

11.3

Introduction to Research Module for ELA/Literacy

Introduction to Research Module for ELA/Literacy

Research is a near-perfect means of leveraging the integrative nature of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA/Literacy. The research process demanded by the CCSS requires both the interplay of all six [pedagogical shifts](#) and a volume of independent reading and engagement in an iterative writing process in order to create a product that demonstrates effective use of the standards and shifts. As stated in the [CCSS Key Design Considerations](#), regular engagement in the research process builds invaluable skills for college, career, and citizenship:

“To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the standards rather than treated in a separate section.”

How does the CCSS Envision Research and Writing to Present an Argument?

The CCSS for ELA/Literacy emphasize an iterative process of productive inquiry with the Research to Build and Present Knowledge strand of the writing standards. Rather than topic- or thesis-driven research in which the sources are chosen and assessed on their capacity to support a claim, the CCSS envision research as an inquiry-driven process in which the sources shape the question or problem, narrowing or broadening the inquiry as needed. Often, the research process necessitates additional sources that may continue to shape the question or problem until students are able to organize sources, claims, and understandings in support of a central claim from which they can begin to build an argument. Throughout this process, the student researcher collaborates with peers, sharing constructive feedback and building an inquiry community.

File: Introduction to Research Module for ELA/Literacy Date: 9/12/14 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2014

© 2014 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Once the researcher has established a central claim, he or she engages in an iterative writing process to articulate a developing perspective through argument writing. Students plan, write, edit, and revise, trying a new approach when necessary, attending to conventions, and adhering to a style appropriate to argument writing.

Please see the Research and Writing Process graphic on page 8 for a visual depiction of these processes and of how specific CCSS for ELA/Literacy overlap and interact.

Module 11.3 Structure

Engaging in research and writing with an end goal of presenting knowledge requires engagement in a process and contains variables inherent to inquiry.

11.3.1 models how to initiate a process of inquiry-based research using a text that is rich enough to provide multiple areas of investigation. Students read a seed text that enables them to identify topics that spark inquiry and provide entry points into the research process they engage in throughout the module. Educators may exchange the seed texts for others that can support a process of inquiry.¹ Students begin the research process in this unit by surfacing topics and crafting inquiry questions to pre-search information. Through using the seed text, students also analyze the components of an effective argument in preparation for writing and presenting their own research-based arguments later in the module. Through the latter half of the unit, students refine topics into several areas of investigation that can be reasonably supported through research, while also generating and refining additional inquiry questions. This initiation of inquiry builds the foundation for the research work in 11.3.2.

11.3.2 continues guiding students through the research process, following the same trajectory and using many of the tools, handouts, and checklists from Odell Education's Research to Deepen Understanding units. Students vet their areas of investigation from 11.3.1 and craft a specific research topic/area of investigation that anchors the research for all of 11.3.2. Students continue to pose and refine specific inquiry questions, exploring areas they wish to investigate related to their research topic/area of investigation. They find and assess sources and use close reading skills developed in previous modules as they annotate and take notes on key sources. Students organize researched material to integrate information and support analysis. As inquiry progresses, they evaluate and extend their research, synthesize their information, and express their evolving evidence-based perspectives in a brief oral presentation and ultimately in a final, written End-of-Unit Assessment. While this unit provides model sources to demonstrate a path of inquiry and research skills, these model sources do not need to be reproduced, and other sources may be used in place of them. The research process itself can be adapted for use with any topic or related source.

¹ Reasons for exchanging the seed text may include student interest or connections to other content areas. Seed texts may be excerpted; however, a seed text must support inquiry and must be grade-appropriate. It is recommended but not mandatory that a seed text be argument-based in nature, to provide students with additional opportunity to analyze the components of an effective argument.

11.3.3 guides students through a writing process during which they present their evidence-based perspectives developed in 11.3.2 in a refined, research-based argument paper. Students engage in an iterative process of writing in which they plan, edit, revise, and try new approaches to communicate their evidence-based perspectives. Students also learn how to construct claims and counterclaims fairly, building cohesion and smooth transitions among their claims. Students learn to craft in-text citations and works-cited pages that adhere to MLA style guidelines. At the end of this unit, students publish a research paper that represents the culmination of their work throughout the three units and showcases their understanding of W.11-12.1.a-e.

The Module Performance Assessment requires students to publish and enhance their research papers using and leveraging the advantages of technology to communicate information dynamically and flexibly. Students present their research succinctly, choosing a specific audience such as a panel of experts or a professional organization that has some interest in their topic. Students reconsider their arguments for this new context and, if necessary, adapt their evidence and claims concisely and knowledgeably to their new audience. Each student considers the most impactful and relevant evidence to present in a 3-5 minute video presentation. Students then view and provide feedback on their peers' video presentations, guided by the expectations of standard SL.11-12.3. It is important to prepare students for this presentation by providing various opportunities to discuss and present their research throughout the module. Many of these opportunities are present in 11.3.2 and 11.3.3, as students both discuss and briefly present their research and writing while applying the skills inherent in standards SL.11-12.1 and SL.11-12.4.

It is crucial to remember, as noted in the [9-12 ELA Prefatory Material](#), that although the lessons in the 9-12 ELA modules are detailed, they are not intended to be scripts. The lessons in this module provide an organized and granular structure for instruction that addresses the targeted standards. Teachers should exercise professional judgment and make real-time decisions to meet the needs of their students while staying true to the demands of the standards and shifts. For example, if students need more class or library time to locate and assess sources in 11.3.2 and/or revise their writing in 11.3.3, teachers should create the time and space to have students engage in the necessary practice of these skills, while holding them accountable for efficiency and growth.

Finally, it is important to note that librarians and media specialists are invaluable resources in guiding students through the research and inquiry processes, and collaboration with school staff is encouraged throughout this unit and module.

How this Module Differs from the Other Modules

In this module, students attend to and engage in iterative processes in terms of research and writing, based on a research topic/area of investigation derived from a seed text. In this sense, this module is different from non-research modules in several significant ways:

1. **Increased independence with appropriate accountability.** As students enter the stage in which they are exploring and tracking topics and initiating inquiry, students should independently be able to put into practice some of the strategies and practices taught in previous modules. A high degree of accountability is embedded within this module, as students are expected to track their progress in the research and writing processes through independent searching, reading and researching homework, and class work deliverables. These deliverables are often composed of Odell Education's handouts and tools from the [Research to Deepen Understanding and Building Evidence-Based Arguments Core Proficiency units](#). In addition to providing accountability, use of the handouts and tools helps to provide the necessary organization for students and teachers during the complex and iterative inquiry process.
2. **Specific texts are not defined in 11.3.2 and 11.3.3.** While the module places an emphasis on textual sources as the basis of claims, besides the seed text in 11.3.1 ("Hope, Despair and Memory" by Elie Wiesel), the texts for this module are not defined. Texts are not defined because: 1) students need to pursue their own paths of inquiry based on research topics/areas of investigation, credible and relevant sources, etc., and 2) the units focus on research and writing respectively, and as such, devote instructional time to direct instruction on research and writing rather than reading. The Module 11.3 instructional units that focus on research and writing processes are designed to apply to a wide variety of texts and topics, as long as the rigor of the standards is present. Although the texts are not defined, there is a modeled research thread using a model research topic/area of investigation derived from the seed text, modeled throughout the module. The teacher can use the model sources associated with this model research topic/area of investigation to demonstrate specific research processes to students. The model sources are not intended to teach specific content; they are highly complex due to the multifaceted nature of the topics derived from the seed text. These model sources may not meet students' needs and can be exchanged for other rigorous, grade-appropriate sources. However, the seed text does give students the appropriate background knowledge to access the content that the model sources demand. Additionally, some of the topics that students research from the seed text may yield exceedingly complex or inaccessible texts. To address this concern, consider recommending that students make use of free databases accessible through <http://novelnewyork.org>, such as Grolier, Gale, and ProQuest; these databases allow searches by subject/keyword and students may filter the searches so that only texts within certain Lexile ranges are returned.
3. **Academic vocabulary.** As a result of the foci of 11.3.2 and 11.3.3, specific academic vocabulary that students acquire is not identified explicitly in the lessons. However, students encounter a wide range of academic and domain-specific vocabulary as they search for, read, evaluate, and synthesize sources related to their inquiry. To hold students accountable to the acquisition of all vocabulary throughout the process, students use a vocabulary journal to track words they encounter throughout the stages of the research and writing processes. Students use a variety of strategies (L.11-12.4)

to determine the meaning of unknown words and keep track of these words, their meanings, and the strategies used to determine their meanings, in their vocabulary journals.

4. **Accountable Independent Reading (AIR)/volume of independent reading.** In order to make time for students to read texts that support the research topic/area of investigation of their choosing, students are not required to complete AIR in this module. Instead, students independently read a volume of texts that they can comprehend—predominantly informational in nature, but related to the research topic/area of investigation that interests the students and that they are evaluating for credibility. Students are held accountable for this volume as they proceed throughout the module via the specific deliverables and assessments.
5. **Instruction to support research and writing processes.** In order to support students in the research and writing processes, there is a greater need to include direct instruction in this module, particularly in 11.3.2 and 11.3.3. Additionally, students note their research progress and next steps by reflecting in a Research Journal throughout 11.3.2. Because the research process is iterative and cyclical, students reflect consistently on the process and their next steps.
6. **Assessment of research and writing processes.** Whereas other modules' lesson-level assessments may assess a reading or writing standard, the key standards requiring assessment in 11.3.2 and 11.3.3 are [W.11-12.4](#), [W.11-12.5](#), [W.11-12.7](#), and [W.11-12.8](#). It is not possible to assess these standards in a single Quick Write, as these standards are explicitly related to engagement with and in processes, rather than demonstration of knowledge or skills. To this end, some lesson-level assessments measure a student's ability to engage in an aspect of the writing or research process in an authentic and rigorous way, with the student providing evidence of having completed the necessary steps in the process. For example, a student may be required to describe in writing why credibility and accessibility are important to consider when examining potential sources ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.8](#)).

How this Module Uses Odell Education's Research to Deepen Understanding Units

11.3.2 guides students through a research process based on Odell Education's Research to Deepen Understanding units. 11.3.2 follows the same trajectory and uses many of the tools, handouts, and checklists from Odell Education's approaches and materials. However, this module is different from Odell Education in that it operates at the lesson level and follows through to research-based argument writing products.

11.3.3 guides students through a writing process based on Odell Education's Building Evidence-Based Arguments units. 11.3.2 borrows from some of the same language and

practices and uses several of the same tools, handouts, and checklists. However, similarly to 11.3.2, this unit is different from Odell Education in that it operates at the lesson level and students craft a research-based argument paper.

How this Module Leverages Collaboration

While this module scaffolds towards independence and demands students perform a large amount of research and writing independently, this module also leverages the advantages of collaborative work. During various aspects of the inquiry process (e.g., generating inquiry questions and areas of investigation; evaluating and analyzing sources) students work with their peers, forming small groups that support each other and are accountable to one another. Similarly, during the writing work in 11.3.3, students work in heterogeneous groups to help with revising, editing, and trying new approaches to communicate their knowledge. The [Common Core Standards for Speaking and Listening](#) that are addressed by many of the collaborative activities in this module have a particular application for students' career readiness.²

How this Module Leverages Technology

Technology and “media forms old and new” are built into the CCSS key design considerations quoted in the introduction above. This module recognizes that in the twenty-first century, vast amounts of information are at most students' fingertips, and this volume of information brings with it its own challenges. Students learn how to assess the credibility of sources with these challenges in mind. Additionally, students use technology in the Module Performance Assessment to re-conceptualize their research using video technology.

This module also recognizes that technology can assist students in organizing their research and writing, and encourages teachers to use free online resources such as Google Docs as a means of achieving this end. In terms of the writing process, review features such as Track Changes and Comments in Microsoft Word are useful for students in sharing their revisions with their teachers and peers. Finally, teachers are encouraged to use cloud-based tools such as Google Drive or Dropbox to leverage collaboration among peers and research communities.

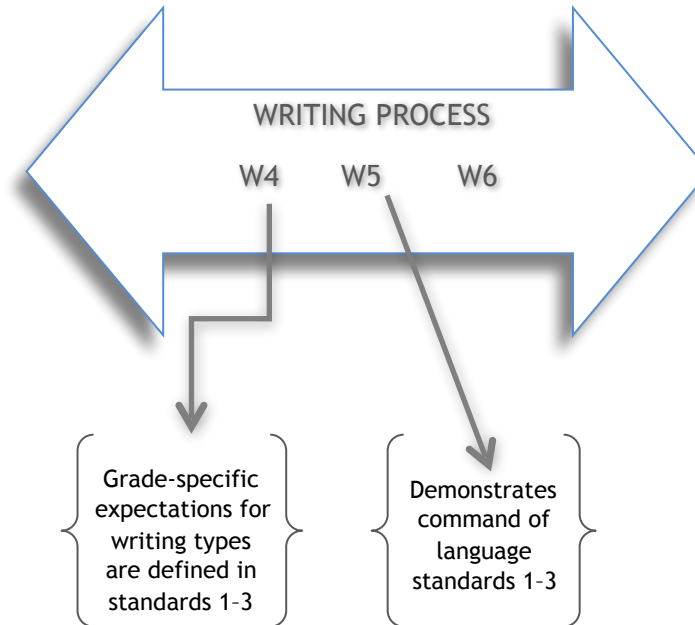
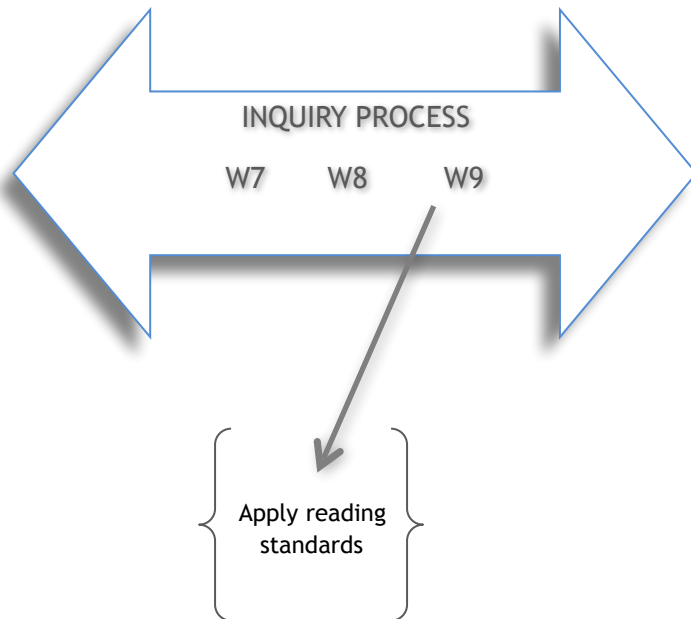
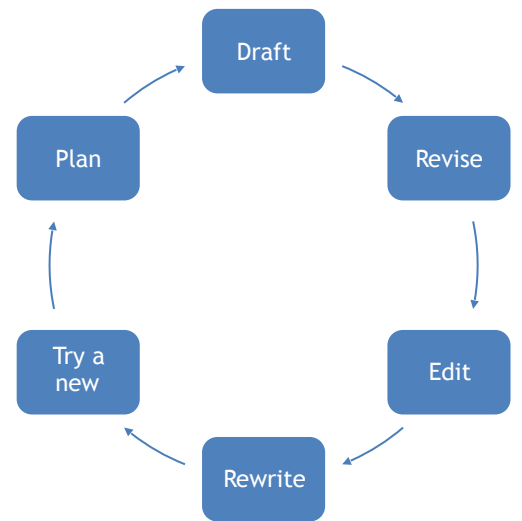
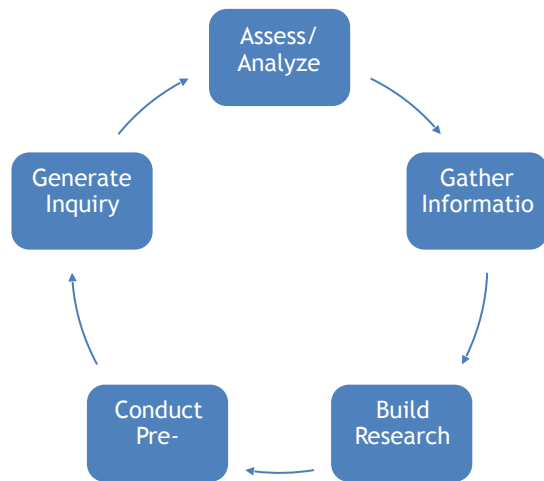
How this Module can Accommodate More Advanced Students in Reading and Exploring Topics Independently

This module comes with a high degree of accountability and detailed structure to guide students through the research and writing processes in a rigorous manner. Some students may

² See Conley, David T. *Getting Ready for College, Careers, and the Common Core: What Every Educator Needs to Know* for more information on the application of these standards to the career pathway.

benefit from a lighter touch and greater independence as they proceed with these processes. For example, in order to increase independence, teachers may elect to provide certain tools as Differentiation Considerations. As long as the standards are met and students engage in inquiry as envisioned by the CCSS, educators should feel free to modify this curriculum to best suit the needs of their students.

Research and Writing Process Graphic



File: Introduction to Research Module for ELA/Literacy Date: 9/12/14 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2014

© 2014 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License