

STAAR PREP WRITING English II

Planning Guide User Information

STAAR Prep Writing - Persuasive

10 class periods (90-minutes each) or

Time Allocations

20 class periods (45-minutes each)

Unit Overview

STAAR Persuasive Writing- Students review the elements of an effective 26-line persuasive essay and craft an example in preparation for the STAAR exam.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills/Student Expectations (TEKS/SEs) (district clarifications/elaborations in italics)

Writing

® ELA.10.13B Structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive (logical) way (e.g., using outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, lists) and develop drafts in timed and open-ended situations that include transitions and rhetorical devices used to convey meaning.

® ELA.10.13C Revise drafts to improve style, word choice, figurative language, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed.

® ELA.10.13D Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

® ELA.10.16A Write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes a clear thesis or position based on logical reasons supported by precise and relevant evidence, *including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs.*

S ELA.10.16C Write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to counterarguments based on evidence to anticipate and address objections.

® ELA.10.16D Write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context.

® ELA.10.16E Write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes an analysis of the relative value of specific data, facts, and ideas.

S ELA.10.16F Write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes a range of appropriate appeals (e.g., descriptions, anecdotes, case studies, analogies, illustrations).

Key Concepts				
 persuasive writing 	writing process			
Academic Vocabulary				
 organization 	 prompt 	 thesis statement 		
Assessment Connections				
 Performance Expectation- Students complete a 26-line STAAR persuasive essay. Formative Assessment- Official STAAR Persuasive Essay Rubric Students work with released STAAR items in order to become familiar with question stems. Released STAAR Sample Items and Released Test Items: Reading: Selection 1- Question 3; Writing: Selection 1- Questions 2 and 4; Selection 2-Questions 4 and 6; Released 2013 STAAR Items Reading: Questions 7, 11-16, 17- 23, 32-38; Writing: Questions 1-5, 7-8, 11-15; Persuasive Essay Prompt 				
Instructional Considerations				

Students review the elements of an effective 26-line persuasive essay and craft an example in preparation for the STAAR exam. A sample calendar to utilize to plan 10 days of instruction is available in Resources. See <u>Persuasive</u> <u>Essay Calendar</u> in Resources.

To ensure effective planning and instruction, refer to the components outlined by the <u>Houston ISD Instructional Practice</u> <u>Rubric</u>.



<u>Writing</u>

Prerequisites

Students should be familiar with the writing process.

Background Knowledge for Teacher

Students should have a firm understanding of the writing process and persuasive writing. Deepen the connection to STAAR persuasive essays through a thorough examination of the persuasive writing task required on STAAR.

Students focus on developing writing skills for use in timed-testing situations. Use the entire writing process described here to offer multiple opportunities for students to practice responding to prompts. Support instruction through the use of the Gradual Release Model, "I do, We do, You do." Initially, model a writing task, provide collaborative opportunities to practice, and have students work independently to fulfill assignment expectations.

STAAR Guidelines- The STAAR Composition Box (26 lines) is all the space in which students have to create a persuasive essay. Please ensure that students understand the following:

- 1. <u>Stay inside the box</u>: Anything outside of these lines will not be graded.
- 2. <u>No extra lines</u>: Some students may have been taught to draw their own lines in between existing lines to create more writing space on TAKS. This is not allowed on STAAR.
- 3. <u>Legible handwriting counts</u>: Ensure students understand the need to take the time to write clearly. Scorers must be able to read the students' writing to score it effectively.
- 4. <u>Size matters</u>: Students who use large or artistic handwriting will quickly fill the requisite 26 lines, leaving them with little room to fully develop their essay.

Ensure students understand an effective STAAR persuasive essay includes a clearly stated thesis statement that is an opinion, is supported by specific evidence and commentary, follows a logical progression of ideas, and is written using proper grammatical conventions. Create an Anchor Chart of the STAAR rubric expectations and post as a reference. Have students copy the information into their Writers' Notebooks.

Reviewing the Rubric- Provide copies of the <u>Official STAAR Persuasive Rubric</u> and the <u>Student-Friendly STAAR</u> <u>Persuasive Essay Rubric</u> in Resources. Model the process of highlighting and underlining key terms of the rubric expectations. Compare and contrast the expectations at each score level, emphasizing the expectation for students is to reach a score of "4." Have students work collaboratively to complete this process.

STAAR Prompts- There are STAAR-released prompts available for Persuasive Essay test component. Providing students with similar prompts helps them prepare for the STAAR exam. See <u>Released STAAR Sample Items and</u> <u>Released Test Items</u> (Released Test Prompt for Persuasive Essay, Sample Prompt for Persuasive Essay) in Assessment Connections. See the <u>TEA</u> website for more information.

Unpacking the Prompt- Introduce students to the writing assignment by distributing and displaying the sample <u>Persuasive Essay Prompt</u> in Resources. Ensure students understand the "Read-Think-Write" format of the prompt. Have students underline and highlight key terms within the "Write" section of the prompt and reinforce understanding by having students rewrite the prompt as a question. Emphasize the need to "write to the task." Ensure students understand that essays written off topic, such as responses to the "Read" or "Think" statements, receive either unsatisfactory scores or are considered unscorable.

One simple acronym to help students break down persuasive prompts is BAT: **B**ackground

Access

Task

Have students label each component and explain what each means. For an example of a Persuasive essay prompt that utilizes the BAT process, see <u>Persuasive Essay Unpacking the Prompt Example</u> in Resources.





Mentor Texts- Just as a driver uses a road map to arrive at his/her destination, writers use guides and/or resources to help them achieve their task. Texts that serve as guides or models for a given mode of writing are known as mentor texts. One of the most important aspects of teaching writing is providing models and mentor texts. If students are to understand how a piece of writing is supposed to look, they must review and dissect mentor texts, analyze the structure, language, and content, and evaluate their effectiveness. Students follow a sequence of activities that improve their writing: reading, analyzing, and emulating. Mentor texts may be utilized in multiple readings, providing examples of organizational patterns, diction, thesis sentence construction, supporting evidence, etc. This process provides the scaffolds necessary to support and encourage student engagement and success. See Anderson's *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know* in Resources.

Provide students with examples of scored essays for all points on the scoring range. Hold whole-class calibration sessions evaluating why each essay was or was not successful. Have students refer to these model texts as they begin the writing process. See the <u>Official Scoring Guide for STAAR Writing Grade 10</u> in Resources.

Teacher Models- Teachers' active modeling of writing is also an integral part of successful instruction. The use of a Teacher's Writer's Notebook is an effective tool to present teacher-generated models of writing as well as examples of the writing process. See Anderson's *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know* in Resources.

Steps for responding to the prompt:

- 1. Understand the prompt: The prompt is asking you to explain, define, or analyze a given topic, which includes providing examples to support the controlling idea. Annotate the prompt to ensure you understand the task.
- 2. Brainstorming: List ideas and examples that are related to the topic.
- 3. Identify/Create your controlling idea: Based on the ideas and examples from step two, state the focus of your essay.
- 4. Organization: Arrange your ideas and supporting examples.
- 5. Write your essay and make revisions as necessary. Be aware of the amount of space you have to develop each of your ideas and examples.
- 6. Reread your work and make revisions and corrections. Use a dictionary!
- 7. If you have time, read your work again and make final corrections.

Prewriting- Prewriting is an essential component of the writing process. Explain that understanding the task is the most important part of the prewriting process, especially in timed situations. Advise students to take the time to develop ideas prior to organizing and drafting. Have students utilize a graphic organizer, such as a <u>Concept Web</u>, to brainstorm details, points, and examples necessary to effectively respond to the prompt. Model the process using a teacher-generated chart and a Think-Aloud. Have students continue to brainstorm until they have more information than is necessary to complete the prompt.

Thesis Statement- Thesis statements are an essential aspect of organization and focus. Review the function of a thesis statement and provide examples in mentor texts. Model the creation of a clearly-stated thesis statement using the teacher-generated Concept Web. See the <u>LEO-Thesis Statements</u> website in Resources.

Organization- Impress upon students the need to organize their essays purposefully. Have students return to the rubric and analyze the section that relates to organization. Provide the <u>Outline Template</u> in Resources to assist students in logically ordering the ideas from their prewriting. Model the process using the teacher-generated Concept Web information. Have students work in collaborative groups to organize information before assigning independent application. The basic structure is:

- Introduction: Provides a lead and a clear thesis statement
- Body: Contains persuasive and logically organized arguments and counterarguments
- Conclusion: Restates the position and contains a memorable ending or call to action (ELA.10.13B, ELA.10.16D)

Drafting- Emphasize that thesis statements drive the organization of persuasive essays. All paragraphs are written to provide support for the thesis statement and are connected with effective transitions. Explain the difference between a statement of fact and a statement of opinion and remind students that a persuasive essay intends to convey a sense of their personal opinions. Caution students from being too informal in the tone they utilize to convey their points of view.





Remind students their thesis statement must be proven with relevant evidence and examples. (ELA.10.16A)

As students work in writing groups, conduct Writing Conferences to evaluate the quality of each student's thesis statement and supporting evidence. Offer immediate and frequent feedback to ensure students proceed with the drafting process correctly. Have students keep a <u>Student Writing Log</u>, found in Resources, in which they record feedback during these conferences. Students can use this log for future writing projects. Remind students to refer to the Anchor Chart to ensure all expectations of the assignment are being met. See <u>ELA Best Practices HS</u> for more information on Writing Conferences.

Model the process of creating a rough draft, incorporating details from the teacher-generated outline. Illustrate the need to write a draft that exceeds 26 lines, providing more evidence and commentary than is needed. Explain that it is more effective to generate more details than needed, and then eliminate less effective support during revising than it is to try to draft a 26-line essay. These tend to be underdeveloped and demonstrate a lack of depth.

Introduction and Conclusion- Remind students an essay must have an introduction, body, conclusion, and proper transitions between ideas. Provide examples of introductions and conclusions in mentor texts and scored essays. Have the class work together to draft the introduction and/or conclusion of the teacher-generated essay. Then have students work in writing groups or independently to complete the draft. This provides students with multiple opportunities to understand the drafting process before working independently.

Effective introductions engage the reader and provide the focus point of the essay. Use mentor texts to provide examples of effective introductions. Instruct students to use the following questions to critique sample introductions:

- Does this introduction catch the reader's attention?
- Does this introduction tell the reader what the essay will be about?
- Does this introduction focus the reader on what is to come?

Use models and mentor texts to provide examples of effective conclusions. Have students work in cooperative groups to critique various conclusions. Provide samples of both effective and ineffective conclusions to provide comparison opportunities. Support participation by providing students with questions to guide discussions. For example:

- Does this conclusion sum up the essay?
- Does this conclusion tie up loose ends and answer all questions posed?
- Does this conclusion restate the thesis in a different way?
- Does this conclusion give the reader something more to think about?

Topic Sentences- Remind students that thesis statements are supported by topic sentences in the body paragraphs. Ensure students understand that topic sentences are typically connected to a transition statement provided at the end of the previous paragraph. This ensures the essay has a smooth, effective flow of information from start to finish.

Provide cooperative learning opportunities to increase students' engagement and support understanding. Distribute paragraphs of information and have students craft topic sentences for them. Once students become more proficient, provide them with topic sentences and have them complete the development of the paragraph with supporting evidence and commentary.

Supporting Evidence- Emphasize that persuasive texts convey opinions that are supported by key ideas and evidence. In addition to effective thesis statements, the body must include specific facts, details, and examples as textual evidence that support their idea without adding unnecessary information. **(ELA.10.16E)**

To assist students in choosing evidence to support their thesis statement. Utilize the acronym HELP:

- H- Historical- What do students remember from history that might support their thesis?
- E- Event- What personal events or anecdotes do students remember that might support their thesis?
- L- Literary- What literary connections or pieces do students remember that might support their thesis?
- P- Pop Culture- What events in pop culture do students remember that might support their thesis?





Transitions- Remind students that transitions move readers from sentence to sentence, idea to idea, and paragraph to paragraph. It is important that students avoid using transitions such as: first, next, last, etc. Reinforce learning by highlighting clear examples in successful scored essays students previously viewed.

Automatic and Manual Transitions- We typically think of transitions as "automatic" transitions. These standard words and phrases are the first learned and, thus, the most easily used. They include words such as *however, in fact, first, for example*, etc. These words and phrases are student-created; however, there are "replicable patterns for creating manual transitions" for a specific piece of writing, and they are used to bring the reader from a given time or location to a new place in time or location. See <u>Automatic Transitions</u>, <u>Manual Transitions</u>, and Anderson's *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know* in Resources.

Sentence Structures- Reiterate that the revision process is the best place to improve sentence fluency in a writing piece. Emphasize that strong sentence fluency involves effective use of varied sentence structures. Provide examples of different sentence constructions in mentor texts and scored essays and model the process of forming complete sentences.

Revising- Explain that even in a timed-writing situation, such as the STAAR, PSAT, or SAT, students must reread their rough drafts in order to identify revision needs. Have students look for the following errors:

- lack of depth in details
- irrelevant details

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• unclear controlling idea

- missing or ineffective
 transitions
- lack of introduction and/or conclusion
- writing for the incorrect purpose

Model the process of identifying and correcting each of these errors using teacher-generated essay or samples of ineffective calibrated essays. (ELA.10.13C)

Often students do not realize their ideas have not been clearly transferred to paper. Have students read their essays aloud to their writing groups so others can hear their essays and offer feedback on the development of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency. Essays that are difficult to read or understand receive low scores regardless of the overall idea development and content. See Instructional Strategies for a Reading Aloud strategy.

Revise to 26 Lines- Once students have completed the revision of their essays, explain the need to revise again to 26 lines. Model the process of eliminating less effective evidence using the teacher-generated draft. Provide students with a copy of the <u>Official STAAR Composition Box</u> to use as a template. Clarify that titles are not necessary and should be used judiciously (i.e., only if there is enough space for both the title and the completed essay).

Editing- Teachers' active modeling of the editing process is a great way to create a safe environment and help students begin to feel comfortable editing their own as well as their peers' papers. In whole-class discussions, use a document camera or projector to correct teacher-generated papers with intentional common CUPS errors, providing students the opportunity to see the editing process in action. When these papers are projected, students are able to actively participate in the editing process by "catching mistakes," adding suggestions, and asking specific questions about grammar rules or specifications. Teacher modeling invites dialogue about the editing process.

Remind students to check capitalization, punctuation, usage, and spelling (CUPS) during the editing process. Review the aspects of conventions with students. Have students form groups or pairs and exchange papers in a clocking activity. As papers rotate from one group member to another, each student is responsible for identifying one aspect from the <u>CUPS Checklist</u> in Resources. Have students highlight errors using different colored pens or markers. Papers are returned to the original writer with errors clearly marked in multiple colors. It may be helpful to rotate the papers several times, allowing students multiple opportunities to mark errors. Model this process prior to having students work independently. Once peer editors have identified as many errors as possible, allow students time to complete the corrections. This activity can be modified or extended as needed to support students' needs. For example, challenge students by having them mark only the line or paragraph in which an error occurs rather than each specific error. See *Grammar Notes* and Write*Smart* CD-ROM in Resources **(ELA.10.13D)**





STAAR Revising and Editing- Remind students that one component of the STAAR exam is related to answering multiple-choice questions regarding revising and editing. Hold a class discussion on the elements of persuasive essays that may appear on the STAAR multiple-choice portion of the exam. Review how to identify purposeful and effective counterarguments and argumentative appeals. Provide students an opportunity to examine how multiple-choice questions regarding these elements may be addressed on the STAAR exam. See <u>Released STAAR Sample Items and</u> <u>Released Test Items</u> in Assessment Connections. **(ELA.10.16C, ELA.10.16F)**

Publishing- Explain that even in a timed situation, students must pay attention to the presentation aspect of their essays. Remind students to write legibly and stay within the composition box. Have students copy their final essays onto an <u>Official STAAR Composition Box</u>.

Instructional Strategies / Activities

<u>Writing</u>

Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback

Working with Rubrics

Scoring essays is also a crucial part of professional development for teachers in order for them to be able to teach students this skill. To enable students to understand and evaluate their own work, train students in scoring EOC essays based on rubrics. Doing so can help students understand the grading process and to evaluate the quality of their own work. Student-friendly rubrics are an excellent tool for this process. If laminated, one class set can be reused multiple times with dry erase markers.

I do: Project and discuss the rubric for the type of essay to be scored. Model scoring an essay using the rubric (circling which categories/scores are applicable, etc.).

We do: Show previously graded essays "blind" without visible scoring. Project each essay for the entire class to see, using an Elmo or overhead projector. Assign students to small groups, and instruct them to come to a consensus regarding their scoring of the essay. Explain that they must be able to back up their reasoning based upon the rubric.

You do: This can easily become a "game" with students raising their scores (in teams or individually) after a quick countdown. The instructor can keep a running tally on the dry erase board or chalkboard. Differences in ratings often lead to lively and important discussions about the quality of writing. Be sure to select a range of essays—released state tests are an excellent baseline and can be supplemented with student samples that the instructor has previously graded.

Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback

Reading Aloud

In order to teach students that revision is not just correcting a paper, a system of revision must be put into place. In this instructional strategy, students partner with another student. If necessary, students can split into groups of three or four, but no larger than four. Students read their essays out loud. This allows students a chance to self-identify issues with focus/coherence, development of ideas, voice, sentence fluency and organization. Have students use the following as a guide to help each other revise.

- 1. If the reader stumbles or pauses, the listeners should make note of where.
- 2. If there is a phrase or word repeated over and over, the listeners should make note of the word or phrase.
- 3. Once the listeners have heard the essay read through once, ask the listeners to summarize the essay.
- 4. Then, ask the listeners if the thesis was easily understood.
- 5. Next, ask the listeners if the details presented were vivid and engaging.

6. Finally, ask the listeners if they have any suggestions that would improve the essay. See Gilmore's *"Is It Done Yet?" Teaching Adolescents the Art of Revision* in Resources.





STAAR PREP WRITING English II

Resources

Adopted Instructional Materials

- *Grammar Notes* CD ROM. Illinois: Holt McDougal, 2010.
 - ✓ Capitalization
 - Punctuation
 - ✓ Spelling
- Write *Smart DVD-ROM.* Illinois: Holt McDougal, 2010.

Supporting Resources

- Automatic Transitions
- <u>Concept Web</u>
- <u>CUPS Checklist</u>
- ELA Best Practices HS
- Manual Transitions
- <u>Official Scoring Guide for STAAR</u> Writing Grade 10
- Official STAAR Composition Box
- Official STAAR Persuasive Rubric
- Outline Template
- Persuasive Essay Calendar
- Persuasive Essay Prompt
- Persuasive Essay Unpacking the Prompt Example
- <u>Student-Friendly STAAR</u>
 <u>Persuasive Essay Rubric</u>
- <u>Student Writing Log</u>

Professional Texts

- Anderson, Jeff. *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2011. Print.
- Anderson, Jeff. Everyday Editing: Inviting Students to Develop Skill and Craft in Writer's Workshop. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2007. Print.
- Gilmore, Barry: *"Is It Done Yet?" Teaching Adolescents the Art of Revision.* New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2007.

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- <u>LEO-Thesis Statements</u> (Website containing information on writing effective writing techniques)
- Houston ISD Instructional
 Practice Rubric
 (Direct link to the HISD
 Instructional Practice Rubric)
 - TEA (The Texas Education Agency's main website which provides STAAR Resources.)

