

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- Close Reading of Complex Texts
- Writing from Sources:
Argument, Literary Analysis,
Research Simulation
- Performance Assessment Practice

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PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

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Approaching Performance Assessments with Confidence

By Carol Jago



In order to get good at anything, you need to practice. Whether the goal is to improve your jump shot, level up in a video game, or make the cut in band tryouts, success requires repeated practice on the court, computer, and field. The same is true of reading and writing. The only way to get good at them is by reading and writing.

Malcolm Gladwell estimates in his book *Outliers* that mastering a skill requires about 10,000 hours of dedicated practice. He argues that individuals who are outstanding in their field have one thing in common—many, many hours of working at it. Gladwell claims that success is less dependent on innate talent than it is on practice. Now I'm pretty sure that I could put in 10,000 hours at a ballet studio and still be a terrible dancer, but I agree with Gladwell that, "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good."

Not just any kind of practice will help you master a skill, though. Effective practice needs to focus on improvement. That is why this series of reading and writing tasks begins with a model of the kind of reading and writing you are working towards, then takes you through practice exercises, and finally invites you to perform the skills you have practiced.

Once through the cycle is only the beginning. You will want to repeat the process many times over until close reading, supporting claims with evidence, and crafting a compelling essay is something you approach with confidence. Notice that I didn't say "with ease." I wish it were otherwise, but in my experience as a teacher and as an author, writing well is never easy.

The work is worth the effort. Like a star walking out on the stage, you put your trust in the hours you've invested in practice to result in thundering applause. To our work together!

Unit 1 Argumentative Essay

Big Issues

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

Should high school start an hour later?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

from Sleep Deprivation in Teenagers Medical Journal Today 4

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

from School Start Time and Sleep National Sleep Foundation 5

STUDENT MODEL

We Need Our Sleep! Jon Attridge 6



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

Should a business have the right to ban teenagers?

Read Source Materials

NEWSPAPER AD

Munchy's Promise 10

BUSINESS ANALYSIS

Munchy's Patrons, July and October
Munchy's Monthly Sales, July–October Hector Ramirez 11

STUDENT BLOG

Munchy's Bans Students! Sylvia Donnolly 12

NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL

A Smart Idea Can Save a Business Francine Lipsky 13

Write an Argumentative Essay

Should a business have the right to ban teenagers? 16



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

Should the minimum driving age be raised?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Traffic Safety Facts National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 22

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes Anahad O'Connor 26

Write an Argumentative Essay

Should the minimum driving age be raised? 31



Unit 2 Informative Essay

Great Adaptations

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

How have birds and lizards adapted to their environments?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

Don't Start Without a Plan 36

STUDENT MODEL

Two Water Birds: The Albatross and the Cormorant Luis Medina 38

STUDENT MODEL

Winged Lizards Jenna O'Leary 40



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

What adaptations allow deep-sea creatures to survive in extreme environments? Why do they need these adaptations?

Read Source Materials

DATABASE

Giant Squid (*Architeuthis dux*) 44

SCIENCE ARTICLE

Zombie Worms Drill Whale Bones with Acid Martha Ennis 45

FIELD NOTES

Trip into Blackness Arthur Jonssen 46

INFORMATIVE TEXT

Deep-Sea Vents Amy Bliss 47

Write an Informative Essay

What adaptations allow deep-sea creatures to survive in extreme environments? Why do they need these adaptations? 50



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

How have Australian animals adapted to their environment?

Read Source Materials

INFORMATIVE ESSAY

Australian Fauna Deirdre Manning 56

INFORMATIVE ESSAY

New to Australia Aidan Semmler 60

Write an Informative Essay

How have Australian animals adapted to their environment? 63



Unit 3 Literary Analysis

Inspirations

STEP 1 ANALYZE THE MODEL

What inspires us to grow and change?

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

William Stafford: The Poet and His Craft Andy Cabrera 68

POEM

Fifteen William Stafford 69

STUDENT MODEL

Growing Up: Theme and Style in Stafford's "Fifteen" Jennifer Ricardo 70



STEP 2 PRACTICE THE TASK

How can real events inspire poetry?

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

Walt Whitman Mark Botha 74

POEM

The Artilleryman's Vision Walt Whitman 76

LETTER

Letter to His Mother Walt Whitman 78

Write a Literary Analysis

Compare and contrast Whitman's depictions of Civil War experiences in "The Artilleryman's Vision" and in a letter to his mother. 82



STEP 3 PERFORM THE TASK

How can inspiration sustain us in difficult times?

Read Source Materials

POEM

If— Rudyard Kipling 88

MEMOIR

Kipling and I Jesús Colón 90

Write a Literary Analysis

Write a literary analysis that examines the universal themes in Kipling's poem "If—" and Colón's memoir "Kipling and I." 95



Unit 4 Mixed Practice

On Your Own

TASK 1 ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY RESEARCH SIMULATION

Read Source Materials

NEWS REPORT

Sugary Drinks over 16-Ounces Banned in
New York City, Board of Health Votes Ryan Jaslow 103

Anchor Text

COLUMN

Food Politics Marion Nestle 105

NEWS REPORT

Should the Government Regulate
What We Eat? Bert Glass 108

Write an Argumentative Essay 111

TASK 2 INFORMATIVE ESSAY RESEARCH SIMULATION

Read Source Materials

Anchor Text

BIOGRAPHY

Suleiman the Magnificent Jane Simmons 117

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Nelson Mandela Inaugurated President of
South Africa Matt Darvill 120

SUMMARY

Accomplishments of Queen Elizabeth I Amit Carter 122

Write an Informative Essay 124

TASK 3 LITERARY ANALYSIS

Read Source Materials

BIOGRAPHY

Edgar Allan Poe Lynn Malle 129

POEM

The Raven Edgar Allan Poe 131

ESSAY

Poe's Process: Writing "The Raven" Suzie LaGreca 135

Write a Literary Analysis 140
