

Writing across the unit: Planning Guide

This guide has been designed to support you as you prepare to teach an upcoming unit. Follow these steps to identify the central goals for writing within the unit, identify key lessons, and determine which additional scaffolds and supports would be most beneficial for your students. This document can serve as a companion guide for the “Writing across core units” resources for grades 6–8.



Determine the central goals for writing

- Define the reading and writing skills that students will develop over the course of the unit
- Explore the Unit Formative and Summative Assessments to determine what essay type students will be asked to write by the end of the unit
- Examine the Essay Prompt to determine what text analysis skills students will need to be successful on this summative assessment



Identify key lessons within the unit

- Review the “Reading and Writing Assignments” table in the Planning for the Unit section of the Unit Overview page to identify key lessons that will engage students in close reading and writing activities that will help to prepare them for the end-of-unit essay
- Prioritize these activities within your feedback cycle and incorporate them into your Revision Assignments



Adjust instruction to prioritize key lessons and skills

- Pace your instruction accordingly to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage fully in the Key lessons and implement any written feedback in revision assignments
- Consider Skill modules, Mastering Conventions PDFs, and Flex Day Activities as potential resources to support targeted skills instruction and explicit practice with the skills students will need to be successful on the end-of-unit essay



Review student work & data to inform instruction

- Regularly monitor student writing in Classwork and provide targeted feedback to celebrate successes, foster growth, and encourage revision
- Monitor Reporting App to track areas of strength and growth in the areas of productivity, focus, conventions, and use of evidence
- Leverage Embedded Measure Data to engage in Flex Day planning

Planning guide

Use the questions below to guide your analysis of the Unit Overview page.

Determine the central goals for writing

Read the Unit Overview statement. As you read, take note of the key text analysis skills and writing skills that students will learn over the course of the unit.

Access the Unit Formative and Summative Assessments article. Define the essay type and record the essay prompt in the space below.

Identify key lessons within the unit

Review the Reading and Writing Assignments chart and take note of 2–3 key lessons where students will engage with critical portions of the unit text, practice key text analysis skills, and work to answer questions that are similar or relevant to the end-of-unit essay prompt.

Planning guide

Use the questions below to guide your analysis of the Unit Overview page.

Adjust instruction to prioritize key lessons and skills

Consider how you will adjust your pacing to ensure students have ample time to engage in close reading, discussion, and writing activities within the key lessons. Note any strategies that you will employ to ensure that every student can engage fully in these activities.

Identify any Skill Modules, Mastering Conventions Activities, or Flex Day Activities that you plan to incorporate to provide targeted skills instruction and explicit practice with key skills. Note how you will adjust lesson pacing to include these additional resources (if applicable).

Review student work & data to inform instruction

Analyze student writing across the unit and take note of common mechanical errors or areas for growth that you would like to address during Flex Days or targeted skill instruction.

Review the Writing Prompts Report and Embedded Measure data for the unit. Take note of any areas of strength or growth, as well as any students who may benefit from additional support.

Write an Essay Sub-Unit

Complete the table below as you explore the lessons in the Write an Essay Sub-Unit.

Lesson # and focus	Lesson Objective(s)	Key Resources & Materials	Before the next lesson