

Title: Moving Research-based Writing to Creative Writing
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Subject Area/ Grade: English/ 11th Grade

Students will use the Next Generation English Language Arts standards to conduct research into authors' text, ideas, and stories, and write analyses, reports, presentations.

Goals

I'd like my students to feel that they have creative control over the project.

I'd like my students to understand that work is involved, but there should be joy in the work.

Students should feel pride in their final products because of both of the aforementioned goals.

Content Area and Standards

Next Generation ELA Standards

11-12R3: In literary texts, analyze the impact of author's choices. In informational texts, analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop.

RH4: Interpret words and phrases, including disciplinary language, as they are developed in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

RH7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

11-12W1: Write arguments to support claims that analyze substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

WHST1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

WHST4: Write responses to texts and to events (past and present), ideas, and theories that include personal, cultural, and thematic connections.

WHST5: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a

question (including a self-generated question), analyze a topic, or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

11-12W7: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas; avoid plagiarism, overreliance on one source, and follow a standard format for citation.

11-12SL4: Present claims, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective; alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed; organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Activity

The situation: You are living in North America just as the Revolutionary War is about to erupt. You will embody a particular character of your choosing and convince an audience to either support the colonies in the fight or remain loyal to England. This is your **PURPOSE**.

You should consider a persona to adopt for your paper. You will write as though speaking from this character's perspective. You will research how different people might have felt about certain events in history. For instance, what might a typical colonist say about this? A British Soldier? A Native American? An African American? An immigrant from Eastern Europe? Etc.

The character is *your creation*, but it should be based on research. Understand how different people might have felt at the time.

You have many options on the type of work you wish to write; here are some possibilities:

- Construct a speech to deliver to your colonial government, as Patrick Henry did.
- Distribute a pamphlet in the style of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," urging colonists to fight.
- Write a letter to a close relative or spouse, as you might find in the correspondence between John and Abigail Adams.

This is your **AUDIENCE**.

You may choose a style not listed here. In any case, construct an approach comfortable to you, but keep it argumentative in nature.

The Process:

1. Research

You need clear background on the issue. Your job is to find *two* sources (minimum) to provide you with the background knowledge necessary for speaking with authority on the matter. You might consider researching a specific event (Boston Tea Party, Battle of Lexington & Concord, Intolerable Acts, etc.) and understanding a) what happened, b) why it happened, and c) how different people might have reacted to it.

You must use two sources minimum, but you may need more.

- **one (1) primary source** (historical documents, letters, firsthand accounts, copies of colonial legislation, etc.)
- **one (1) secondary source** (history book, modern day historians, etc.)

The purpose of the research is to understand what exactly was going on and to understand how and why different people responded to these events at the time. It gives your paper some authenticity.

2. Argumentation

You're writing an argumentative piece in the style of what we've read in class.

Therefore, follow the guidelines of an **Argumentative Essay**:

- Draw on controversial or debatable subject matter.
- States the problem or issue, sometimes tracing its cause.
- State the position that the paper will take (make a claim).
- Offer supporting details that the position taken is the reasonable one to hold (evidence).
- Anticipate objections to the position then acknowledge and refute them (counterclaim).

Consider the classical argument structure: Exordium, Narratio, Conformatio, Refutatio, and Peroratio.

3. Rhetoric

Demonstrate your understanding of the rhetorical techniques that we've studied in class! Show that you're a master orator! Utilize some of these techniques in your writing! You may:

- ask rhetorical questions
- employ parallelism, anaphora, etc.
- use restatement
- utilize pathos, logos, and ethos

- etc.

Other Guidelines:

- Establish a character using methods recommended by Hector Elizondo; maintain that character throughout the piece.
- Soundly employ rhetorical techniques for specific effect.
- Incorporate primary and secondary sources unobtrusively into your work.
- 600-700 words are appropriate.
- Use MLA format and include a Works Cited page.
- Appropriately appeal to *pathos*, *logos*, and *ethos* as called for by the task.
- Follow the conventions of standard written English.
- Submit to Turnitin.com on the due date.

Joy2Learn Artists /Videos that Support Project

Hector Elizondo, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, An Actor's Tool

Art Forms that May Be Included

The project is a writing project, but it's designed to move research-based writing into the realm of creative writing. The students will choose the voice, but must employ some of the rhetorical techniques they've studied in class.

Connections to Students Passion Areas and Interests

It's clear to me that students hate research; this is an attempt to allow students to take on a creative persona. Students might opt to create characters with whom they might share a background. Not every student in the classroom are descendents of British colonial subjects; how might others see the conflict?

Materials Needed

Access to laptops / devices

Research database

Google Docs (for peer revision)

Collaborators

During the writing process, students will work together for peer review exercises.

Points in which students will share progress with groups include:

- Early in the research process - share character concepts and sources
- "Down Draft" - students will collaborate on their first drafts, focusing primarily on

structure and voice.

- “Up Draft” - upon completion of the up draft, students will revisit structure and voice, plus pay closer attention to technical skills such as use of rhetorical techniques and proper citation.
- “Down Draft” - just before the final draft is due, students will have the opportunity to have a second (or third or fourth) “pair of eyes” to catch errors they may have missed.

Peer revision will occur over multiple days; it’s never a “one class” activity.

Assessment

[Click here to see the rubric](#); it evaluates Meaning / Organization / Language / Development / Conventions, or, as my district calls it, “MOLD-C.” This was a district mandated rubric format.

Timeline

Week 1: Conduct initial research and establish a character. Share initial research with collaborative groups.

Week 2: Continue research; construct a “Down Draft.” Share draft with collaborative groups.

Week 3: Construct an “Up Draft;” collaborative groups engage in peer revision activities; deliver speeches to your groups “in character.”

Week 4: final conferencing, last chance for extra help; construct your “Dental Draft” and submit.

Other Notes

I would likely use the videos with Hector Elizondo as an in-class lesson on establishing a character and setting up the “rhetorical situation” (understanding audience, speaker, purpose, message, occasion, context, tone, etc.).

During the writing process, particularly during the peer revision process, students will be able to deliver their speeches to their groups “in character.”