Selected Excerpts from
Tools for Teachers:
Engaging in Academic Writing
&
Using Evaluation to Support
Mastery in Academic Writing
Implementing Key Shifts in the
Common Core State Standards—Parts Four & Five

For more information on Tools for Teachers, contact Joaquin Tamayo, Assistant Director of the Aspen Education & Society Program, at joaquin.tamayo@aspeninst.org.
Key Design Considerations

CCR and grade-specific standards
The CCR standards anchor the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed. The K-12 grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school. The CCR and high school (grades 9-12) standards work in tandem to define the college and career readiness line—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity. Hence, both should be considered when developing college and career readiness assessments.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards, retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades, and work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the CCR standards.

Grade levels for K-8; grade bands for 9-10 and 11-12
The Standards use individual grade levels in kindergarten through grade 8 to provide useful specificity; the Standards use two-year bands in grades 9-12 to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design.

A focus on results rather than means
By emphasizing required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. Thus, the Standards do not mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards.

An integrated model of literacy
Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout this document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.

Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole
To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section.

Shared responsibility for students’ literacy development
The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school. The K-5 standards include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including but not limited to ELA. The grades 6-12 standards are divided into two sections, one for ELA and the other for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects the unique, time-honored place of ELA teachers in developing students’ literacy skills while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other areas must have a role in this development as well.

Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K-12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding.

The Standards are not alone in calling for a special emphasis on informational text. The 2009 reading framework of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) requires a high and increasing proportion of informational text on its assessment as students advance through the grades.
Why Key Design Considerations Matter (Slide 6)

Critical Point
Key design considerations of the CCSS have important implications for writing instruction that can contribute to the development of all students' grade-level writing proficiency.

Step-by-Step Instructions
• Explain to participants that the writers of the CCSS intentionally designed the standards to ensure that all students are engaged in frequent opportunities to develop grade-level writing proficiency. The Key Design Considerations of the CCSS, which can be found on page 4 the introduction to the standards, lay out three specific considerations with important implications for teachers’ writing instruction:

1. A school-wide approach to writing instruction integrates the CCSS for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language in all grades.
2. Daily writing instruction is a shared responsibility across the curriculum to ensure students can communicate understanding effectively across a variety of subjects and for a variety of purposes.
3. Research is woven through the CCSS to ensure that students develop the abilities “to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas” that are essential for “college, workforce training, and life in a technological society.” (CCSS, p. 4)

• As facilitator, you might choose to have participants read page 4 from the CCSS that lists the Key Design Considerations. The three considerations discussed on this slide implicate writing instruction most directly and should be deeply understood by all educators. Review and clarify the slide as necessary to ensure that participants’ understanding is clear.

• In small groups, ask participants to take four minutes to discuss the three key design considerations and the extent to which they compare and contrast with typical writing instruction in their own classroom and at their school. Ask participants to chart their reflections so they can reference the current state of their writing instruction throughout the rest of the session. The point here is to help participants begin to appreciate the magnitude of the shift in instruction that is likely to be required in their context as the CCSS for writing are implemented.

• Summarize the conversation and pose clarifying questions to check for understanding.

Words of Wisdom
Structure facilitation of this slide to generate as much interest in and excitement as possible around the notion of CCSS-aligned writing instruction, which might be quite foreign to any number of educators. Speak with clarity, authority, and passion about the need for academic writing at each grade level and the shared nature of an effective approach to CCSS writing instruction.
Three Types of CCSS Writing (Slide 10)

Three Types of CCSS Writing

Writing Standard 1: Arguments use reasoning and evidence to defend a point of view or position and convince others to adopt that perspective or agree with a claim.

Writing Standard 2: Informative/Explanatory Writing aims to convey understanding about a subject, process, or concept.

Writing Standard 3: Narratives convey experiences about real or imagined stories, individuals, events, or procedures which can stand on their own or be integrated into explanations or arguments.

Critical Point

Students are expected to engage in three types of writing per the CCSS: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing. Each are defined in the context of Anchor Writing Standards 1-3.

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Explain that the CCSS require students to engage in three specific writing types: argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing, which are defined by Anchor Writing Standards 1-3 and their related sub-standards. Remind participants that all Anchor Writing Standards 1-10 apply to students in all grades K-12.

- Review each Anchor Writing Standard 1-3 with participants as stated on the slide. Explain that each writing type implies a specific purpose; it’s critical that educators understand the distinct purposes implied by each writing type in order to design effective instruction.

- Be sure to stress the final point made relative to narrative writing: that narrative can stand on its own or can also be integrated with the other two writing types. It’s important that participants understand that the writing types do not exist in isolation and can be integrated according to task and purpose, including arguments and informative/explanatory writing.

- Should questions arise as to whether the three CCSS writing types encompass the totality of the academic writing that students are expected to produce, explain that the CCSS identify the writing types that are foundational to college and career readiness. When engaging in academic writing, students should be supported to meet writing expectations as defined by the CCSS.

- Before moving on, ask if there are any questions, or pose some questions to help participants synthesize their thoughts.

Words of Wisdom

There may be a need to spend additional time helping participants think through the shifts in understanding that may be prompted by their exploration of the three CCSS writing types. It’s important that participants have time and space to process new terms and definitions and how might they apply to their instructional process.
Tools for Teachers: Using Evaluation to Support Mastery in Academic Writing
Implementing Key Shifts in the CCSS—Part Five

Facilitator’s Guide
January 2014
Critical Point

The CCSS’ Key Design Considerations make the imperative of teaching and learning clear: in order to achieve academic readiness for college and careers, students must be supported in mastering progressions of grade-level knowledge and skills.

Step-by-Step Instructions

• Ask participants to turn to page four of the CCSS entitled, “Key Design Considerations.” For participants who have not experienced Part Four of “Tools for Teachers” on academic writing, briefly explain that these “Key Design Considerations” are the core principles according to which the standards were designed and written.

• In pairs or small groups, ask participants to read the first section of this page, “CCR and grade-specific standards.” Give groups three minutes to discuss their understanding of this section.

• Next, click to reveal the pop-out in which the phrase regarding mastery is highlighted in yellow. Read the sentence out loud to the group with emphasis on the highlighted text. On chart paper, write the following questions for the group:
  - How do the CCSS’ grade-level progressions support student mastery of the standards grade by grade?
  - What do these progressions suggest for how students are expected to master the standards and how you are expected to teach to the standards at each grade?

• Instruct participants to take seven minutes to write their answers to these questions, followed by another seven minutes for reflection with their partners and to prepare one member of their group to share a synthesis of the group’s thinking. The goal here is to enable participants to understand that the CCSS envision mastery along the grade-level progressions articulated by the standards, with students mastering basic to more complex knowledge and skills within and across grade levels.

• Allow time for each group to share its reflection on the questions and ask participants to refer explicitly to the text and/or to other participants’ statements in order to substantiate their claims. This discussion is intended to ensure that all participants grasp the developmental nature of the CCSS and how important the concept of mastery is to the intent and design of the standards.

Words of Wisdom

Before moving on to the next slide, be sure that all participants possess a working understanding of the concept of mastery and its deep connection to the CCSS. Through their writing and verbal responses, participants should be able to articulate the developmental nature of the grade-level progressions and some of the implications for CCSS-aligned instruction. If helpful, refer to the grade-level standards for illustrative purposes.
The Standards aim to align instruction with this framework so that many more students than at present can meet the requirements of college and career readiness. In K–5, the Standards follow NAEP’s lead in balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. In accord with NAEP’s growing emphasis on informational texts in the higher grades, the Standards demand that a significant amount of reading of informational texts take place in and outside the ELA classroom. Fulfilling the Standards for 6–12 ELA requires much greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional. Because the ELA classroom must focus on literature (stories, drama, and poetry) as well as literary nonfiction, a great deal of informational reading in grades 6–12 must take place in other classes if the NAEP assessment framework is to be matched instructionally. To measure students’ growth toward college and career readiness, assessments aligned with the Standards should adhere to the distribution of texts across grades cited in the NAEP framework.

NAEP likewise outlines a distribution across the grades of the core purposes and types of student writing. The 2011 NAEP framework, like the Standards, cultivates the development of three mutually reinforcing writing capacities: writing to persuade, to explain, and to convey real or imagined experience. Evidence concerning the demands of college and career readiness gathered during development of the Standards concurs with NAEP’s shifting emphases: standards for grades 9–12 describe writing in all three forms, but, consistent with NAEP, the overwhelming focus of writing throughout high school should be on arguments and informative/explanatory texts.

It follows that writing assessments aligned with the Standards should adhere to the distribution of writing purposes across grades outlined by NAEP.

Focus and coherence in instruction and assessment

While the Standards delineate specific expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, each standard need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task. For example, when editing writing, students address Writing standard 5 (“Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach”) as well as Language standards 1–3 (which deal with conventions of standard English and knowledge of language). When drawing evidence from literary and informational texts per Writing standard 9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading. When discussing something they have read or written, students are also demonstrating their speaking and listening skills. The CCR anchor standards themselves provide another source of focus and coherence.

The same ten CCR anchor standards for Reading apply to both literary and informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The ten CCR anchor standards for Writing cover numerous text types and subject areas. This means that students can develop mutually reinforcing skills and exhibit mastery of standards for reading and writing across a range of texts and classrooms.

---

1The percentages on the table reflect the sum of student reading, not just reading in ELA settings. Teachers of senior English classes, for example, are not required to devote 70 percent of reading to informational texts. Rather, 70 percent of student reading across the grade should be informational.

2As with reading, the percentages in the table reflect the sum of student writing, not just writing in ELA settings.
**Critical Point**
The CCSS Anchor Standards discuss the importance of mastery across the curriculum—that is, in English Language Arts as well as literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**
- It’s critical for participants to understand that mastery of the CCSS is not confined to the ELA standards. True mastery of the CCSS must be demonstrated across the curriculum, as per the Key Design Considerations. Your participants should therefore understand that supporting students’ literacy development is the task of all teachers in all content areas and at each grade.
- Ask participants to turn to page five of the CCSS and read the very last paragraph on the page. Click to reveal the pop-out on this slide, which highlights that section. Read the selection out loud with emphasis on the text highlighted in yellow.
- Now that participants have discussed how mastery is supported along the CCSS’ grade-level progressions and have just read about the standards’ cross-curricular design, ask them to take five minutes to articulate in writing how they think the CCSS are defining mastery in 25 words or less. This activity is sometimes called a “gist statement” and can be used effectively to help learners synthesize their thinking.
- Now, in small groups, participants should take another five minutes to share their “gist statement” and collaborate with their colleagues to write a new 25-word “gist statement” that captures the group’s best thinking about the CCSS’ definition of mastery. Groups should write their new “gist statement” on chart paper.
- Post the group’s statements around the room and facilitate a five-minute gallery walk to allow all participants a chance to read and think about their colleagues’ definitions of CCSS mastery.
- Next, ask participants to return to their small groups in order to refine their “gist statement” based on their reading and reflection of the other groups’ statements.
- Facilitate a brief discussion to allow groups to share their refined “gist statements” on their definition of mastery according to the CCSS. This activity serves as a formative assessment that should allow you to discern the depth of participants’ understanding of the role of mastery in CCSS-aligned instruction. Extend and deepen participants’ understanding of mastery as necessary before moving on.
- Solicit two or three volunteers to share a general synthesis of the discussions with the group.

**Words of Wisdom**
As noted on page six of this facilitator’s guide, there is a robust research base supporting the CCSS’ mastery-based design principles. If helpful, you may augment this professional learning experience by sharing with participants selected readings that will further illuminate the definition of mastery in the context of K-12 education. Participants should understand that research over the years has consistently shown positive effects of mastery-based teaching and learning.
Time to Reflect (Slide 7)

**Critical Point**

It’s important to understand what the CCSS say about mastery and what some of the implications are for daily teaching and learning.

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

- Explain to participants that at the end of each portion of the session, they will have an opportunity to reflect on what they’ve read, discussed, and thought about thus far. It’s now time to reflect on the implications of “rich tasks” for daily instruction and assessment practices.
- Review the numbered summary points on the slide and then ask participants to discuss in small groups or pairs their definition of mastery of the CCSS, why it’s important to understand how the CCSS define mastery, and the implications for teaching and learning in their classrooms. Questions (posted on chart paper) for participants to consider are:
  - What are the implications of mastery of the CCSS for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in my classroom and at my school?
  - What are some specific actions I can take to better align my instruction to the demands and expectations of CCSS? What might be some barriers to taking such actions? How will I overcome them?
  - What kind of school-based leadership and extra supports will I need to be sure all students’ progress toward mastery of the CCSS?
- Close this portion of the module by engaging the whole group in a modified “Final Word” protocol:
  - Ask each small group to summarize its major takeaways in three sentences or less.
  - Small groups should chart their takeaways and choose a volunteer to share their “final word.”
  - Facilitators should use participants’ answers in order to help make critical connections throughout this professional learning experience.
- Solicit a couple volunteers to synthesize the discussion and bring the reflection to a close.

**Words of Wisdom**

Reflection time is critically important to consolidating new learning. Be sure to provide participants sufficient time to reflect on their learning, including reflection on their hopes, fears, and thoughts about engaging in this important work. Moreover, participants’ responses are valuable data. Be sure to track their learning over the course of the session to help participants make important connections and seize on critical “ah ha” moments.
How is mastery of the CCSS assessed? (Slide 9)

**Critical Point**
The CCSS do not say much about instruction and assessment, but the introduction to the CCSS offers an important clue: “Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task” (p.5).

**Step-by-Step Instructions**
- The goal of this slide is for participants to identify the concept of “rich tasks” as defined by the CCSS. For more information on rich tasks, see Aspen’s presentation, “Rich Tasks for Real Kids,” here: http://www.aspendrl.org/portal/browse/DocumentDetail?documentId=1643.
- Open by acknowledging that at this point in the session, participants are probably wondering how they should think about evaluating mastery once they align their curriculum and instruction to the intent and design of the CCSS. After all, this module is focused on using evaluation to support student mastery in writing.
- Explain that while the CCSS do not say very much at all about instruction or assessment, the introduction to the CCSS offers an important clue.
- Draw participants’ attention to the section of page five of the CCSS entitled, “Focus and coherence in instruction and assessment.” Ask them take two minutes to read the first paragraph of that section. Help the group begin to unpack their reading by asking this question:
  - *What does the Introduction say about how you can teach for and evaluate progress toward mastery of the standards?*
- Your essential goal here is to support the whole group in identifying the concept of “rich tasks” as a means of instructing and evaluating progress toward mastery of the CCSS.
- Check for questions before moving to the next slide.

**Words of Wisdom**
Facilitators are encouraged to refer participants to Aspen’s presentation on rich tasks, “Rich Tasks for Real Kids,” in order to extend their own professional learning.
What are “rich tasks”? (Slide 10)

Critical Point
“Rich tasks” address multiple standards—sometimes across content areas—and provide students meaningful and engaging opportunities for feedback and deeper learning.

Step-by-Step Instructions
- In order to deepen participants’ understanding of the nature rich tasks as defined by the CCSS, ask participants to read the text of the slide as you click through the text and read aloud.
- In pairs or small groups, participants should consider for 15 minutes the following questions (posted on chart paper) in discussion and in writing. Groups can assign one member to be the recorder who will take notes and another to be the synthesizer who will share small group takeaways with the larger group.
  - How do “rich tasks”, as defined by the CCSS, compare and contrast to the kind of assignments you currently ask students to complete?
  - What value might there be in evaluating progress toward mastery of the standards through a “rich task” as opposed to teaching discrete standards or within discrete content areas (e.g. ELA vs. history or science)?
  - Why is feedback important to students’ progress toward mastery of the CCSS? How specific should feedback be to drive progress toward mastery?
  - What are some specific ways in which the teaching and learning process needs to shift for teachers and students in order to incorporate learning through “rich tasks”?
- Close the session with sharing of small group syntheses and follow-up probing questions and clarifications as necessary. Insist that participants refer to the text in order to substantiate any claims they make.
- Before moving on to the next slide, synthesize the discussion for the group and share your own personal ah-ha about rich tasks and instruction.

Words of Wisdom
Understanding the nature of rich tasks may prove challenging for any number of your participants. Be sure to support their understanding by encouraging exploration of the standards throughout the sessions and when they are working in pairs or small groups. The more familiar they become with the layout and content of the CCSS, the more able they will be to imagine how to align their instruction to the demand and expectations of the standards.
Evidence in Argumentative Writing

9-10 Grade Band Argumentative Writing Task

Were the achievements and growth of the Industrial Revolution Era worth the cost to society? After reading primary and secondary sources pertaining to the British Industrial Revolution, write an argumentative essay that addresses the question. Support your position with evidence from the texts. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.
Sample Task (Slide 12)

Critical Point
This 9th-10th grade sample argumentative writing task is drawn from a Literacy Design Collaborative exemplar module.

Step-by-Step Instructions
- Distribute the handout entitled “Evidence in Argumentative Writing.” Introduce this slide by explaining that this 9th-10th grade sample task in history is drawn from a Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) exemplar module. The complete module can be found on the LDC website here: http://www.literacydesigncollaborative.org/resources/sample-modules/history-social-studies/
- Read the task aloud to the group, or ask for a volunteer to read the task aloud.
- In pairs or small groups, instruct participants to take six minutes to unpack this task and determine what makes it a “rich task” according to the definition that the group previously discussed. Groups should identify at least two or three characteristics of the task indicating that it is a rich task, and then designate one member of their group to share their reflections with the larger group. Insist that participants refer to evidence in the task and the CCSS’ grade-level standards to substantiate their claims.
- Bring the group back together and solicit initial small group reactions to this task. Pose clarifying questions and ask participants to identify explicit evidence in the task and in the CCSS to substantiate their claims. Encourage participants to ask questions of each other for clarification and deeper understanding as necessary.
- Explain that the group will now proceed to further explore the task together to highlight how this task qualifies as a rich, CCSS-aligned task.

Words of Wisdom
The Literacy Design Collaborative modules, which can be accessed free of charge on the LDC website, provide helpful models of how educators can align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to rich tasks like these in a way that supports all students toward mastery of the CCSS.
What makes this a “rich task”? (Slide 13)

Critical Point
This sample argumentative writing task is a rich task because it addresses multiple standards in reading and writing; involves research using multiple sources of evidence; and has possible cross-curricular connections with ELA and/or science.

Step-by-Step Instructions
• Explain that it’s now time to unpack this task together to discover the many aspects that make it a rich task well aligned to the CCSS. Participants should draw upon their small group’s unpacking of this task in order to support the following whole-group discussion.
  • First, ask first for identification of the specific reading standards this task addresses. Click to reveal the bubble listing the reading standards that can be addressed through this task: Reading Standards for Literacy in History 1, 2, 4, 6, 7-9, and 10. Participants may have other suggestions. Be sure they substantiate their claims during discussion.
  • Next, ask for identification of the specific writing standards this task addresses. Click to reveal the bubble listing the writing standards that can be addressed through this task: Writing Standards for History, Science, and Technical Subjects 1, 4, 7-9, and 10.
  • As you click through the slide, build on the discussion to help all participants understand that this is a rich task because it:
    o Addresses multiple standards in reading and writing.
    o Involves research using multiple sources.
    o There are possible cross-curricular with ELA and/or science, depending on how the curriculum is structured.
  • Now, ask the small groups to consider what kind of instruction could help to create a “bridge” between this CCSS-aligned task and a challenging opportunity for students to demonstrate progress toward mastery of the CCSS. Insist that participants refer to the task and/or the CCSS to substantiate their claims. Facilitators should chart participants’ responses.
  • Close this activity by soliciting three or four reflections from the small groups. Pose clarifying questions as necessary.
  • Before moving on, you may choose to suggest that the tasks analyses the group just performed can be done with students by asking them to identify the skills and knowledge they will need to demonstrate in order to successfully complete a given rich task.

Words of Wisdom
Encourage participants to explore the LDC website for many additional sample rich tasks as well as complete modules that illustrate effective instructional and assessment approaches that can support all students’ progress toward mastery of the CCSS.
Critical Point

CCSS-aligned instruction can be supported by employing rubrics keyed to the expectations of the CCSS, which should be used to provide specific information for improvement.

Step-by-Step Instructions

- Distribute to all participants the packet of CCSS-aligned rubrics, which includes rubrics aligned to each CCSS writing type as well as to each grade band with the exception of K-2.
- Ask participants to take 10 minutes to explore the various rubrics in pairs or small groups. Answer any and all questions that arise about the content of the rubrics.
- Explain that these rubrics are tools that teachers can use to evaluate student progress toward mastery of the CCSS.
- Help participants notice how the criteria on the left-hand column are explicitly aligned to the CCSS for the specific grade-band, with four performance levels identified for each criterion.
- In their small groups, give participants another seven minutes to consider the implications of these CCSS-aligned rubrics by answering the following questions (posted on chart paper):
  - How would the specific information these rubrics can provide support a student’s progress toward mastery of the CCSS?
  - What role does specific information for improvement play in CCSS-aligned instruction?
  - How can these rubrics support student progress toward mastery as they work to complete rich tasks?
- Ask volunteers from the small groups to share their responses to the prompts above. Insist that participants cite evidence from the rubrics and/or the CCSS to support their answers.
- Summarize the conversation and pose clarifying questions to check for understanding.

Words of Wisdom

If the topic of grading surfaces during the discussion of these rubrics, let participants know that while they can certainly use the rubrics for summative purposes—that is, to assign grades to student work—the essential purpose of these rubrics is to serve as tools for providing individual students, in the words of Black and Wiliam, “advice on what he or she can do to improve” in order to progress toward mastery of the CCSS.
# Argumentative Writing Rubric Grades 9-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Argumentative Writing</th>
<th>Exemplary Performance</th>
<th>Meeting Expectations</th>
<th>Needs Attention</th>
<th>Critical Area for Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension and Meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge:</td>
<td>Dynamic understanding</td>
<td>Exemplary understanding</td>
<td>Basic understanding</td>
<td>Little to no understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development and Elaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim:</td>
<td>Compelling claim</td>
<td>Credible claim</td>
<td>Weak claim</td>
<td>No claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td>Ample evidence</td>
<td>Sufficient evidence</td>
<td>Unclear evidence</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning:</td>
<td>Convincing reasoning</td>
<td>Well-developed reasoning</td>
<td>Inconsistent reasoning</td>
<td>Invalid reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development:</td>
<td>Illuminating focus on task, purpose, and audience</td>
<td>Clear focus on task, purpose, and audience</td>
<td>Some focus on task, purpose, or audience</td>
<td>No discernible focus on task, purpose, or audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization and Focus</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>Compelling introduction</td>
<td>Well-developed introduction</td>
<td>Underdeveloped or ineffective introduction</td>
<td>No recognizable introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence:</td>
<td>Offers purposeful logical organization</td>
<td>Offers sufficient logical organization</td>
<td>Inconsistent logical organization</td>
<td>Little or no logical organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion:</td>
<td>Compelling conclusion</td>
<td>Well-developed conclusion</td>
<td>Underdeveloped or ineffective conclusion</td>
<td>No recognizable conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Clarity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary:</td>
<td>Compelling use of precise language and vocabulary</td>
<td>Clear use of precise language and vocabulary</td>
<td>Ineffective use of language and vocabulary</td>
<td>Use of unclear language and poor vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone:</td>
<td>Consistent formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions</td>
<td>Sufficient formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions</td>
<td>Inconsistent formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions</td>
<td>Lacks formal style, academic vocabulary, and conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions:</td>
<td>Outstanding transitions</td>
<td>Sufficient transitions</td>
<td>Occasional transitions</td>
<td>Little or no transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions:</td>
<td>Few if any errors</td>
<td>Some errors</td>
<td>Several errors</td>
<td>Numerous errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources:</td>
<td>Ample properly cited sources</td>
<td>Several properly cited sources</td>
<td>Some sources, improperly cited</td>
<td>Plagiarism of sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2013 The Aspen Institute