Teach
Explain to students that informal language is the kind we use in everyday speech and conversation. Informal language can vary depending on the country, region, profession, and age of the speaker. Guide students to understand the following definitions:

- **Colloquialisms**: informal expressions that reflect the way we speak every day
- **Idioms**: expressions that mean something other than what they literally say
- **Jargon**: specific language related to a certain profession or interest
- **Slang**: nonstandard informal language that can become outdated
- **Culture-specific language**: words and expressions that are common in a language or region and may or may not be adopted by other cultures

Provide examples of each type of informal language and invite students to contribute their own examples. Maintain a list of these examples for students to reference in Practice and Apply.

Practice
Use folktales to illustrate how informal language helps make the story seem more authentic. Select several folktales from various cultures around the world. Point out that using informal and culture-specific language is important to these stories that are set in a certain time and place. Informal language is also an important part of a character’s actions or dialogue; it makes the character seem more authentic.

Read aloud several folktales. Discuss how informal language is used in the story and how the language reflects the characters and setting.

Choose two characters from a folktale and write a short script for them, including examples of informal language appropriate for the age, culture, profession, and setting. Discuss the script with students and revise it using student feedback.

Apply
Have students work in pairs to write a short script between two characters of a particular time, place, or culture. Point out that they may use two characters from one of the folktales or they can make up their own characters. Remind them to think about the region, age, background, and interests of the characters before they start.

Ask them to include informal language that better develops each character, yet sounds like natural speech appropriate for the place and time.

Assess
Have partners identify how they used informal language to develop their characters. Ask them to identify specific uses of slang, colloquialisms, and jargon.

*Listening and Speaking Connection*: Have partners perform their scripts. After each presentation, ask the group to identify examples of informal or culture-specific language that was used by each character. Then ask the audience to evaluate whether each dialogue sounds like everyday conversation appropriate for the given time and place.
Using Informal Language

**Teach**

Explain to students that informal language is the kind used in everyday speech and conversation. Informal language can vary depending on the country, region, profession, and age of the speakers.

Guide students to understand the following definitions:

- **Colloquialisms**: informal expressions that reflect the way people speak every day
- **Jargon**: specific language related to a certain profession or interest
- **Slang**: nonstandard informal language, that can become outdated
- **Culture-specific language**: words and expressions that are common in a particular language or region and may or may not be adopted by other cultures

Provide examples of each type of informal language and invite students to contribute their own examples. Maintain a list of these examples for students to reference in Practice and Apply.

**Practice**

Point out that using informal and culture-specific language is important to a story that is set in a certain time and place. Informal language is also an important part of a character’s actions or dialogue.

Model for students how informal language is used to develop a character through dialogue. Choose two characters and write a short dialogue between them, including examples of informal language appropriate for the age, culture, profession, and setting of the characters. Discuss the dialogue with students and revise it using student feedback.

**Apply**

Have students work in pairs to write a short dialogue between two characters of a particular time, place, or culture. Remind them to think about the region, age, background, and interests of the characters before they start. Ask them to include informal language that better develops each character, yet sounds like natural speech appropriate for the place and time.

**Assess**

Have partners identify how they used informal language to develop their characters. Ask them to identify specific uses of slang, colloquialisms, and jargon.

*Listening and Speaking Connection*: Have partners read aloud their dialogues. After each presentation, ask the group to identify examples of informal or culture-specific language that was used by each character. Then ask the audience to evaluate whether each dialogue sounds like everyday conversation appropriate for the given time and place.
Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses

Consider using with Voyages in English 2018
Grade 6–Chapter 8, Lesson 3 and Writer’s Workshop
Chapter 9, Lesson 3

Teach
Tell students that parentheses, brackets, and ellipses are used in special circumstances in their writing. Review the following rules and examples:

• Parentheses are placed around parenthetical elements, information that is not crucial to the sentence.
• Parentheses are also used to include citations in expository text.
• Ellipsis dots show that something has been left out of a quotation. Ellipses can also be used to show a pause in dialogue.
• Brackets show that something has been added or changed in a quotation.

Practice
Model for students how each type of punctuation is used in the following examples. Write each example on the board, leaving out the parentheses, brackets, or ellipses. Demonstrate where to add the parentheses, brackets, or ellipses. Compare how the punctuation helps clarify the writing.

1. “I . . . don’t know what you mean,” stammered Tara.
2. The artist commented wryly, “My most creative time of day . . . is from dawn until noon.”
3. The scientist remarked, “[The peregrine’s] habitat is being systematically destroyed.”
4. Many families (some with more than five children) were set up in the camps near the lake.
5. This would be the last time they would attempt an ascent over the north face. (Smith, 2009).

Apply
Provide students with books or magazines to use for quotations and as citations for parentheses. Ask students to draft an example for each use of the punctuation listed above.

Assess
Check that students use parentheses, brackets, and ellipses correctly in their examples. When students complete their research reports, have them identify where they use each type of punctuation in their reports.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students write dialogue that uses ellipses to note pauses, stammering, or other voice inflections. Ask students to read aloud each other’s completed dialogue, demonstrating how the use of ellipses affects their fluency.
Teach
Tell students that using prepositional phrases can make their writing clearer and more descriptive.

- A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and its object.
- A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in a sentence. The noun or pronoun that follows the preposition is called the object of a preposition.
- Prepositional phrases can act as adjectives that tell what kind, which ones, how many, or how much.
- Prepositional phrases can act as adverbs that tell where, when, or how.

Write these prepositional phrases on the board and identify the preposition and the object of the preposition in each. Discuss whether each phrase tells what kind, which one, how many, how much, where, when, or how.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>by the river</th>
<th>over the top</th>
<th>under the bridge</th>
<th>with courage</th>
<th>of the people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>during the night</td>
<td>after dinner</td>
<td>in twenty years</td>
<td>over time</td>
<td>in a dozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Canada</td>
<td>around noon</td>
<td>without pockets</td>
<td>toward me</td>
<td>against the door</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice
Display some interesting illustrations or photographs. Explain that you will write captions for the pictures and use prepositional phrases to make the captions more informative. As you write, point out the prepositional phrases in each caption. Then identify what information the phrase provides. Tell students that your captions explain what they see in the picture and that the prepositional phrases help draw attention to particular details.

Invite volunteers to suggest other sentences as captions. Guide students to identify the parts of each prepositional phrase and the information they provide.

Apply
Provide students with a number of pictures to use as they write captions. Include photographs, illustrations, and cartoons. Remind students that the caption should explain or tell more about the picture. If students need help, remind them that they can start by writing a descriptive sentence and then revise the sentence by adding prepositional phrases. Point out that asking what kind, which one, how many, how much, where, when, or how can help them figure out which prepositional phrases they may want to add.

Assess
Have students share their pictures and captions. Ask each student to identify the prepositional phrases in the captions. Invite the class to identify whether each prepositional phrase tells the reader who, what, where, why, or how.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Invite students to meet in small groups to discuss their pictures and captions. Suggest that they take turns displaying pictures and reading aloud the captions. Have students ask what else they would like to know about the picture and invite them to suggest other information that could be added to the sentence in the form of a prepositional phrase. Ask each group to share their best revisions with the class.
Teach

Explain that many different languages have made contributions to English vocabulary. Some of these words are easy to read and pronounce. Others have more unusual spellings or pronunciations. Tell students that as they read and spell, they can use their knowledge of English to decode unfamiliar words. Discuss with students some of the rules they observe when they read and spell words.

Possible rules include

- silent e appears at the end of words with a long vowel sound.
- dropping the silent e or doubling consonants before adding -ed or -ing.
- knowing the sounds made by syllables -le and -ed when they end words.
- writing i before e in the long e sound except when this letter combination appears after the letter c or when ei makes the long a sound in a word.

Then explain that some words from other languages cannot be pronounced by following English phonics rules. These words have pronunciations that are influenced by their languages of origin.

Practice

Write the following words on a chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French:</th>
<th>ballet</th>
<th>grotesque</th>
<th>filet</th>
<th>gourmet</th>
<th>armoire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian:</td>
<td>ski</td>
<td>fjord</td>
<td>slalom</td>
<td>floe</td>
<td>krill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African:</td>
<td>banana</td>
<td>yam</td>
<td>zebra</td>
<td>jumbo</td>
<td>safari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek:</td>
<td>psychology</td>
<td>psychiatrist</td>
<td>abyss</td>
<td>alphabet</td>
<td>hypnotism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese:</td>
<td>karaoke</td>
<td>anime</td>
<td>sushi</td>
<td>edamame</td>
<td>haiku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish:</td>
<td>abalone</td>
<td>cafeteria</td>
<td>chocolate</td>
<td>embargo</td>
<td>mosquito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American:</td>
<td>caribou</td>
<td>hickory</td>
<td>moccasin</td>
<td>raccoon</td>
<td>toboggan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read aloud the words and have students repeat them. Discuss patterns, spellings, and sounds that these words have in common.

Apply

Arrange students in groups and assign each group a country of origin. Ask groups to use a dictionary, encyclopedia, or online resources to find five additional words from their assigned country. Have them practice the pronunciations of the words, noting those that have unusual pronunciations that do not follow the more common English phonics rules. Have students share with the class the rules of pronunciation that they notice.
Assess
Post a large map of the world on a bulletin board or wall. Have groups write the words they found on small strips of paper and then pin the strips to their countries of origin on the map. Check that each word is pinned to the correct country.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students each select one word a word that originated from a different language. Ask them to create posters that show the following:

• the word they’ve chosen
• a photo or drawing of the flag representing the word’s country of origin
• the word’s pronunciation
• a photo or drawing showing the word’s meaning

Ask students to take turns presenting their posters to the class. Encourage volunteers to use the word in sentences.
Teach
Invite students to discuss books that they have particularly enjoyed reading. Ask students to identify any additional titles by the same author. Explain that many readers choose books by the same author because they hope that the characters will appear in new adventures or that the plot will be of a similar style. Guide students to name some of their favorite authors and tell if their books are part of an ongoing series or individual titles that stand on their own. Then discuss the following elements of a book report:

- Identification of a central theme or message
- A well-organized introduction, body, and conclusion
- A summation of the plot, characters, and setting
- Personal opinions and supporting evidence
- A summarizing conclusion

Practice
Model for students how to organize ideas for a book report. Display a story map and model completing each part based on a series book with which students will be familiar. In addition, discuss these questions:

- How did the main characters change over time?
- What was the author's theme or message? Does this theme carry over to other books in the series? Why or why not?
- How does this book connect to others in the series?

Remind students that they can use their story maps to help guide them as they write their reports.

Apply
Have students select a series book for a book report. Have students organize their information by completing a story map. Consider having students meet in small groups according to book series to discuss and share their ideas. Remind them that opinions should be clearly supported through specific references. Have students use these refined ideas to write a one-page report that includes the features outlined on the rubric.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of a book report.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Point out that many popular book series are made into movies. Ask students to discuss some of these, identifying those series books that also have film versions.

Discuss these ideas:

- Is it better to read the book before seeing the movie?
- In what ways is the movie better than the book?
- Did the movie portray the theme, characters, setting, and major events in the same way as you visualized them in the book?
- Did both the book and the movie have the same ending?
- What part of the book was factual or realistic? Was it portrayed the same way in the movie?

Invite students to make notes as they consider responses to each question. Then lead a discussion in which they can share and discuss their responses with the group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series Book Report</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ideas**
- report is based on a book from a series
- clear focus on the book

**Organization**
- beginning that identifies the author, characters, and setting
- middle that describes a sequence of events and relates how they connect to the theme
- ending that sums up the writer’s opinion of the book

**Voice**
- confident, informed voice

**Word Choice**
- carefully chosen adjectives
- variety of words

**Sentence Fluency**
- variety in sentence types
- logical transitions from step to step

**Conventions**
- correct grammar, usage, and spelling
- correct punctuation and capitalization

**Presentation**
- consistent margins and spacing
- neatness
- visual aid appropriate for purpose
Comparative Essay

Consider using with Voyages in English 2018
Grade 6—Chapter 7, Lesson 2 or Writer’s Workshop; Chapter 10, Lessons 1–4 and Writer’s Workshop
Grade 7—Chapter 6, Lesson 6
Grade 8—Chapter 4, Lesson 6 or Writer’s Workshop

Teach
Explain to students that a comparative essay is a piece of writing in which they analyze two subjects and tell how they are alike and different. A comparative essay contains the following elements:

- A clear identification of the two subjects to be compared
- Specific examples on how the subjects are similar and different
- An equal weighing of both subjects
- A well-organized introduction, body, and conclusion
- A consistent structure of comparison in the body of the essay

Practice
Provide students with a selection of folktales and a tall tale that include illustrations. Model for students how to compare and contrast the features and literary elements of a specific folktale and tall tale. Explain how the illustrations support the plot and give a sense of each story’s time and place. Point out the importance of exaggeration, similes, metaphors, and sensory details. Discuss the idioms, jargon, and colloquialisms that make each story seem more authentic.

Apply
Have students work in small groups. Have each group select a folktale and tall tale picture book to analyze and compare. Ask groups to look for and discuss the following:

- What features do a folktale and a tall tale have in common?
- What literary elements does the author use?
- How do the illustrations help you understand the culture and setting of each story?
- Why do you think the author chose to write about these characters?
- How do the subject matter, dialogue, point of view, and word choice reflect a culture’s heritage, traditions, and values?

Have students use their groups’ responses to write a comparative essay.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of a comparative essay.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Invite students to share their comparative analyses orally with the class. Ask the audience to listen for specific details that tell how the genres are alike and different.
## Comparative Essay

### Ideas
- compares and contrasts features of each genre
- compares and contrasts literary devices used in each genre
- analyzes importance of illustrations
- recognizes how culture influences story

### Organization
- introduction names folktale and tall tale
- body uses a consistent structure of comparison
- conclusion summarizes the comparison

### Voice
- appropriate for audience
- holds reader’s attention

### Word Choice
- specific examples
- vocabulary that compares or contrasts

### Sentence Fluency
- natural transitions between sentences and paragraphs
- variety of sentence styles

### Conventions
- correct grammar, usage, and spelling
- correct punctuation and capitalization

### Presentation
- consistent margins and spacing
- neatness
Teach
Tell students that a paragraph is the basic unit of composition. A paragraph consists of a group of sentences that are related to one main idea.

Point out that a good paragraph includes the following elements:

- A topic sentence is usually the first sentence of a paragraph. It introduces the main idea and gives a general statement.
- Supporting sentences come after the topic sentence. They develop and support the topic sentence. These sentences give supporting details, facts, and examples related to the main idea.
- The closing sentence is the last sentence of a paragraph. It restates the paragraph’s main idea using different words.

Explain to students that paragraphs are constructed to explain, define, classify, describe, sequence, compare and contrast, and evaluate. The purpose of the paragraph will help determine the topic sentence and supporting sentences to be included.

Practice
Model for students how to construct a good paragraph by writing an example on the board or on chart paper. Choose a topic sentence to develop. Point out how it is a general statement about one idea. Think out loud as you write facts, details, or examples that support the main idea. Ask students for ideas as you brainstorm a closing sentence that restates the topic sentence. Point out how the closing sentence forms a conclusion, or wraps up, the paragraph.

Guide students to identify the purpose of your paragraph. Then invite them to discuss how each element helps communicate the main idea to readers.

Apply
Have students work independently to write a paragraph. Have them choose one of the topic sentences below or encourage them to come up with their own topic sentence.

- There are many things to do in our community.
- Owning a pet is a great responsibility.
- Soccer is a better spectator sport than baseball.
- A variety of foods make healthful afterschool snacks.
- Whales are mammals.
- Our field trip turned out to be a fascinating experience.
- The school fund-raiser was a huge success.
Remind them to brainstorm several supporting details for the topic sentence they choose. Encourage students to use a graphic organizer, such as an idea web or a Venn diagram, to organize the details. Point out that the paragraph should end with a closing sentence.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of writing a paragraph.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students revise and edit their paragraphs by sharing them in small groups. Ask the group to evaluate each paragraph by asking and answering these questions:

- Does the topic sentence state the main idea in a general way?
- What is the main idea of the paragraph?
- What is the purpose of the paragraph? What will the reader learn from it?
- Do the supporting details accomplish this purpose? Why or why not?
- Have I stated my supporting details in an interesting way that readers will understand?
- Does the closing sentence restate the main idea in a new way? If not, how could it be improved?
## Writing a Paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>states one main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clearly conveys purpose of the paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives supporting facts, details, and examples related to main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begins with a topic sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists details that tell more about the topic sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses a closing sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate tone for the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses appropriate transition words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language specific to the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses a varied choice of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear, concise sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct grammar, usage, and spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct punctuation and capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph is indented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neatness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teach
Explain to students that an interpretive essay is a piece of writing in which they analyze, evaluate, and give supported opinions about a book, movie, poem, or article. An interpretive essay contains the following elements:

• A strong thesis
• A well-organized introduction, body, and conclusion
• A summation of the plot, characters, and setting
• A clear analysis of the theme, importance of the setting, and impact of literary and poetic devices
• Personal opinions and supporting evidence
• A summarizing conclusion

Practice
Model for students how to choose a thesis, or a statement that interprets the theme or message of a story. Guide students to list three pieces of supporting evidence from the chosen print or visual media. For example:

• In the film *Up*, we learn that it is only by letting go of our attachments that we truly become free.
• In the book *The Lord of the Rings*, the character Gandalf provides experience and wisdom.

Invite students to discuss their evidence in small groups.

Apply
Have students choose a thesis and list three pieces of supporting evidence from a book or a movie. Have them meet in small groups to present their theses and supporting evidence and discuss their ideas with their peers. Remind them that opinions should be clearly supported through specific references. Have students use their refined ideas to write a three-page essay that includes the features outlined on the rubric.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of an interpretive essay.

*Listening and Speaking Connection:* Invite students to share their interpretive essays in small groups. After each student presents, have the group use the rubric to discuss whether the writer included all the parts of an interpretive essay. Remind students to withhold judgment about each writer’s thesis until they have heard all supporting evidence. Ask the group to give positive, constructive feedback about each essay.
## Writing an Interpretive Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clearly analyzed subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting evidence connected to opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well-organized and of adequate length (three-page minimum)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes title, plot summary, analysis, and supporting details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes introduction, body, and summarizing conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tone appropriate for audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>precise words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persuasive words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures that connect facts to opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct grammar, usage, and spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct punctuation and capitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy to read, typed or handwritten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes essay title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teach
Explain that advertisements are a form of persuasive writing. Ads are designed to get people to buy a product or service and often use images and words to sell something. Point out that an effective visual advertisement has the following features:

- Tells a simple story quickly
- Asks the consumer to do something
- Is easy to understand
- Appeals to the consumer’s emotions using pictures, slogans, and symbols
- Is memorable

Remind students that advertisements often employ propaganda techniques: bandwagon, testimonial, loaded words, and vague generalities.

Practice
Display two print ads for products of interest to students. Ask them to give their initial reactions to each advertisement. Model for students how to analyze each ad using the above list of features. Emphasize the importance of the pictures, slogans, or symbols, and name the ideas they invoke. (For example, an envelope stamped with the word *Official* might suggest a false sense of importance.) Remind students that one’s reaction to an ad can be negative or positive.

Apply
Provide several examples of advertisements for products or services that appeal to students. Choose a variety that show different styles of layout, images, and propaganda. Have students select one ad and write a paragraph that analyzes how that ad contains each feature listed above. Remind students that they do not have to like a product in order to find an ad effective.

Assess
Invite students to share their analyses with the class. Have students determine whether each ad fulfills the requirements of an effective advertisement. Invite students to critique one another’s writing in a positive, constructive manner.

*Listening and Speaking Connection:* Point out that many advertisements are aimed at a specific age group, geographic area, or income level. This is why certain ads are associated with particular TV shows or magazines. Discuss with students the audiences to which ads might be targeted (for example, toy commercials aimed at children). Have them explain the ways that ads are effectively aimed at a particular audience. (Toy commercials are shown during cartoons, when children are the main audience.)
Essay Questions

Consider using with Voyages in English 2018
Grade 6—Chapter 5, Lesson 6 or Writer’s Workshop
Grade 7—Chapter 7, Lesson 2 or Writer’s Workshop
Grade 8—Chapter 5, Lesson 6 or Writer’s Workshop

Teach
Explain that students will be asked to answer essay questions on some tests. Point out that essay questions ask students for a written response to convey what they have learned or to apply what they have learned to a new situation. Unlike other types of test questions, essay questions are not graded with an exact answer key but rather on their completeness and organization. Point out that most essay-question tests impose a time limit so students must use their time wisely.

Tell students that to answer an essay question effectively, they should do the following:

• Look for key words in the question that will direct them to the correct writing form (compare/contrast, cause/ effect, and sequence of events).
• Brainstorm ideas using a graphic organizer to plan their writing.
• Note where gaps in information occur and think how these can be filled.
• Give specific examples that support their analysis or opinions.
• Make key points clear and easy to identify. Restate parts of the test question in their response.
• Review the response for errors, especially those that detract from reader’s comprehension.

Practice
Model for students how to plan, organize, and answer an essay question. Select an essay question related to a particular unit of study in social studies, history, or science. Textbooks often have examples of essay questions as part of their unit tests. Model how to note the key words in the question, choose an appropriate writing form and graphic organizer, and make notes for writing. Point out how to use the graphic organizer to structure their paragraphs. Use the checklist of key features to discuss the completed response with students.

Apply
Have students draft a response to this essay question:

Think about examples of historical fiction—books, movies, and TV—and compare these to nonfiction versions of the same event. Do these fictionalized versions affect our understanding of the people, places, and events of history?

Before students begin, review the rubric that will be used to evaluate their essay-question responses. Remind them to keep these key points in mind as they organize and plan their writing.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of an essay question.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students work in small groups to conduct mock debates of opposing viewpoints. Group students by whether or not their thesis statements generally agree. Have each group member share his or her writing and work as a group to compile their reasons and examples for their opinion. Then ask each group to present their position, allowing the opposing side to ask questions that challenge their findings. Remind listeners to withhold judgment until they have heard the entire presentation. Remind each group to be ready to anticipate the opposing side’s arguments and defend these challenges with specific examples.
## Essay Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>Sentence Fluency</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>response uses key words from question</td>
<td>relevant topic sentence</td>
<td>appropriate for audience</td>
<td>includes key vocabulary related to topic</td>
<td>uses complete sentences</td>
<td>correct spelling, grammar, and usage</td>
<td>writing plan is apparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>answers question thoroughly</td>
<td>appropriate organizational strategy</td>
<td>sense of conviction</td>
<td>avoids redundancy</td>
<td>uses a variety of sentence styles</td>
<td>correct capitalization and punctuation</td>
<td>neatness with consistent margins and spacing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teach
Explain to students that argumentative writing is a form of opinion writing in which they try to convince a reader of the merits of their claim using logic and evidence. Argumentative writing requires the writer to anticipate and address counterclaims and to perform research. An argumentative essay contains the following elements:

- A clearly stated position
- Evidence that supports the position
- Anticipates and refutes other viewpoints (counterclaims)
- A balanced examination of a position

Practice
Write the following on the board or on chart paper: ______ is the best day of the week. Invite students to offer suggestions for filling in the blank to this sentence. Point out that students have different opinions about which day of the week they think is the best. Write the word Monday in the blank. Ask volunteers to give reasons why Monday is the best day of the week, such as “I get to see all my friends” and “I have P.E. class.” Write the reasons on the board or chart paper. Close the exercise by writing: Others think Friday is the best day because it is just before the weekend, but I still think Monday is the best. Read or ask a volunteer to read the paragraph on the chart.

Apply
Choose one of the writing prompts. Ask students for three different words to replace the one(s) in the bracket. For example: [Apples] are the best fruit; Grapes are the best fruit; Mangos are the best fruit. Group together students who share the same opinion—apples with apples, grapes with grapes, etc. Have each group brainstorm at least three reasons that support their opinion. Ask one person from each group to report the reasons. Record the reasons on the board under the opinion: Apples are the best fruit. They are easy to take as a snack. They come in a lot of different colors. They are not too tart and not too sweet.

Have students use this brainstorming as the basis for writing an argumentative essay.

Assess
Use the rubric on page 4 to evaluate students on their understanding of argumentative writing.

Potential Prompts and Writer’s Workshop
Prompts
Substitute other words for the words in brackets [ ] to adapt the prompt to best suit your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE 1</th>
<th>GRADE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like to [ride my bike] more than I like [to swim].</td>
<td>[Rainy] days are as fun as [sunny] days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Monkeys] are the most fun animals to see at the zoo.</td>
<td>[Soccer] is the best sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Lunch] is my favorite meal of the day.</td>
<td>[Cereal] is the best breakfast food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Spring] is the most exciting season of the year.</td>
<td>[Triangles] are my favorite shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Markers] are better than [crayons] for art projects.</td>
<td>Watching a movie [at home] is better than watching one [in a theater].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Writer’s Workshop**

**Prewriting**
Explain that during the prewriting step, students will plan what they are going to say. Lead students in brainstorming topics or use the suggested prompts for the grade level you are teaching. Provide each student with a graphic organizer, such as an idea web. Guide each student to complete his or her organizer. Consider grouping together students with similar topics to help one another complete their respective organizers.

**Drafting**
Ask students to review their completed graphic organizers and add any additional information or details. Tell them to begin their piece by stating their opinion or preference. Provide word banks to those who would benefit from having them. Explain that in drafting, students should get their ideas down on paper in sentence form but shouldn’t worry about perfect spelling or punctuation.

**Content Editing**
Direct students to use the Content Editor’s Checklist as they read their drafts. Consider having students work in pairs as peer editors. Review student work in writer’s conferences and provide feedback to students individually. Reteach any characteristics of argumentative writing to individuals or the whole group as necessary.

**Revising**
Explain that in the revising step, students will fix any changes marked and copy the draft onto a sheet of paper. This is the time for students to make sure that their ideas are sound and clearly stated. Students should refer to the Content Editor’s Checklist again. Tell students to ask themselves, “Is my argument stronger than it was in the draft stage? Is there anything else I want to add?”

**Copyediting and Proofreading**
With the entire class, review the common proofreading marks shown on the inside back cover of the student and teacher editions. Direct students to use the Copyeditor’s Checklist as they read their drafts.

**Publishing**
Explain to students that the publishing step is when they get to share their work with an audience. Remind students that the look, or presentation, of their work will make a difference in how it is received by others. Discuss the many ways that students can publish their work. Emphasize that when students provide one another feedback, they should be positive and offer only constructive criticism.
### Checklists

#### Content Editor’s Checklist
- Does the beginning include a position statement?
- Does the topic sentence grab my readers’ attention?
- Do you use sensory words?

#### Writer’s Checklist for Revising
- Is the position statement stated at the beginning?
- Is the evidence presented from reliable sources?
- Do you state then disprove other positions?
- Did you use a variety of sentence types?
- Is your word choice appropriate, descriptive, and precise?
- Did you include an ending that summarizes your position statement?

#### Copyeditor’s Checklist
- Are compound sentences used correctly?
- Are words with suffixes used correctly?
- Are the sentences complete?
- Does the sentence order make sense?
- Do all the words mean what you think they mean?

#### Proofreader’s Checklist
- Are all the words spelled correctly?
- Did you use capital letters?
- Did you use the right punctuation marks?
- Are pronouns and adjectives used correctly?
## Argumentative Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opinion or preference</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a beginning that tells the opinion or preference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a middle that gives reasons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a middle that states a differing opinion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>an ending that provides a concluding statement</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a natural voice</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Choice</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>linking words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>recognizable words</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Fluency</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correct sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correct grammar</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>correct spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct punctuation and capitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Argumentative Writing**

**Teach**

Explain to students that argumentative writing is a form of opinion writing in which they try to convince a reader of the merits of their claim using logic and evidence. Argumentative writing requires the writer to anticipate other claims, refute other positions, and to perform research. An argumentative essay contains the following elements:

- A clearly stated position
- A well-reasoned and researched position
- Evidence that supports the position
- Anticipates and refutes other viewpoints (counterclaims)
- A balanced examination of a position

**Practice**

Ahead of time, obtain a copy of *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco. Write on the board Mr. Falker is a hero. Read aloud the book to the class. Say: *The teacher in this book is a hero to one of his students. Listen as I read it again. Stop me when I come to a part that gives an example of Mr. Falker acting like a hero.* List the examples on chart paper or on the board. Explain that Mr. Falker is a hero is a position statement and that they gave examples to support the position. Say: *Some would say that Mr. Falker is not a hero; he is just doing his job.* Ask volunteers to offer their opinions about whether Mr. Falker is a hero or just doing his job. Explain that argumentative writing states a position (Mr. Falker is a hero) and supports it with reasons and evidence (He stops a boy from bullying Trisha. He gets her help with her reading.) It also acknowledges that some people might disagree. (Some people think that Mr. Falker was just doing his job.)

**Apply**

Choose one of the writing prompts or let students choose. Have students write an argumentative essay using the prompt. Explain that some research will be required so that the reasons they provide will be supported by evidence. Review appropriate and reliable resources that students should use.

**Assess**

Use the rubric on page 4 to evaluate students on their understanding of argumentative writing.

**Potential Prompts and Writer’s Workshop**

**Prompts**

Substitute other words for the words in brackets [ ] to adapt the prompt to best suit your students.

**GRADE 3**

- Using a [tablet computer] is better than using a [desktop computer].
- [July] is the most fun month of the year.
- [Video games] are more fun than [board games].
- Field trips to [the museum] are the most [educational].
- Starting school two hours [later] would make students [work harder].
- Students should spend more time in [math] class than in [language arts] class.

**GRADE 4**

- The [smartphone] is the most important invention ever.
- [Roald Dahl] is a very [descriptive] author.
- The best genre of literature is [science fiction].
- The most effective way to study for a test is to [use flash cards].
- The [piano] is my favorite instrument.
- Listening to music [through headphones] is better than [through speakers].
GRADE 5

- [Checking books out of the library] is better than [buying them]
- [Cucumbers] are the best [vegetables].
- [Having a different teacher for every class] will be the best part of middle school.
- [Language arts] is the most useful subject.
- It’s easier to write a [poem] than to write a [paragraph].
- [Texting] is an important skill in life.

Writer’s Workshop

**Prewriting**
Explain that during the prewriting step, students will plan what they are going to say. Provide the students with a graphic organizer, such as a concept web, to help them plan and organize their ideas. Lead the students in brainstorming topics or use the suggested prompts for the grade level you are teaching. Argumentative writing requires conducting research in the prewriting step. Explain to students that their topic sentence (thesis) may change if the information they learn from their research does not support their thesis. Emphasize that this is OK. Consider having the students preview the Chapter 8 Study Skills activities in their textbook before beginning their research.

**Drafting**
Ask the students to review their completed graphic organizers and add any additional information or details. Tell them to begin their piece by stating the topic. Explain that in drafting, students should get their ideas down on paper in sentence form but shouldn’t worry about perfect spelling or punctuation.

**Content Editing**
Direct the students to use the Content Editor’s Checklist as they read their drafts. Consider having the students work in pairs as peer editors. Review student work in writer’s conferences and provide feedback to students one-on-one. Reteach any characteristics of argumentative writing to individuals or the whole group as necessary.

**Revising**
Explain to students that in the revising step they will fix any changes marked and copy the draft onto a sheet of paper. This is the time for students to make sure that their ideas are sound and clearly stated. Students should refer to the Content Editor’s Checklist again. Tell students to ask themselves, “Is my argument stronger than it was in the draft stage? Is there anything else I want to add?”

**Copyediting and Proofreading**
With the whole class, review the common proofreading marks shown on the inside back cover of the student and teacher editions. Direct the students to use the Copyeditor’s Checklist as they read their drafts.

**Publishing**
Explain to students that the publishing step is when they get to share their work with an audience. Remind students that the look, or presentation, of their work will make a difference in how it is received by others. Discuss with students the many ways they can publish their work. Emphasize that when students provide feedback on any work, they should be positive and offer only constructive criticism.
### Checklists

#### Content Editor’s Checklist
- Does the beginning have a clear topic sentence?
- Does the middle include at least two reasons that are well supported?
- Are the reasons clear and fully explained?
- Does the ending retell the topic sentence?
- Are opinion words used?

#### Writer’s Checklist for Revising
- Is the position statement stated at the beginning?
- Is the evidence presented from reliable sources?
- Do you state then disprove other positions?
- Did you use a variety of sentence types?
- Is your word choice appropriate, descriptive, and precise?
- Did you include an ending that summarizes the position statement?

#### Copyeditor’s Checklist
- Are compound sentences used correctly?
- Are words with suffixes used correctly?
- Are the sentences complete?
- Does the sentence order make sense?
- Do all the words mean what you think they mean?

#### Proofreader’s Checklist
- Are all the words spelled correctly?
- Is the first word of each sentence capitalized?
- Are proper nouns capitalized?
- Does each sentence end with the correct punctuation mark?
- Have you checked to be sure that no new mistakes were made while editing?
## Argumentative Writing

### Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>correct punctuation and capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>neatness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistent spacing and margins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teach

Explain the importance of argumentative writing; tell students they will be asked to do argumentative writing as part of some tests and that these skills will help them in real ways in their lives professionally and personally. Point out that argumentative writing is used to convince the reader that a given point of view is valid and well-reasoned. It can focus on a topic (i.e., pets, sports, music) or a text (i.e., the Declaration of Independence; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *The Red Pony*). The ability to compose an argument supported by evidence is an important skill. Students will be called on to use argumentative writing in high school, college, when applying for a job, and likely as part of any job they get.

Argumentative writing challenges the writer to

- be aware of and evaluate various sides of an issue or topic.
- conduct research on the topic.
- choose a position that is supported by facts.
- present that position and the evidence that supports it.
- acknowledge the existence of other positions.
- use evidence to refute arguments (counterclaims) that support other positions.

Practice

Ahead of time, bookmark several websites and gather various reference books. Explain that argumentative writing requires research. Review strategies for evaluating the reliability of a resource. As a group, create a resource reliability rubric or checklist. Evaluation criteria should include date, authority (who wrote it), and whether the source is neutral or biased. Explain that students should use this tool to evaluate the sources they will use in their articles. Facilitate a discussion and point out that when students give their opinions about what makes a source reliable, they are engaging in argument.

Apply

Choose one of the writing prompts or let students choose. Have the students write an argumentative article using the prompt. Explain that research will be required so that the reasons they provide are supported by evidence. Brainstorm resources that students can use to get information about the specific topic.

Assess

Use the rubric on page 4 to evaluate students on their understanding of argumentative writing.

Potential Prompts and Writer’s Workshop

Prompts

Substitute other words for the words in brackets [ ] to adapt the prompt to best suit your students.

**GRADE 6**

- Learning [another language] is important.
- It’s easier to write a [poem] than to write a [paragraph].
- People have become overly dependent on [technology].
- A [longer] school [day] would make students learn more.
- [Bullying] is the biggest problem in schools today.
- [Computer games] should be used as teaching tools.

**GRADE 7**

- [Graffiti] is an art form.
- [Football] is [not] too dangerous for young people.
- [Volunteering] makes a big difference in people’s lives.
- Twenty years from now, only [electric cars] will be [on the road].
- Global climate change [is largely] caused by humans.
- [Television shows] are better today than ever before.
GRADE 8

- [Worrying about the future] causes teens more stress than any other factor.
- Combining [Abraham Lincoln] and [Dwight Eisenhower] would make the perfect president.
- [Swimming] is the best form of exercise.
- [Puerto Rico] should be the 51st state.
- [Privacy] is more important than [security].
- You can learn a lot from [playing video games].

**Writer’s Workshop**

**Prewriting**

Explain that during the prewriting step, students will plan what they are going to say. Provide the students with a graphic organizer, such as a concept web, to help them plan and organize their ideas. Lead the students in brainstorming topics or use the suggested prompts for the grade level you are teaching.

Argumentative writing requires conducting research in the prewriting step. Explain to students that their topic sentence (thesis) may change if the information they learn from their research does not support their thesis. Emphasize that this is OK.

**Drafting**

Ask the students to review their completed graphic organizers and add any additional information or details. Tell them to begin their piece by stating the topic. Explain that, in drafting, they should get their ideas down on paper in sentence form but shouldn’t worry about perfect spelling or punctuation.

**Content Editing**

Direct the students to use the Content Editor’s Checklist as they read their drafts. Consider having the students work in pairs as peer editors. Review student work in writer’s conferences and provide feedback to students one-on-one. Reteach any characteristics of argumentative writing to individuals or the whole group as necessary.

**Revising**

Explain to students that, in the revising step, they will fix any changes marked and copy the draft onto a sheet of paper or use a computer. This is the time for students to make sure that their ideas are sound and clearly stated. Students should refer to the Content Editor’s Checklist again. Tell students to ask themselves: “Is my argument stronger than it was in the draft stage? Is there anything else I want to add?”

**Copyediting and Proofreading**

With the whole class, review the common proofreading marks shown on the inside back cover of the student and teacher editions. Direct the students to use the Copyeditor’s Checklist as they read their drafts.

**Publishing**

Explain to students that the publishing step is when they get to share their work with an audience. Remind students that the look, or presentation, of their work will make a difference in how it is received by others. Discuss with students the many ways they can publish their work. Emphasize that when students provide feedback on any work, they should be positive and offer only constructive criticism.
### Checklists

#### Content Editor’s Checklist

- Does the introduction state your position clearly and briefly state the reasons for the position? Does it catch the reader’s attention?
- Does the body explain the reasons and support them with facts?
- Have you included all important details?
- Have you taken out details that are not important?
- Does your conclusion summarize your arguments and express confidence that they are convincing?

#### Writer’s Checklist for Revising

- Does the beginning include the position statement?
- Is the evidence presented from reliable sources?
- Do you state then disprove other positions?
- Did you use a variety of sentence types?
- Is your word choice appropriate, descriptive, and precise?
- Did you include an ending that summarizes the position statement?

#### Copyeditor’s Checklist

- Are there any run-on sentences, rambling sentences, or sentence fragments?
- Is each sentence grammatically correct?
- Is each sentence clear and logical?
- Does the length of the sentences vary?
- Are any words redundant, repeated, or misused?

#### Proofreader’s Checklist

- Are the paragraphs indented?
- Have any words been misspelled?
- Are there errors in grammar?
- Are the capitalization and punctuation correct?
- Were new errors introduced during the editing stage?
# Argumentative Writing

## Ideas
- a claim
- alternate or opposing claim

## Organization
- a beginning that states the claim
- a middle that gives reasons that support the claim
- a middle that states then refutes opposing claims
- an ending that supports the argument presented

## Voice
- a formal voice

## Word Choice
- transitional words and phrases

## Sentence Fluency
- a variety of sentences, including sentences with compound predicates

## Conventions
- correct grammar
- correct spelling
- correct punctuation and capitalization

## Presentation
- neatness
- consistent spacing and margins

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Grades 6–8 Skill Extender 4 of 4 www.voyagesinenglish.com
Changes in Word Meanings

Consider using with Voyages in English 2018
Grade 6–Chapter 1, Lesson 5 or Chapter 7, Lesson 4
Grade 7–Chapter 1, Lesson 4 or Chapter 8, Lesson 5
Grade 8–Chapter 1, Lesson 5 or Chapter 8, Lesson 5

Teach
Explain to students that some words have multiple meanings. Discuss the following points:

• Sometimes the connotation of a word is more important than its denotation.
• Some words are culturally dependent; different words are used for the same idea or object.
• The use of slang changes the meaning of some words.
• Over time, some accepted vocabulary falls out of favor and becomes incorrect.

Practice
Guide students to recognize that the English language evolves over time. Ask students what awful means. Then explain that long ago this word meant “full of awe.” Over time its meaning changed, and today the meaning is completely negative. Point out that technological advances have also affected language. Mouse used to mean a rodent. Now it also means a computer’s input device. Geography affects language. In England, a lift is an elevator and a biscuit is a cookie. Popular culture affects language. Cool, groovy, cat, dude, and bad are words whose slang meanings are different from their literal meanings.

Have students identify at least two meanings for each of these words: guts, bug, tight, surf, web, bomb, wicked, flat, and crisp.

Apply
Have students work in pairs to write a short dialogue between two characters having a misunderstanding due to certain words that each character interprets differently. Point out that they should use at least two words whose meanings have changed over time or that have different meanings due to cultural differences.

Assess
Check that each skit includes two words with multiple meanings and that the words are used correctly in each context.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students perform their skits for the class. Ask the audience to identify the cause of the misunderstanding and to identify the words that were the basis of the misunderstanding.
**Teach**
Discuss the conventions of e-mail with students (for example, fields, salutation, body, closing, etc.). Explain the similarities between writing letters and writing e-mails. Point out that like business letters, business e-mails are more formal than personal e-mails. Remind students that business e-mails should not contain informal language, slang, and emoticons.

**Practice**
Provide students with a traditional business letter. Ask students to revise the letter into a format appropriate for an e-mail.

Remind students to use the spell-check feature to check spelling and grammar. Point out that they should still read e-mail carefully, since spell-checking programs might overlook homophones and other words that are spelled correctly but used in the wrong context.

Have students trade finished e-mails and check each other’s work.

**Apply**
Have students draft an original e-mail to a company. Remind them to use the appropriate format and style. Review and discuss the rubric with students so they understand what to include in the e-mail.

**Assess**
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of e-mail conventions.

*Listening and Speaking Connection:* Invite students to share their original business letters and e-mails, pointing out the similarities and differences between the two. Encourage the audience to ask questions about each writer’s process and results.
## E-mail Conventions

### Ideas
- clearly stated reason for writing
- information tailored to recipient

### Organization
- salutation
- ideas in body presented in a logical order
- closing

### Voice
- clear and respectful voice

### Word Choice
- business-letter etiquette

### Sentence Fluency
- variety of sentences
- avoids clichés and repetitive statements

### Conventions
- correct grammar, usage, and spelling
- correct capitalization and punctuation

### Presentation
- completed fields in e-mail
- consistent spacing and margins
Writing a Current-Events Article

Teach
Explain to students that a current-events article is a piece of writing that discusses events and issues currently in the news. A current-events article contains the following elements:

- A main topic
- An explanation of who, what, when, where, and why
- Formal language
- Details about how the event occurred and why the reader should care about it (optional)
- Illustrations, photographs, charts, or maps to emphasize points (optional)

Practice
Display and discuss the various types of current-events writing, such as newspaper articles, blog postings, Internet articles, editorial articles, and commentaries. Invite students to share their experiences with each. Point out how each type contains the elements of a current-events article and that some types, such as blogs and editorials, also include the author’s opinions, supported by facts and examples. Explain that editorial articles, letters to the editor, and political cartoons address topics that are of current interest and can be a starting point for further investigation, but help students distinguish between facts and opinions in these sources. Point out the importance of supporting visuals, such as photographs, illustrations, maps, graphs, and charts.

Apply
Have students write a one-page current-events article about a topic of interest to their peers. Provide students with newspapers and Internet news sources from which to choose a topic for investigation. Discuss resources they may use to conduct research. Explain that interviewing people in the community, including friends and family connected to the issue, may also be useful sources of information. Remind students that any generalizations they make from their source material should be supported by related facts. Encourage students to include at least one visual aid to support the information in their article.

Assess
Have students determine the form by which they will publish their current-events article. Encourage students to post completed articles on a classroom blog or web page. Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of a current-events article.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students work in small groups to create a rubric they can use to evaluate a web page or blog for its current-events content. Suggest they begin with the writing rubric and tailor it for an Internet application, which may include additional graphic elements, links, and visual aids. Have students select a particular website and use their rubrics to evaluate the content. Then invite students to present their evaluations to the class.
## Current-Events Article

### Ideas
- a clear focus on one topic
- factual information supported by research or personal experience
- topic is of current interest and audience appropriate

### Organization
- introduction tells who, what, where, when, and why
- body provides more detailed information about the topic
- conclusion summarizes and includes additional related resources or links

### Voice
- appropriate for an informative news article
- uses formal language

### Word Choice
- uses synonyms and interesting word choices appropriate to the topic
- uses language specific to the topic

### Sentence Fluency
- clear, concise sentences
- logical transitions throughout

### Conventions
- correct grammar, usage, and spelling
- correct punctuation and capitalization

### Presentation
- text elements are organized and easy to read
- consistent margins and spacing
- visual features appropriate for purpose
- neatness
Teach
Tell students that in order to find our way from one place to another, we need specific, precise directions. Directions are hard to follow if they are vague or if important details are left out. Point out that good directions include the following:
• Cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) and ordinal directions (NW, NE, SW, SE)
• Names or descriptions of landmarks
• Specific street names
• Specific distances

Practice
Provide groups of students with a map of their community. Have them find a specific location on the map and then give oral directions, one step at a time, to lead them to a second location. Be sure to use specific information such as cardinal and ordinal directions, landmarks, street names, and distances. Then invite volunteers to give similar directions, as the rest of the class follows the directions to find the location.

Apply
Have students write a short paragraph that gives directions from their school to a location in town for someone who is new to the community. Point out that they cannot assume that the student knows any of the familiar landmarks in town so their directions need to be specific and detailed. Ask students to include a simple map that illustrates their chosen route. Review the rubric so that students know what should be included in their writing.

Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of writing directions.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Have students work in small groups to take turns giving and following directions. Have the speaker keep the final destination a mystery and ask the listener to guess the location. Encourage students to work collaboratively to make revisions to their directions if listeners have difficulty following them.
### Writing Directions

#### Ideas
- states the purpose of the directions
- includes specific information
- detailed accurate and complete directions

#### Organization
- beginning
- steps in the order they will be completed
- ending destination

#### Voice
- appropriate tone written for someone unfamiliar with the area
- precise imperative sentences

#### Word Choice
- transition words
- language specific to the topic

#### Sentence Fluency
- clear, concise sentences
- logical transitions from step to step

#### Conventions
- correct grammar, spelling, and spelling
- correct punctuation and capitalization

#### Presentation
- consistent margins and spacing
- neat, legible writing or text
- visual aid appropriate for purpose
Teach
Tell students that an emergency plan is an outline of what to do in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Explain that it is important to have a plan in place and to understand it well before ever having to use it. Discuss how a plan for an earthquake or tornado would be different than one for a structural fire or flood. Explain that a good emergency plan has adjustments for any kind of emergency.

Point out that all schools and public structures must, by law, have an evacuation plan posted in the building. Have students discuss the emergency plans they practice at school. Then discuss the elements of a good emergency plan:

- Identifies a plan of evacuation specific to the structure or location
- Identifies situations that may be encountered during the disaster and what causes them to happen
- Explains what to do in a concise, step-by-step format
- Gives procedures to follow under certain circumstances and explains the purpose for each one

Explain that having an emergency plan is just as important at home as it is at school.

Practice
Discuss with students the kinds of natural disasters more common to your area and list these on the board. Then invite students who are familiar with basic first aid to share what they know. Using what they already practice at school during fire and earthquake drills, discuss what people should do before, during, and after an emergency. Compare and contrast how reacting to a fire would be different from reacting to an earthquake or tornado. Tell students that their emergency plan should have three parts. It should begin with an introduction that tells what happens during the particular disaster. The body should include a sequential plan that tells what to do during the emergency and addresses other possible situations that could arise and what to do in those events. The conclusion should sum up why it is important to have a plan like this during such a disaster.

Apply
Have students choose a disaster scenario and ask them to write a detailed emergency plan for their family to use at home. Provide them with resources to help them develop their plan, including books and Internet resources. Point out that FEMA and the American Red Cross are both good sources of information. Explain that some resources will have diagrams and illustrations that can help them understand certain procedures. Remind them that any procedures should be written so that they are easy to remember and follow when under the stress of an actual emergency.

Encourage students to share their completed emergency plans with their family. Ask them to make notes of feedback their family provides. Have students share this feedback and how they revised their emergency plans with the class.
Assess
Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of an emergency plan.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Tell students that one of the more important calls they will ever have to make is one to report an emergency. Remaining calm and knowing what to say may save someone’s life. Then review what one should do when reporting an emergency. (Identify whether to call 911 or another number in your area.)

- Stay calm.
- Give the city and state you’re calling from (very important when calling from a cell phone).
- Provide your full name
- Give your specific location or describe your surroundings.
- State your emergency.
- Stay on the line until told to hang up.
- Never, ever make a false emergency call.

Have partners role-play reporting an emergency. You may want to give students specific emergency scenarios, have them research online what should be done specifically for that scenario, and then act out making a call for the class.
## Writing an Emergency Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outlines characteristics of a specific emergency or disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes cause-and-effect details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gives accurate, concise, and complete directions</td>
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</tbody>
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| **Organization**            |
| introduction tells what happens during the particular emergency |
| body includes specific step-by-step plan on what to do |
| conclusion explains importance of having the plan in place |

| **Voice**                   |
| informative, confident |
| precise imperative sentences |

| **Word Choice**             |
| formal language with use of specific details |
| uses language specific to the topic |

| **Sentence Fluency**        |
| clear, concise sentences |
| logical sequence |

| **Conventions**             |
| correct grammar, usage, and spelling |
| correct punctuation and capitalization |

| **Presentation**            |
| consistent margins and spacing |
| neat, legible writing or text |
| visual aid is appropriate for purpose |
| enumerated steps where appropriate |