an introduction and visualize where it should be placed. This activity might be most appropriate when students are ready to write their papers, after they have selected their thesis and homed in on their arguments.

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** For this activity students can use a graphic organizer, or they can draw their own upside-down pyramids in their notebooks. The pyramid should be divided into three sections.
2. **Ask Students to Label the Pyramid.** Tell them that this pyramid represents the introduction to their paper. Give them the following terms and definitions and ask them to label where on the pyramid they think it makes sense to place this information. You could also ask students to label these parts on a persuasive essay you give to them as an exemplar.
 - *Hook:* A hook is a sentence or question that captures the reader's attention—by addressing something that connects to their lives or providing particularly interesting or surprising information. It can also be a general statement that sets the tone for the essay.
 - *Background Information:* To understand an essay, readers often need some background information on a topic. For example, your reader may never have heard about Central High School or Little Rock, Arkansas, or Jim Crow segregation. Writers often use the introduction to provide readers with the basic facts needed to understand the essay.
 - *Thesis Statement:* The *point* of an argumentative essay is to persuade the reader to believe a claim you are making. The main claim of your essay is called the thesis statement.
3. **Have Students Review Other Sample Introductions.** As students read examples of introductions, ask them to label the hook, the background information, and the thesis statement. Ask them questions about the sample paragraphs: What do you like about the introduction? Is anything missing? How might you enhance or rework this introduction?

STRATEGY 25. Conclusions: Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World

WRITING FOCUS: Students will identify connections between the ideas in their essays and their own lives and gather ideas they might use in their concluding paragraph.

RATIONALE

In the conclusion of an essay, students help the reader understand how the ideas in the essay connect to other events in the past and present. This helps the reader appreciate why the ideas in the essay matter. Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World is a strategy that helps students develop the habit of making these connections. It can be used to help students prepare for writing a conclusion, after they have written the body paragraphs of their essay.

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparation.** Students need a copy of their essay for this activity. You might also want to prepare a graphic organizer for them to do this activity. Or they could answer the questions in a notebook or journal.
2. **Active Reading with Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World.** Below are sample directions and prompts you can use with this strategy:
 - *Text-to-Text*—How do the ideas in your essay remind you of another text (story, book, movie, song, document, etc.)?
 - *Text-to-Self*—How do the ideas in your essay relate to your own life, ideas, and experiences?
 - *Text-to-World*—How do the ideas in your essay relate to the larger world—past, present, and future?
3. **Debrief and Journal Writing.** Students gain a deeper understanding of their essays, their classmates, and the world around them when they have the opportunity to discuss their responses with peers. Students can share their responses with a partner, in small groups, or as part of a larger discussion.

Possible journal prompts include:

 - What ideas are on your mind now about how to conclude your paper?
 - Of all the ideas you recorded, which one is the most interesting to you? Why?

STRATEGY 26. Fishbowl

WRITING FOCUS: Students will discuss the relevance of the ideas in their essay and practice thinking they will use in their concluding paragraph.

RATIONALE

As thinkers and writers, students need practice contributing to and listening to a discussion.

The Fishbowl is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the Fishbowl circle while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to the process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when you want to make sure all students participate in the discussion, help students reflect on what a good discussion looks like, and provide a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics.

PROCEDURE

1. **Preparing Students for the Fishbowl.** For the purpose of helping students write conclusions for their essays, you might have students write about one of the following questions in their journals before beginning the Fishbowl discussion:
 - How do the ideas in your paper connect to life today? What is the same? What may be different?
 - What would you like someone to learn from reading your essay?
 - What did you learn from the *Educator's Guide* unit?
 - What questions are on your mind after writing this essay?

The **Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World** strategy also can be used to prepare students to participate in a Fishbowl discussion about the relevance of their essays.

2. **Setting Up the Room.** A Fishbowl requires a circle of chairs (the “fishbowl”) and enough room around the circle for the remaining students to observe what is happening in the “fishbowl.” Sometimes teachers place enough chairs for half of the students in the class to sit in the “fishbowl,” while other times teachers limit the chairs in the “fishbowl.” Typically having six to twelve chairs allows for a range of perspectives while still giving each student an opportunity to speak. The observing students often stand around the “fishbowl.”
3. **Discussing Norms and Rules of the Discussion.** There are many ways to structure a Fishbowl discussion. Sometimes half the class will sit in the “fishbowl” for 10–15 minutes, and then the teacher will say, “Switch.” At this point the listeners enter the “fishbowl,” and the speakers become the audience. Another common Fishbowl format is the “tap” system. When students on the outside of the “fishbowl” wish to join the discussion, they gently tap a student on the inside, and the two students switch roles.

Regardless of the particular rules you establish, you want to make sure these are explained to students beforehand. You also want to provide instructions for the students in the audience. What should they be listening for? Should they be taking notes? Before beginning the Fishbowl, you may wish to review guidelines for having a respectful conversation. Sometimes teachers ask audience members to pay attention to how these norms are followed by recording specific aspects of the discussion process, such as the number of interruptions, respectful or disrespectful language used, or speaking times. (Who is speaking the most? The least?)

4. **Debriefing the Fishbowl Discussion and Journal Writing.** After the discussion, you can ask students to reflect on the ideas they heard that might be relevant for the conclusions of their essays. What ideas and questions interested them the most?

F. REVISING AND EDITING TO IMPACT YOUR AUDIENCE

Use these strategies **after** the unit.

Throughout the drafting of their essay, *and* after students have a complete rough draft, students need opportunities to rethink, revise, and refine their understanding. Students can substantially improve their logic and expression when they receive clear, specific, constructive feedback.⁷ They also become better readers of their own writing when they analyze and critique others' writing—both “mentor texts” from the real world⁸ and their peers' writing.

During the revising stage, students clarify, reorganize, and strengthen the content of their paper. They might add evidence or elaborate on their analysis. Revising often involves adding transitions to connect ideas and moving content from one paragraph to another.

This section provides two sorts of “revising” strategies: peer feedback and self-assessment. Getting feedback from peers and teachers can help students recognize where their ideas are unclear and what they need to do to make their essay stronger. Students can also evaluate their own essay using the sample rubric.

Note: While Facing History sees the importance of copyediting one's writing to address grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors, in this resource we emphasize the broader challenges of helping students continue to reexamine the historical content and issues and to develop and express their thinking clearly. Teachers may want to help students understand the distinction between “revising” (which literally means “to look again”), or reworking one's ideas, and the much more specific task of copyediting to make one's writing clear and error-free.

After students are confident in the content and organization of their writing, they can move on to edit and spell-check their paper. During editing, teachers may want to provide mini-lessons on trouble spots for students (e.g., properly citing sources, using commas, etc.).

⁷ Richard Beach and Tom Friedrich, “Response to Writing,” in *Handbook of Writing Research*, ed. C. A. McArthur, S. Graham, and J. Fitzgerald (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 222–234.

⁸ Katie Wood Ray, *Study Driven: A Framework for Planning Units of Study in the Writing Workshop* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006).

STRATEGY 27. 3-2-1

WRITING FOCUS: Students will read a peer's essay and provide specific feedback. They will also receive feedback on their own writing.

RATIONALE

This activity provides a quick, structured way for students to give and receive feedback. The 3-2-1 prompt can be adjusted to suit the needs of particular students and specific assignments. Teachers have also found that using this strategy can help them streamline the feedback-giving process.

As students give each other feedback, again remind them that your focus is broader than this specific essay. You are teaching “the writer, not the writing.”⁹ Encourage peers to focus on each other's growth and persistence as writers.

PROCEDURE

1. **Answering 3-2-1 Prompt.** After students read a paper (either their own or a peer's paper), ask them to identify:
 - **Three** things the writer did well
 - **Two** next steps the writer could take to make the paper better
 - **One** question they have about the paper

You can vary this prompt to suit specific aspects of the writing journey. For example, students could be asked to identify:

- **One** thesis statement
- **Two** arguments that support the thesis
- **Three** pieces of evidence that support each argument

or

- **Three** transition words
- **Two** sources cited properly
- **One** source that still needs to be cited

Students can record their responses on editing sheets, on the essay itself, or on exit cards.

2. **Debriefing.** Use students' 3-2-1 responses to help evaluate where students may need more support for their writing. What are they able to locate in each other's papers? What questions keep popping up?

⁹ Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).

STRATEGY 28. Adding Transitions

WRITING FOCUS: Students will identify functions of transition words and phrases and add such words as needed to make their essays more clear and coherent.

RATIONALE

Transitions help the reader connect one idea to the next and often distinguish a well-organized paper from a difficult-to-read paper. Many students need instruction on how and when to add transitions to their writing. It is often helpful to wait until the revision process to add transitions to a paper.

PROCEDURE

1. **Give Students a List of Transition Words.** Many websites post lists of transition words. [Michigan State University offers one such list.](#) Here is a shorter list of transition words and phrases you might use to get started:
 - **To express a similar idea:** also, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, similarly
 - **To express something that is a result of something else:** accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, therefore, thus
 - **To demonstrate a point:** for example, for instance, for one thing
 - **To compare and contrast:** on the one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast
 - **To show when something happens in a sequence of events:** to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, next
 - **To summarize:** in conclusion, in summary, to summarize, finally
2. **Help Students Recognize the Value of Transition Words.** One way to do this is to have students read a paragraph or two from a textbook with the transition words removed. Then have them read the same text again, with the transition words inserted.
3. **Have Students Mark on Their Papers Where Transition Words Belong.** You might ask students to place a star at specific places where they expect to see transition words, such as at the beginning of each body paragraph and between sentences in the body paragraphs.
4. **Students Add Transitions to Their Papers.** Using a transition word list, ask students to add a minimum number of transition words to their paper (perhaps five to seven). They can work on this individually and then trade papers with a partner to check each other's work.

STRATEGY 29. Backwards Outline

WRITING FOCUS: Students will get feedback on their own writing, particularly the organization of their essay.

RATIONALE

When students have to create an outline of a paper they are reading, it not only helps them pay attention to the structure of the writing (main idea, supporting evidence, etc.) but also provides important feedback to the writer.

PROCEDURE

1. **Have Students Find Partners or Assign Partners.** Alternatively, you can collect papers and pass them out randomly. Just be sure that no student ends up with their own paper.
2. **Creating Backwards Outlines.** Sample directions:
 - You will create an outline of the paper you are reading.
 - The outline must include the thesis, main arguments, and supporting details you find in the paper.
 - You do not have to write in complete sentences. Just capture the main words and phrases.

It is often helpful to create a blank outline for students to fill in for this exercise. (See **Reproducible 29.1.**) You can provide a sample completed outline so that students understand that they do not have to rewrite the entire essay on the outline.

3. **Review Feedback and Add Comments.** You can collect the essays and the outlines as a way to evaluate the degree to which students can identify the different parts of a paper. Then you can add your own responses and return the paper, with the outline, to the writer.
4. **Students Revise Papers.** Based on what is missing on their outline, students should revise their paper. If this is the first time you are using this strategy, you might want to review how students will know what they need to do next. For example, if they notice a blank section of their outline, their first step can be to fill in that section.



REPRODUCIBLE 29.1 Blank Argumentative Essay Outline

(Adapt this outline to fit the assignment.)

INTRODUCTION

Hook:

Background information:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Thesis:

FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH

Main idea:

Supporting evidence:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

SECOND BODY PARAGRAPH

Main idea:

Supporting evidence:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

THIRD BODY PARAGRAPH

Main idea:

Supporting evidence:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

CONCLUSION

Thesis restated:

Why are the ideas in this paper important?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

STRATEGY 30. Conferring

WRITING FOCUS: Students will get specific help on areas of need in their writing and formulate next steps for revision.

RATIONALE

Meeting one-on-one with students is often the most effective way to help a student improve their writing. Feedback is most helpful for students when it is both oral and written, and conferences allow for both. Conferences can be short, especially if everyone comes prepared, and they typically happen during class time. They can be in the form of a conversation, where students are given time to explain their thinking. For students who need special assistance, you might also confer with them outside of class time.

As you confer with students to respond and give feedback, remember that your focus is broader than this specific essay. You are teaching “the writer, not the writing.”¹⁰ Name and celebrate students’ growth and persistence as writers.

PROCEDURE

1. **Setting Up Effective Conditions for Conferring.** One of the most important questions to think about when deciding to confer with students about their writing is: What will the rest of the class do while I am working one-on-one with students? Often teachers give students time in class to work independently on their papers or other coursework while conferences take place. Sometimes teachers schedule individual student conferences during a class test. Teachers can also invite parents or other volunteers to help out with the rest of the class on days when conferences will take place. Conferences do not work well if the teacher is constantly interrupted by off-task students, so be sure to plan this time well.
2. **Preparing for the Conference.** Conferences also work best when students use this time wisely. They only get a few minutes (typically five minutes) with the teacher, so this time should focus on areas where the student has questions and/or needs help moving to the next level. Students should bring at least three specific concerns to the conference. Sentence starters that students can complete prior to the conference include:
 - *I am confused by . . .*
 - *I don’t know how to . . .*
 - *I need help with . . .*
 - *I am stuck by . . .*
 - *How can I make _____ better?*

To help complete these statements, students should edit their own papers prior to the conference and/or have their papers edited by a peer. Students should bring these editing sheets to the conference.

¹⁰ Lucy Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).

3. **Conferring.** Students can begin the conference by explaining where they need help. When you have time to read papers in advance, you can also present one or two areas you would like to address during the conference. During the conference, many teachers help students complete a “next steps” card or section on their editing sheet, which details exactly what the student plans on doing after the conference. Students should leave a conference with two or three next steps. More than that is usually overwhelming.
4. **Post-Conference.** After conferences are over, you might debrief with the class about how the conferences went. What makes for successful conferences? What could students and the teacher do better next time? These reflections can happen in writing or through a class discussion. They often provide helpful ideas that can be used to improve conferences the next time around.

STRATEGY 31. Read-Alouds

WRITING FOCUS: Students will read another paper and provide specific feedback. They will also receive feedback on their own writing.

RATIONALE

Hearing papers read aloud can be a helpful step in the editing process because it often allows us to notice things we may miss when reading a paper silently.

PROCEDURE

1. **Have Students Pair Up.** While students can read their own paper aloud, it can also be more useful for them to hear their paper read by someone else. It is best to pair students up for this exercise.
2. **Read-Aloud (Round One).** Have students take turns hearing their paper read aloud. Before students begin, you might want to model an appropriate speed at which to read so that the listener can process the information.
3. **Note-Taking and Debrief.** After hearing their papers read aloud, students should take a few minutes to record notes on their essay about sections they want to revise. They may even read sentences aloud to themselves a second time.
4. **Repeat.** Repeat this process to give both students the opportunity to hear their paper read aloud.

G. PUBLISHING/SHARING/REFLECTING

*Use these strategies **after** the unit.*

It is important to end the writing process with an opportunity for students to share what they wrote with their peers or an outside audience. Thinkers write for many purposes; the purpose of formal writing is to express an idea to an audience. In this section, we include strategies and suggestions for how students can make their thinking public. We also include ways that students can think about what they learned about the topic and about themselves as writers.

STRATEGY 32. Reflecting on the Process

WRITING FOCUS: Students will reflect on the writing journey, celebrate their successes, and formulate a plan for growing in their writing.

RATIONALE

The purpose of formal writing is to share one's ideas with readers. When students have engaged in authentic inquiry about a topic, they need an authentic audience. Giving students time to reflect on their writing helps them learn more about their thinking and their writing styles. It also allows students to pause and celebrate the aspects of their writing they are proud of, which in turn will encourage them to approach the next writing task with confidence. Finally, it can also help them discover the gaps in their writing skills and make them more aware of their personal needs when writing another formal paper.

PROCEDURE

In journals, ask students to answer as many of the questions as they can. Have them attach their thinking to the final draft of their essays.

1. What aspect of your paper makes you the most proud?
2. What would you do differently next time? Why?
3. After working on this paper, what have you learned about being a good writer and the journey of writing?
4. What was the biggest challenge for you?
5. What tools or activities helped you write this paper?
6. What could you have done to help yourself write a better essay?
7. What else could have helped you write a better paper? What other support would you have liked from your peers or teacher?
8. What do you need to learn to take your writing to the next level?
9. Do you think being able to present your ideas clearly in writing is important? Why or why not?
10. What surprised you about writing this paper?

STRATEGY 33. Online Publishing

WRITING FOCUS: Students will share their work with a broader audience through the Internet or an internal website.

RATIONALE

Students need to share their work with an authentic audience outside of their classroom. This will help them to gather additional feedback and evaluate the power and potential of their writing.

Currently, over half of teenagers produce content for the Internet, and having students think critically about how, why, and where they share content can help students be better overall producers and consumers of online content.

PROCEDURE

1. **Thinking about Audience.** Teacher and students should think about what of their writing they would like to share with a larger audience and why. For example, students could choose the work they are most proud of, or the class could vote on a few pieces. Some guiding questions might include: Who did you think was the audience for your work on this writing project? Does knowing you will have a particular audience (outside of your teacher) require you to change or adapt your writing? Why or why not? Can you add additional resources (through links or images) that would enhance the online presence of your writing?
2. **Exploring Online Platforms.** Once students decide on an audience they want to share their work with, students may need to explore what sites, forums, or tools could help them reach that audience. Students could work in small groups to search sites that match their intended audiences. Have students search three to five sites with search key words the teacher and group come up with and then answer the following questions about each site.
 - Who runs this site?
 - What is the reputation of the organization or site?
 - How is this site used and by whom?
 - Could I/would I use this to share my schoolwork?
 - Would I receive feedback from this site?
 - What might be the benefits or drawbacks from sharing on this site?
3. Once students have explored their sites and compared answers to the questions, bring all students back to the larger group to share their findings, being sure to explain at least one of the sites to the rest of the class, including what they explored and how it works. Students and teacher may decide that their writing does not fit an external site they explored. This realization can be an important one because it shows students thinking critically about their work, the audience, and the responsibility and vulnerability that comes from sharing online.

4. The class may decide to share within the school or between classes by setting up their own internal website. This would allow student work to be posted and commented on by classmates. This approach can give students a similar experience within a controlled environment. Below are some sites you may want to employ for class writing projects.
 - **Wikispaces** is a social writing platform specifically for those in education.
 - **Edublogs** and **Blogger** are two blog publishing-tools.
 - **Ning** offers many possibilities for using social networks.

APPENDIX

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING RUBRIC GRADES 9-12 | STUDENT NAME: _____

| Criteria for Argumentative Writing | Exemplary Performance | Meeting Expectations | Needs Attention | Critical Area for Improvement |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Claims and Support</i> | | | | |
| Claim: The writer introduces precise, (knowledgeable) claim (s), (establishes the significance of the claim), and distinguishes it from opposing claim s (W.9-10(11-12).1a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Compelling claim | <input type="checkbox"/> Credible claim | <input type="checkbox"/> Weak claim | <input type="checkbox"/> No claim |
| Evidence: The writer develops claim(s) & opposing g claims (thoroughly), supplying (relevant) evidence while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both (W.9-10(11-12).1b) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ample evidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient evidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear evidence | <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence |
| Reasoning: The writer uses valid reasoning that explains how the evidence supports the claim (W.9-12.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Convincing reasoning | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-developed reasoning | <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent reasoning | <input type="checkbox"/> Invalid reasoning |
| <i>Coherence and Organization</i> | | | | |
| Organization: The writer creates organization [through paragraphs] that establishes clear relationships among (logically sequences) claim(s), opposing claims, reasons & evidence (W.9-10(11-12).1a) | <input type="checkbox"/> Offers purposeful logical organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Offers sufficient logical organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent logical organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no logical organization |
| Transitions: The writer uses words, phrases, and clauses (as well as varied syntax) to link the major selections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationship among claims (s), opposing claims, reasons and evidence (W.9-10(11-12).1c) | <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional transitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no transitions |

| Criteria for Argumentative Writing | Exemplary Performance | Meeting Expectations | Needs Attention | Critical Area for Improvement |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Conclusion: The writer provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the argument presented (W.9-12.1e) | <input type="checkbox"/> Compelling conclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-developed conclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Underdeveloped or ineffective conclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> No recognizable conclusion |
| <i>Clarity and Conventions</i> | | | | |
| Clarity: The writer produces clear and coherent writing in which the style is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (W.9-12.4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Illuminating focus on task, purpose, and audience | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear focus on task, purpose, and audience | <input type="checkbox"/> Some focus on task, purpose, and audience | <input type="checkbox"/> No discernable focus on task, purpose, and audience |
| Tone: The writer establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms, conventions, [and academic vocabulary] of the discipline in which they are writing (W.9-12.1d) | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions |
| Grammar : The writer demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage (L.9-12.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Few if any errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Some errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Several errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Numerous errors |
| Mechanics: The writer demonstrates command of the conventions of capitalization , punctuation, and spelling (L.9-12.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Few if any errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Some errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Several errors | <input type="checkbox"/> Numerous errors |
| Sources: The writer uses multiple sources, avoids plagiarism , and follows standard format for citation (W.9-12.8) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ample properly cited sources | <input type="checkbox"/> Several properly cited sources | <input type="checkbox"/> Some sources improperly cited | <input type="checkbox"/> Plagiarism of sources |