

Write an Essay Sub-Units: Skills progression

The Write an Essay Sub-Unit is a key component of every core unit in Amplify ELA. Appearing in the latter half of the unit, these sub-units engage students in critical phases of the writing process as they draw from their comprehension of the text, apply writing skills they've been developing throughout the unit, and work to prepare a multi-paragraph essay in response to an essay prompt. To support students' transition from elementary writing skills and prepare them for the rigors of high school and beyond, the content and structure of these units will gradually increase in rigor from units A-F for each grade level and across grade levels.

Grade 6

In Grade 6, students are transitioning from elementary school writing and need strong supports to develop the skills necessary to create a long piece of writing. While the formative writing prompts within the core lessons will help them to build endurance and confidence in their writing, they require more explicit instruction when crafting a multiparagraph essay. As you examine the skills progression across the Write an Essay Sub-Units in Grade 6, you will notice that the lesson structure is relatively consistent, as students are introduced to essential elements of an essay in 6A, and continually develop the skills to gather evidence to make a claim, build body paragraphs, craft an introduction and conclusion, create citations, and practice revision and polishing skills throughout the year.

Grade 7

As students transition to Grade 7, they will continue to build upon the skills that they developed over the course of Grade 6, as they sharpen and refine their ability to craft multi-paragraph essays. In Unit A, lessons like “Deepening your Ideas” and “The Introduction” will help students to think more critically about the impact of their evidence and their framing of their claim about Ji-Li. They will also incorporate an Editor’s Checklist to support their revision for mechanical errors and practice giving and receiving feedback from a peer. In Unit B, students learn about transitions. These lessons are presented at the start of the year to support students as they continually apply these skills in subsequent units to sharpen and hone their essay writing skills.

Grade 8

In Grade 8, students will continue to employ the skills and routines that they have learned from Grades 6 and 7. In Unit C, the Write an Essay Sub-Unit begins with the “Make an Outline” Lesson. This is the first time students will be introduced to this practice as they brainstorm how they will answer the essay prompt. Throughout this lesson, students will consider whether or not a series of provided quotations could be used as evidence for or against the creature’s humanity. Ultimately, this lesson will help students to determine which side they wish to argue. Next students will begin to craft their outline based on the evidence that they have selected. This outline will serve as the framework for their essay, and they will focus on drafting the paragraphs for the remainder of the Sub-Unit.