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## TASC Transition Curriculum Project

### MODULE 2: WORKSHOP 5

DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS FOR NON-FICTION LITERACY MATERIALS, UTILIZING EXCERPTS FROM SAMPLE TEST MATERIALS AND IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS AND KEY THEMES FOR INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS, INCLUDING IDENTIFYING CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE

# Instructional Objectives / Goals

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting or plot.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY RI.6.8 Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY W.6.4 Respond to nonfiction reading by producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



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# Goals

- Participants will become familiar with:
- Examining various types of nonfiction prose.
- Explain how individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact throughout a text, and analyze connections in a text.
- Examine the importance of writing a reading response to an excerpt example 1 similar to the one given in the new addition of the TASC exam, and
- Respond to another excerpt example 2, similar to the one given in the new addition of the TASC exam



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# Warm-Up / Review

How has the TASC exam changed in the areas of reading and writing? How may we help our students to build reading skills and to write reader's responses that are required on the most recent TASC exam?



# Lesson Topic 1

## Lesson Content Focus: Examine Various Types of Nonfiction Prose.

There are many different examples of nonfiction utilized on the TASC exam. Participants/students will be shown samples to explore followed by specific reading selections and questions to become more familiar with what is offered on the actual TASC exam. The value of understanding words in context will be emphasized and vocabulary related to the reading excerpts will be made available to all participants/students.



# Activity 1

- Facilitator will distribute samples of different types of nonfiction such as, letters, diaries, memoirs, essays, and legal documents. Each group will investigate (quick read) how each piece of writing while truthful (nonfiction) is written in a different genre. Facilitator explains that similar writings are likely to be on the TASC exam.
- Think, Pair, Share Activity: Participants will receive a reading excerpt, an employee “Disciplinary Action Form” and will be asked to read through it. They will also receive a “related vocabulary” sheet. Before answering the 3 questions in response to the excerpt, they will interpret vocabulary and examine sentences in the “directions” that would be needed to complete the form as required. Then pair up to answer the questions and share with the group.
- Participants will receive a nonfiction letter excerpted from My Countrymen Want Art and Address, John Adams to Abigail Adams by John Adams, 1776 with 3 questions. They will repeat the TPS process above and when they share-out, discuss how different the process was with each piece.
- Related vocabulary will be provided by the Facilitator. Participants/students will examine some of the words using examples from the text. A group discussion will ensue identifying the importance of defining vocabulary using context clues to make sense of the sentences and identify the connections for enhanced comprehension and overall analysis of the text.
- Facilitator will chart varied responses (context clues) on large chart paper and review the various types of nonfiction prose that appear on the TASC exam. (Consider reviewing the nonfiction samples).



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# Questions to Answer

- In order for the participants to understand the importance of today's activities, the following questions are provided to help facilitators review key ideas of what was presented in the lesson.
- How do the words and sentences in a nonfiction excerpt help to portray the meaning of a paragraph?
- How do using context clues help the reader to comprehend difficult vocabulary in a text?
- How do the ideas in a paragraph help a reader to analyze the text?
- What are the differences between the sample nonfiction materials that were provided to you today?



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# Wrap Up

Teacher: Utilizing charted responses, review the importance of examining parts of a text in order to determine meaning and how this relates to the author's point of view and the purpose of the text. (For participants).

Questions for students:

- Why is it important to define meanings of words within a text?
- What is a topic sentence and how does this relate to the information in a paragraph?
- How do we utilize the events in the text to determine author's purpose and point of view?

Criteria to Evaluate Student Questions: Students need to recognize how understanding vocabulary helps one to comprehend the text. By breaking down the structure of a text such as, identifying a topic sentence helps students to understand how to make connections in a text. As students examine the events in the text, they will be able to recognize the author's purpose for writing the piece.



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# Lesson Topic 2

**Lesson Content/Focus – Explain How “Individuals, Events, or Ideas” Develop and Interact Throughout a Text, and Analyze Connections in a Text.**

Facilitator will define inference/insinuation and how they are drawn from gathered information in a text. Simple pictures will be used to identify how pictures tell a story even though there is no text to state what is happening – inference. Participants/students will examine a nonfiction excerpt and a cluster diagram that allows them to gather key words, details, and evidence to help them to answer the comprehension and inference/analysis questions (similar to those on a TASC exam). Upon reading and completing activities, they will understand the process leading to making inferences and analyzing connections in a text.



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# Activity 2

- Facilitator will lead a preliminary discussion about inference and implication and how inferences are drawn from gathered information.
- Participants will be asked to work in groups of 4 or 5. They will receive 4 pictures to examine “making inferences with pictures.”
- Each group will share out their inferences made such as, graduates, missed the bus, watching a sad movie, etc.
- Each team/group will be given an excerpt and asked to read a movie review by Johanna Steinmetz, Chicago Tribune.
- Cluster Diagram Activity: Participants/students will be given a graphic organizer (cluster diagram) and be asked to write a key word in the center of the diagram and relate and write other details in the connecting bubbles to help them to make inferences about the text. Emphasis will be placed on citing evidence from the author’s point of view, and using words that might reveal a secret meaning (one that is not obvious) which will lead up to a better understanding of the excerpt through inference and analysis.
- They will examine and discuss the inferences made by comparing notes from the cluster map. Then they will be prepared to answer two questions. (Similar to a LAR question on the TASC test). The first question assesses comprehension and the second assesses making inference/analysis.
- Group findings will be shared out and will serve as a review as to how inferences develop ideas presented in a text noting the importance of making connections between key words, individuals and events that aid readers in comprehension and analysis of the text. The facilitator will share the correct responses to the questions and the reasons why to emphasize the difference between assessing comprehension questions v inference/analysis questions.



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# Questions to Answer

For Teachers:

How does citing evidence from a text support a student to make inferences?

How could students discover connections between unsaid statements in a picture and unstated information in a sentence? What is this called? (Making inferences which leads to analysis).

What kinds of hints in a picture or in a sentence assist a reader to determine inferences?

Student Questions:

- What is an inference? Can you provide me with an example of inference from the text you read today?
- Even though pictures do not include text, what do they imply? How does this relate to inference?
- How does the use of a cluster diagram help you to gather information and formulate ideas about a text? Did the use of the diagram cluster help you to make inferences?
- What did you learn from others in the class when they shared the answers from questions about the excerpt?
- Do you understand the difference between a “comprehension” question and an “inference/analysis” question?



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# Wrap Up

- Facilitator will identify a word or phrase from the text and ask the participants/students what this means and how have they come to that awareness. Facilitator will discuss the importance of making inferences to establish a deeper meaning of the text and review the concepts learned in today's lesson.
- Identify one important word or phrase that the author introduces in the reading excerpt presented today. What does this word or phrase mean? What clues caused you to arrive at that answer?
- What clues or hints were presented in the pictures that led you to interpret what was going on in that picture? (Understanding the text or picture by making inferences allows a student to examine the details and analyze what is being stated in a visual piece or in a written text.)
- Write down one main concept or idea that you acquired from today's lesson.



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# Lesson Topic 3

## Content/Focus – Examine the Importance of Writing a Reading Response to an Excerpt

Example 1 (similar to the one given in the new addition of the TASC exam). Facilitator will discuss how arguments are presented in nonfiction prose. Participants/students will study propaganda and be able to define its meaning. They will be able to separate fact from opinion to trace and evaluate an argument and recognize how outlining information presented in a nonfiction text will support them in writing a constructed reader's response.



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# Activity 3

- Facilitator will have a preliminary discussion with participants about non-fiction prose that presents an argument.
- Propaganda Technique: Participants will receive and read through an organizer to become familiar with how propaganda is used by authors to persuade readers such as bandwagon, loaded language, etc.
- Participants will read an excerpt from Scholastic Should Bullies' Parents Pay?.
- Fact v Opinion Activity: Participants will use the graphic organizer to separate fact from opinion. They will be asked to look through the Scholastic article again to find a fact (something we know to be true) and write the information under the "fact" side of the graphic organizer. They will then be asked to find information in the article that is clearly an opinion (a belief or an outlook someone has) and write the statement down under the "opinion" side of the graphic. This will help students discern fact from opinion and will help them to organize their thoughts for an intelligent discussion about the article and to compose a constructed reader's response to the article.
- Trace and Evaluate the Argument Activity: Participants will work in small groups to determine what the author's argument is by evaluating their graphic organizers and using the excerpt they have read.
- Participants will formulate 2-4 sentences responding to the excerpt they have read.
- A few volunteers will discuss and share what they have written and explain how the above process helped in organizing their writing.



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# Questions to Answer

- Teacher: How does separating fact from opinion help to trace and evaluate an argument presented in a text?

## Student Questions:

- Some nonfiction texts present information, while others use information to present an argument. What is an author trying to do when he/she writes in this way? (The author wants to persuade the reader to take his/her position in the argument being presented.)
- Why do authors of argumentative nonfiction use propaganda to persuade their readers? (Propaganda used by writers' is a way of marketing their way of thinking.)
- How does separating fact from opinion help to trace and evaluate an argument in the Article: Should Bullies' Parents Pay? (It allows the reader to recognize how the author provides the audience with an argument based on both fact and fiction guiding the reader to formulate his/her own opinion and position based on the information provided.)
- Was it easier to construct a reader's response to the article after completing the "fact v opinion" graphic organizer? (Answers will vary – most will agree that by organizing information and separating fact from opinion it simplified the writing process.)



# Wrap Up

- Utilize the following questions as a review for today's lesson
- Why does an author utilize specific language to persuade a reader to take his/her side?
- Define propaganda and how the author uses this to his/her advantage.
- How does a student distinguish fact from opinion in order to trace an argument?
- What is one way to formulate an effective writing response to a nonfiction excerpt?
- Participants and students will be able to correctly answer all of the above by drawing information learned during today's lesson.



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# Lesson Topic 4

**Lesson Content Focus – Examine the Importance of Writing a Reading Response to an Excerpt Example 2** (similar to the one given in the new addition of the TASC” exam).

Participants/students will read a nonfiction article to discern whether or not video games are a sport. A Venn diagram will be completed to further participants/students to get the picture of their position on this topic, while preparing them to construct a writing response with information extracted from the text.



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# Activity 4

- Participants will be given a short reading excerpt from Scholastic titled Are Video Games Sports?
- Groups of 4/5 will write and discuss the pros and cons activity at the bottom of the article.
- A Venn diagram “My views/Views we share/Their views” will be handed out. Group members will work together to complete the diagram by transferring information from the pros and cons activity and the article itself to the graphic organizer.
- On a separate piece of paper participants will write 4 – 5 sentences personally responding to the information drawn from the text.
- Volunteers will share out their written reader’s responses to the article.



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# Questions to Answer

## Teacher:

- How does outlining ideas and information from a text help to produce clear and coherent writing?
- How does organizing information given in a text enable a writer to elaborate on his/her own ideas in a short piece of writing?
- How does this lesson/activity relate to the TASC exam? (The May 2015 TASC exam added a “reader’s response” question in the LAR part of the exam requiring examinees to write a response to an excerpt.)

## Student Questions:

- Do you think video games are sports?
- What does the article: Are Video Games sports? Say to make you believe that they are? (Pros) What does the article say to cause you to believe they are not? (Cons) Students will have the answers from the lesson they did in class.
- Did you find that organizing your thoughts and ideas made it easier to write a few sentences that included your position about the article?
- Are you pleased with your written reader’s response? What could you do to make it better? (Include my opinion; make corrections; revise before submitting, etc.)



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# Wrap up

- Understanding how an author’s perspective may cause a reader to be persuaded into believing something that may not be so. Participants will write a few sentences persuading someone else to do what they want. They will pair up to critique each other’s sentences. (By performing this task participants/students will have the opportunity to view an argument from an author’s perspective. This affords them the chance to discover the strategies it takes to convince a reader of your views or position about a topic.)
- Review how gathering pertinent information from a text, determining your own views, the author’s views, and those views that both the reader and writer share, will aid the facilitator/student in developing organized writing that is specific to the task. They will draw on experiences from today’s lesson, such as writing the pros and cons, information that was compared by using a Venn diagram, and the writing process which included utilizing outlined information.



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# Overall Wrap Up

- 1. Teacher/Participants will reflect on the goals of the workshop and discuss ways to incorporate various strategies into their personal classrooms.
- Anticipation guide – Establish a purpose for reading and create post-reading reflections and discussion.
- Have a short focused discussion about each of the goals in today’s lesson with the question: Have the goals of each lesson been met?
- 2. Students: Have participants interview each other asking, “What are the component parts of nonfiction and how may a student respond to it in writing?”
- See attachment “provide Access to” for implementation of lessons for ESL, ELL and other varied level learners.



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# Project Homework

- Review lessons from today’s workshop in order to create classroom lesson plans incorporating the new materials.
- Explore the following websites for additional ideas and activities and printable handouts. For example, the various nonfiction reading worksheets found in “testprep” may be substituted in previous lessons.
- For ELL or ESOL students consider accessing “readingrockets” to increase comprehension of nonfiction materials.
- Use “abcteach” for additional reading comprehension worksheets to be substituted in the above lessons.
- “Scholastic” materials may not only be used in the above lessons because they have nonfiction articles for every level student, they also have specific comprehension strategies for reading nonfiction.
- If teachers would like to make certain that the materials they are using are common core aligned go to “teacher.scholastic” see website below.
- Since students will need to be prepared to compose a constructed written response on each part of the TASC exam consider a common core constructed response organizer at “teacher.depaul” see website below.
- The NYTimes has a learning network where extensive articles are available to be substituted in the above lessons. For preparation of future lessons they also offer sample lesson plans.
- Ultimately all students regardless of level are preparing for the culminating assessment – the TASC exam. Teachers may go to “tasctest” below to incorporate sample test items in their classroom assessments.



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- [www.testprep.about.com/od/Nonfiction](http://www.testprep.about.com/od/Nonfiction) - nonfiction reading worksheets
- [www.readingrockets.org/...e/increasing-ell-student](http://www.readingrockets.org/...e/increasing-ell-student) - Increasing ELL student reading comprehension with nonfiction
- [www.abcteach.com/...tory/reading-comprehension-16-2-1](http://www.abcteach.com/...tory/reading-comprehension-16-2-1) - Printable reading comprehension worksheets
- [www.scholastic.com/...hers/article3-comprehension](http://www.scholastic.com/...hers/article3-comprehension) - Comprehension strategies for reading nonfiction
- [www.teacher.scholastic.com/SRI](http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/SRI) - Common core alignment
- [www.teacher.depaul.edu](http://www.teacher.depaul.edu) – Common core constructed response organizer
- [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) – go to Learning Network, extensive articles and lesson plans
- [www.tasctest.com](http://www.tasctest.com) – sample test items



# Contact Information

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