

OELAS: Supporting English Language Learners' Academic Writing Contents

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What are Genres?

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Adapted from Scaffolding Writing Through the Teaching and Learning Cycle, Spycher (2017)

In order to provide scaffolding for students to write various academic genres, or text types, teachers themselves need to understand the notion of “genre.” Broadly speaking, genres are socially recognized ways of using language that enable people to express their ideas about the world, establish relationships with others, and accomplish various goals. In order to understand how different written genres do these things, it is important to consider the social purpose, overall organization and structure, and specific language features of each genre.

Purpose. Fundamentally, written genres are distinguished by their social purposes — that is, what the text is intended to accomplish within a particular context and content area and the desired effect on the people who will be reading it (the audience). Social purposes include recounting (e.g., telling about an experience or an event), entertaining (e.g., entertaining and sometimes teaching others through a fictional story or memoir), informing (e.g., telling about a historical event or science facts), explaining (e.g., helping others to understand a political system or a science process), and persuading (e.g., getting others to believe something or take action on an issue). These social purposes shape the genre, guide how it is structured and organized, and determine which language resources are most powerful to use in the text.

Organization. Each genre has evolved to be structured and organized in predictable ways and to leverage predictable language features. For example, a fictional story — the purpose of which is generally to entertain and to convey certain overarching messages or themes — tends to have a lot of action and is typically presented as a sequence of events in three major stages:

- *Orientation* — in which the author *orients* the reader by introducing the setting and characters and possibly foregrounding the plot.
- *Complication* — where things get *complicated* and the plot thickens.
- *Resolution* — where the problem is *resolved* and the reader comes away with a satisfied feeling, possibly having learned an important life lesson.

Language features. Different genres leverage particular language resources to achieve their social purpose. For example, stories tend to have the following:

- Dialogue (so the reader can get into the head of characters and understand what they are thinking and feeling and what they are like, as well as to move the plot along, in ways that “show” and don’t merely “tell”).
- Descriptive vocabulary (which helps readers imagine the world in which the characters live or evoke certain emotions).

These language features help the text achieve its purposes of entertaining the reader and (often) conveying universal themes and life lessons. The following figure shows a few different genres that students read and write in school, highlights their social purposes, and provides some information on the typical organization and language features of each genre. The pages that follow include a collection of genre cheat sheets¹, organized by grade span, that provide additional detail about some of the text types students encounter most frequently in school.

¹ These genre cheat sheets were adapted from a variety of sources, which are provided at the end of this document for further reading.

	Argument	Explanation	Information Report	Recount	Story
Example Texts	<i>Climate Change is a Problem Created by Humans</i>	<i>How Deserts are Formed</i>	<i>Insect Habitats</i>	<i>A Day in the Life of a Civil War Soldier</i>	<i>The House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros
Social Purpose	Arguing for a position: To persuade people to think or act in a certain way	Explaining how things work: To explain how things work or why things happen	Giving information: To provide information about a topic	Telling what happened: To retell events or recount a series of events over a long timespan	Entertaining: To entertain To convey universal themes or life lessons
Text Structure & Organization (Stages)	Thesis/Claim Arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point Elaboration Reinforcement of thesis/Call for action	Phenomenon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification Description of the phenomenon Explanation (e.g., sequential, casual, factorial)	General Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification Definition Classification Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features Characteristics, appearance Activities, behavior 	Orientation Record of events (Evaluation or re-orientation)	Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events Complication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events (Evaluation) Resolution
Some Typical Language Features	Text connectives: <i>first of all, on the other hand, therefore</i> Modality: <i>should, might needlessly, obviously</i>	Text connectives: <i>as a result, however, consequently</i> Casual subordinating conjunctions: <i>because, since, as a result of</i>	Text connectives: <i>for example, in contrast</i> Verbs in the timeless present (action and relating): <i>Bees are... Insects have... Butterflies eat...</i>	Text connectives: <i>after that, during this time, in the end</i> Dates and times to orient the reader (e.g., <i>In 1860</i>) Verbs in the past tense	Text connectives: <i>once upon a time, after a long while, suddenly, soon</i> Verbs in the past tense: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action (for events) Thinking and feeling (for inner thoughts and intentions) Saying (for dialogue)

Narrative Texts/Stories Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To entertain and/or teach by posing a problem that needs to be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Orientation that introduces the characters and setting, and sometimes hints at the problem.	Once upon a time there were three little pigs. The first little pig built his house out of straw, the second little pig built his house out of sticks, and the third little pig built his house out of bricks. They felt safe in their little homes.
	Complication: a sequence of events, where a problem arises.	One night, the big bad wolf, who dearly loved to eat fat little piggies, came along and saw the first little pig in his house of straw. The wolf blew the house in and ate the first little pig.
	Resolution in which the problem is resolved.	The wolf then came to the house of sticks. He knew the house could not withstand him, and he blew that house in too and ate the second little pig. Finally, the wolf arrived at the house of bricks. "Let me in, let me in!" cried the wolf "Or I'll huff and I'll puff 'til I blow your house in!" "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin," replied the pig. The wolf huffed and puffed but he could not blow down the brick house. The smart little pig was safe and lived to tell the tale!
Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbs in the past tense (<i>saw, was, lived</i>). ● A variety of verb types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doing/action verbs that describe the actions of the characters (<i>huffed, blew</i>). ○ Thinking/feeling/sensing verbs that describe characters' feelings, thoughts, or experiences (<i>felt, knew</i>). ○ Saying verbs that mark and describe dialogue or reported speech (<i>said, cried, replied</i>). ● Sequential/transitional words and phrases to indicate sequence of events, time, or a change in the plot (<i>one night, a long time ago, later</i>). ● Prepositional phrases to give specific details about place or time. ● Pronouns and reference devices to refer back to or introduce something to come (<i>they, him, it</i>). 	

Literary Response Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To provide an opinion, or interpretation, of a story, using evidence from the text and good reasons.	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction and opinion statement	<p>How does CJ change in this story?</p> <p>I think CJ learns that the world around him is beautiful. At the beginning of the story, he was sad that he couldn't ride in a car. He was also sad because he didn't have things. But then his Nana said, "Why do we need a car? We have a bus that breathes fire!" Also, his Nana told him to listen to the guitar the man was playing on the bus. Then, CJ saw all the beautiful things around him because the music gave him the feeling of magic. CJ changed a lot in the story. At the end, he didn't think his neighborhood was ugly. He thought the world around him is wonderful and amazing.</p> <p>(From <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i> by Matt de la Peña)</p>
	Reasons and evidence that support the opinion	
	Conclusion	
Language Features	<p>Connectives and conjunctions (e.g., at the beginning, but, and, also)</p> <p>Past tense verbs (<i>saw, gave, didn't think</i>)</p> <p>Citation phrases to indicate textual evidence (Nana told him, ...)</p> <p>General academic vocabulary and literary language (<i>wonderful, amazing, bus that breathes fire</i>)</p>	

Information Report Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To describe, define, classify, or categorize information.	
Text Organization and Structure	General statement that identifies, the topic and classifies it into a particular category.	Frogs are amphibians, animals with cold-blood and moist skin. Frogs spend most of their time in water. They have long, powerful legs on the lower part of their body that make them strong swimmers. They have webbed feet that help them glide through water.
	Descriptive facts & details about the topic are grouped together in categories (i.e. characteristics, appearance, behavior, etc.)	
	Order of body sections (categories) not necessarily important.	
	Reports do not always have a conclusion but may be rounded off by a general statement about the topic.	
Language Features	Generalized participants (vs. individuals).	Frogs have long, strong legs. (Not “The frog has...”)
	Long noun phrases with embedded clauses and prepositional phrases.	They have [long, powerful legs on the lower part of their body that make them strong swimmers .]
	Variety of Verb Types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being and having verbs to describe characteristics and attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is/are, become, seem, etc. ○ Has/have, possess, own, etc. • Doing/can do (action) verbs to describe activity or behavior. Verbs in the timeless present tense.	Frogs are amphibians. Frogs have long, strong legs. Frogs spend most of their time in water. They capture insects with their long, sticky, tongues.

Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To explain how things work or why things happen.	
Text Organization and Structure	Identification and description of phenomenon or thing to be explained.	Honeybees are important for pollination. When a honeybee crawls around a flower, she is dusted with pollen. The bee then flies to another flower, carrying pollen in her branched hair. When the bee lands on another flower, pollen falls onto the flower’s stigmas. Now, a new plant will grow.
	Explanation about the phenomenon or thing, organized logically into categories (rather than sequentially, like a story).	
	Sometimes, but not always, there is a conclusion, which may reinforce the description of the thing that has been explained.	
Language Features	<p>Often generalized participants vs. individual participants (“honeybees collect” and not “one honeybee collects”).</p> <p>Long noun phrases. (The sticky pollen from flowering plants clings to their bodies.)</p> <p>Simultaneous connectives: as, while, during, etc.</p> <p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, due to, etc.</p> <p>Nominalization that condenses entire processes (in the form of verbs, such as pollinate) into “things,” or noun or noun phrases (Honeybees are critical to pollination).</p> <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense. (Something that always is: Honeybees are insects.)</p>	

Opinion Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To state the way one thinks or feels about something. Opinion writing develops students' understanding of argument writing.	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/State the opinion	Dogs are excellent pets to own. They are fun to play with. Also, dogs keep you company. Another reason they are great pets is because they can protect your house. For example, if a burglar tries to break in to your house, the dog would bark and scare him away. I think everybody should have a dog because they are good pets.
	List of reasons/evidence	
	Conclusion/Reiteration of opinion/recommendation (optional)	
Language Features	Connectives and conjunctions (because, when, one reason, the reason, for example, ...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Another reason</u> they are great pets is <u>because</u> they can protect your house. • <u>Also</u>, they exercise a lot.
	Modal auxiliary verbs (e.g., can, should, must, ought to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think everybody <u>should</u> have a dog because they are good pets.
	Evaluative language that indicates author's beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs are <u>excellent</u> pets to own. • Another reason they are <u>great</u> pets is because they can protect your house. • I think everybody should have a dog because they are <u>good</u> pets.

Mathematical Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To explain how a problem was solved or how a problem could be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Identification and/or description of the problem and solution to be explained.	I know that the paperclip is 3 centimeters long. I used the centimeter cubes to measure from one end point to the other and then I counted the cubes. This took 3 centimeter cubes so the paperclip is 3 centimeters long.
	Causal or sequential explanatory sequence of steps.	
	Conclusion that includes the complete solution and/or the final step(s) to arrive at the solution.	
Language Features	<p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, as a result, therefore, etc.</p> <p>Prepositional phrases that provide detail about where or when things are, why things occur, or how things compare to other things (e.g., from one end point to the other).</p> <p>Domain specific and general academic vocabulary.</p>	

Mathematical Argument Text Cheat Sheet (Grades TK–1)

Purpose	To propose, defend or refute an approach to a mathematical problem, idea, or analysis	
Text Organization and Structure	Position Statement or claim	$8 + 1 = 3 + 5$ Is this statement true or false?
	Evidence and supporting elaboration that may include computation and the author’s interpretation	The statement is false. $8 + 1 = 9$ and $3 + 5 = 8$. 8 is not the same as 9 so the statement must be false.
	Optional conclusion/Reiteration of position	
Language Features	Connectives and conjunctions (This is not the same <u>so</u> the statement must be false. This is untrue <u>because</u> the two sides are not equal.) Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief (The statement is <u>false</u> .) Domain specific and general academic vocabulary (equation, equal to, statement)	

Narrative Texts/Stories Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	To entertain and/or teach by posing a problem that needs to be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Orientation that introduces the characters and setting, and sometimes hints at the problem.	<p>For many years, the Sun and the Wind had lived together in harmony. But one day, they happened to have a quarrel when both of them claimed to be stronger. At last they agreed to have a trial of strength.</p> <p>“Here comes a traveler. Let us see who can strip him of his cloak?” said the Sun.</p> <p>The Wind agreed and chose to have the first turn. He blew in the hardest possible way. As a result, the traveler wrapped his cloak even more tightly about him.</p> <p>Then it was the turn of the Sun. At first he shone very gently. The Sun went on shining brighter and brighter. The traveler felt hot and, before long, he took off his cloak and put it in his bag.</p> <p>The Wind was forced to accept his defeat and agreed, at least in this case, that the Sun was stronger.</p>
	Complication: a sequence of events, where a problem arises.	
	Resolution in which the problem is resolved.	
Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbs in the past tense. • A variety of verb types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doing/action verbs that describe the actions of the characters. ○ Thinking/feeling/sensing verbs that describe characters’ feelings, thoughts, or experiences. ○ Saying verbs that mark and describe dialogue or reported speech. • Sequential/transitional words and phrases to indicate sequence of events or a change in the plot. • Adverbial time phrases to describe time. • Prepositional phrases to give specific details about place or time. • Pronouns and reference devices to refer back to or introduce something to come. 	

Information Report Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	<p>To describe, define, classify, or categorize information.</p> <p>To describe the way things are, typically focusing on classes of things rather than individuals.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	General statement that identifies, the topic and classifies it into a particular category.	Frogs are amphibians, animals with cold-blood and moist skin. Their skin has a layer of thin mucus that protects the skin from drying out.
	Descriptive facts & details about the topic are in categories (i.e. characteristics, appearance, behavior, etc.)	Frogs spend much of their time in water. They have long, powerful legs on the lower part of their body that propel them through water. They have webbed feet which help them glide through water and sticky pads that allow them to climb and stick to trees.
	Order of body sections (categories) not necessarily important.	Frogs use their long, sticky tongues to capture their prey. They are carnivores and eat any small animal that they see.
	Reports do not always have a conclusion but may be rounded off by a general statement about the topic.	
Language Features	Generalized participants (vs. individuals).	Frogs have long, strong legs. (Not “The frog has...”)
	Long noun phrases with embedded clauses and prepositional phrases.	They have [webbed feet with sticky pads that help them glide through the water and allow them to climb and stick to trees.]
	<p>Variety of Verb Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being and having verbs to describe characteristics and attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is/are, become, seem, etc. ○ Has/have, possess, own, etc. • Doing/can do (action) verbs to describe activity or behavior. <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense.</p>	<p>Frogs are amphibians.</p> <p>Frogs have long, strong legs.</p> <p>Frogs spend most of their time in water. They capture insects with their long, sticky, tongues. Their tongues are so sticky that they can capture an insect that’s almost twice its weight.</p>

Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	<p>To explain how things, work or why things happen.</p> <p>Common explanation genres include: Sequential explanation, casual explanation.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	<p>Identification and description of phenomenon to be explained.</p>	<p>Salmon have a unique life cycle in which they return to the place of their birth to lay their eggs. Adult salmon lay their eggs in freshwater rivers in special nests in the gravel called redds. When the eggs hatch and become alevins, the alevins leave their redds to feed. At this point they are known as fry and they grow quickly. Once salmon are over a year old they are known as parr. Parr stay in freshwater for between one and four years, feeding on small insects and growing larger. After 1-4 years, the parr become smolts and head out to sea as adult salmon. Adult salmon travel great distances at sea to rich feeding grounds, ultimately returning to the rivers where they were born to lay their eggs.</p>
	<p>Casual or sequential explanatory sequence of events.</p>	
	<p>Sometimes, but not always, there is a conclusion, which may reinforce the description of the thing that has been explained.</p>	
Language Features	<p>Often generalized participants vs. individual participants (“Salmon live in rivers.” and not “the salmon lives in the river.”)</p> <p>Long noun phrases (“Salmon scales are coated with a layer of mucus, a slimy substance, which help it glide easily through water.”)</p> <p>Simultaneous text connectives: as, while, during, etc.</p> <p>Sequential text connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, due to, etc.</p> <p>Nominalization, which condenses entire processes (in the form of verbs, such as pollute) into “things,” or noun or noun phrases. (People pollute rivers and streams. Pollution is impacting salmon health. This impact results in the decline of salmon populations.)</p> <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense (something that always is- “Salmon are fish. Fish have gills.”)</p>	

Opinion/Argument Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	<p>To take a position on an issue and justify it.</p> <p>To persuade the reader to agree to a certain viewpoint or take a certain action.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/ Position Statement	Energy use at school must be reduced. Even though there are many electronic devices that students can benefit from, there is still much that can be done to conserve power and reduce energy consumption in schools.
	Series/List of arguments plus supporting elaboration that includes quotes, statistics, examples, and other evidence	First of all, electronic equipment uses too much energy. Therefore, computer screens should be turned off when not in use. Another reason is that other equipment like lights and air conditioners also use a lot of energy. Students and teachers should turn off lights when they leave the room. Also, air conditioners should be turned down.
	Acknowledgement of counterpoint (optional)	
	Conclusion/ Reiteration of position plus recommendation/call to action (optional)	We can all save energy if we think more about saving power. We must start reducing energy consumption now!
Language Features	Connectives and conjunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>First of all</u>, electronic equipment uses too much energy. • <u>Also</u>, air conditioners should be turned down.
	Modal auxiliary verbs (i.e. can, should, must, ought to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <u>should</u> pay for plastic bags they use for their shopping. Making people pay for these plastic bags <u>would</u> encourage them to use reusable bags.
	Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Surprisingly</u>, the health problems of eating too much hit poor people the hardest. • Depending on the zoo, animals are fed once or twice daily. This <u>destroys</u> their natural feeding pattern.
	Citation phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The International Campaign to Ban Landmines estimates</u> that 100 million mines have been laid throughout the world. • <u>According to Dr. Curt Richter of Johns Hopkins University</u>, “The dietary habits of rat and man are almost identical.”
	Domain specific and general academic vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is still much that can be done to <i>conserve</i> power and <i>reduce energy consumption</i> in schools.

Literary Response Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	To propose and defend an interpretation of a text- often, but not always, based on analysis of the characters, setting, plot, theme, or author’s craft.	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/ Position Statement	Mama’s feelings change and she realizes that the quilt is very important. By the end of the story, both Mama and Grandma spent their winter evenings working on the quilt. Even while they were cooking and baking their Christmas treats, they still worked on the quilt. We know that the quilt becomes important to Mama because she spends so much time working on it with Grandma.
	Reasons and supporting evidence that support the position statement	
	Conclusion/ Reiteration of position	
Language Features	<p>Connectives and conjunctions (i.e. however, similarly, therefore)</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (i.e. can, should, must, ought to)</p> <p>Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief</p> <p>Citation phrases (i.e. In line 3, the author...; According to the text...)</p> <p>Domain specific (i.e. metaphor, onomatopoeia) and general academic vocabulary</p>	

Mathematical Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	To explain how a problem was solved or how a problem could be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Identification and/or description of the problem and solution to be explained.	There is \$65 left to spend. With that money, I would buy 2 magnet kits. Each magnet kit is \$30. $\$30 + \$30 = \$60$. I would then buy one package of poster boards. The package of poster boards costs \$5. $\$60 + \$5 = \$65$. After that I will have spent all of the money that is left.
	Causal or sequential explanatory sequence of steps.	
	Conclusion that includes the complete solution and/or the final step(s) to arrive at the solution.	
Language Features	<p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, as a result, therefore, etc.</p> <p>Clarifying connectives: For example, that is, to illustrate, in other words</p> <p>Passive voice that removes agency (the doer) in actions or focuses on a process (e.g., <i>The decimal is converted to a fraction because the other terms are fractions</i>).</p> <p>Prepositional phrases that provide detail about where or when things are, why things occur, or how things compare to other things (e.g., <i>the sum of all the sources, a common denominator for all the X values, 2020 is between 2019 and 2021</i>).</p> <p>Domain specific and general academic vocabulary.</p>	

Mathematical Argument Text Cheat Sheet (Grades 2–3)

Purpose	To propose, defend or refute an approach to a mathematical problem, idea, or analysis	
Text Organization and Structure	<p>Position Statement or claim</p> <p>Evidence and supporting elaboration that may include computation, data, statistics and the author’s interpretation</p> <p>Optional conclusion/ Reiteration of position</p>	<p><i>Mia said Figure Q and Figure R have equal areas and equal perimeters. She supported her thinking by saying that any two figures made of an equal number of unit squares always have equal areas and equal perimeters. Is Mia correct?</i></p> <p>Mia is incorrect. Only the areas of the two figures are equal. Both figures have an area of 12 square units. The perimeters of the figures are not equal. Figure Q has a perimeter of 14 centimeters, but Figure R has a perimeter of 16 centimeters. Any two figures with an equal number of unit squares have to have equal areas but not equal perimeters.</p>
Language Features	<p>Connectives and conjunctions (<u>Therefore</u>, the solution provided is proven false; <u>Further</u>, the equation is incorrectly written; <u>Therefore</u>, the final answer is inaccurate.)</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (The student <u>should</u> change the scale of the graph to intervals of 10s; The student <u>can</u> write the solution in this form because it will not change the solution.)</p> <p>Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief (Using this approach would get the solution <u>faster</u> than the one provided; Option A is a <u>more efficient</u> method of graphing the function.)</p> <p>Evidence with citation phrases (<u>According to</u> Figure 3.5, “The rate of consumption of Harry and Potter is almost identical, except at point C.”)</p> <p>Domain specific and general academic vocabulary (Based on the <u>function</u> $y=3x + 5$, the <u>y-intercept</u> is <u>located</u> at <u>coordinate</u> (0,5).)</p>	

Narrative Texts/Stories Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	To entertain and/or teach by posing a problem that needs to be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Orientation that introduces the characters and setting, and sometimes hints at the problem.	For many years, the Sun and the Wind had lived together in harmony. But one day, they happened to have a quarrel when both of them claimed to be stronger. At last they agreed to have a trial of strength.
	Complication: a sequence of events, where a problem arises.	“Here comes a traveler. Let us see who can strip him of his cloak?” said the Sun. The Wind agreed and chose to have the first turn. He blew in the hardest possible way. As a result, the traveler wrapped his cloak even more tightly about him.
	Resolution in which the problem is resolved.	Then it was the turn of the Sun. At first he shone very gently. The Sun went on shining brighter and brighter. The traveler felt hot and, before long, he took off his cloak and put it in his bag. The Wind was forced to accept his defeat and agreed, at least in this case, that the Sun was stronger.
Language Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbs in the past tense. ● A variety of verb types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doing/action verbs that describe the actions of the characters. ○ Thinking/feeling/sensing verbs that describe characters’ feelings, thoughts, or experiences. ○ Saying verbs that mark and describe dialogue or reported speech. ● Sequential/transitional words and phrases to indicate sequence of events or a change in the plot. ● Adverbial time phrases to describe time. ● Prepositional phrases to give specific details about place or time. ● Pronouns and reference devices to refer back to or introduce something to come. 	

Information Report Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	<p>To describe, define, classify, or categorize information.</p> <p>To describe the way things are, typically focusing on classes of things rather than individuals.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	General statement that identifies, the topic and classifies it into a particular category.	Frogs are amphibians, animals with cold-blood and moist skin. Their skin has a layer of thin mucus that protects the skin from drying out.
	Descriptive facts & details about the topic are in categories (i.e. characteristics, appearance, behavior, etc.)	Frogs spend much of their time in water. They have long, powerful legs on the lower part of their body that propel them through water. They have webbed feet which help them glide through water and sticky pads that allow them to climb and stick to trees.
	Order of body sections (categories) not necessarily important.	Frogs use their long, sticky tongues to capture their prey. They are carnivores and eat any small animal that they see.
	Reports do not always have a conclusion but may be rounded off by a general statement about the topic.	
Language Features	Generalized participants (vs. individuals).	Frogs have long, strong legs. (Not “The frog has...”)
	Long noun phrases with embedded clauses and prepositional phrases.	They have [webbed feet with sticky pads that help them glide through the water and allow them to climb and stick to trees.]
	<p>Variety of Verb Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being and having verbs to describe characteristics and attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is/are, become, seem, etc. ○ Has/have, possess, own, etc. • Doing/can do (action) verbs to describe activity or behavior. <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense.</p>	<p>Frogs are amphibians.</p> <p>Frogs have long, strong legs.</p> <p>Frogs spend most of their time in water. They capture insects with their long, sticky, tongues. Their tongues are so sticky that they can capture an insect that’s almost twice its weight.</p>

Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	<p>To explain how things work or why things happen. Common explanation genres include: sequential explanation, causal explanation.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	<p>Identification and description of thing to be explained.</p>	<p>All owls are equipped with special adaptations that make them efficient predators. Keen eyesight allows them locate quarry even on dim nights. Sensitive, directional hearing helps locate concealed prey. Some species can even hunt in complete darkness using sound alone to guide them to a successful kill. An owl’s flight is silenced by special wing feathers, that muffle the sound of the air rushing over the surface of the wing. This allows owls to hunt by stealth, taking their victims by surprise. It also allows owls to listen for prey movements while still flying.</p>
	<p>Causal or sequential explanatory sequence of events.</p>	
	<p>Sometimes, but not always, there is a conclusion, which may reinforce the description of the thing that has been explained.</p>	
Language Features	<p>Generalized participants vs. individuals (“owls eat” and not “an owl ate”).</p> <p>Long noun phrases. (Spectacled owls have striking masks that are formed by their dark circles of disk feathers surrounded by white plumage around their eyes.)</p> <p>Simultaneous connectives: as, while, during, etc.</p> <p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, due to, etc.</p> <p>Passive voice that removes agency (the doer) in actions or focuses on a process. (Old growth forests are cut down to create farmland. Tracking devices are placed on the wings to monitor flight and hunting patterns.)</p> <p>Nominalization that condenses large amounts of information into a noun or noun phrase. (Chemical contamination is considered to be one of the most detrimental threats to owl populations.)</p> <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense.</p>	

Opinion/Argument Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpos	<p>To take a position on an issue and justify it.</p> <p>To persuade the reader to agree to a certain viewpoint or take a certain action.</p>	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/ Position Statement	<p>Energy use at school must be reduced. Even though there are many electronic devices that students can benefit from, there is still much that can be done to save power and reduce energy consumption in schools.</p> <p>Firstly, electronic equipment uses too much energy. Therefore, computer screens should be turned off when not in use. Secondly, other equipment like lights and air conditioners also use a lot of energy. Students and teachers should turn off lights when they leave the room. Air conditioners should be turned down.</p> <p>We can all save energy if we think more about saving power. We must start reducing energy consumption now!</p>
	Series/List of arguments plus supporting elaboration that includes quotes, statistics, examples, and other evidence	
	Acknowledgement of counterpoint (optional)	
	Conclusion/ Reiteration of position plus recommendation/call to action (optional)	
Language Features	Connectives and conjunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Therefore</u>, we need to make people pay for the bags they use. • <u>Further</u>, when people try to tag in dangerous places, they run the risk of harming themselves or others.
	Modal auxiliary verbs (i.e. can, should, must, ought to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <u>should</u> pay for plastic bags they use for their shopping. Making people pay for these plastic bags <u>would</u> encourage them to use reusable bags.
	Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Surprisingly</u>, the health problems of eating too much hit poor people the hardest. • Depending on the zoo, animals are fed once or twice daily. This <u>destroys</u> their natural feeding pattern.
	Citation phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The International Campaign to Ban Landmines estimates</u> that 100 million mines have been laid throughout the world. • <u>According to Dr. Curt Richter of Johns Hopkins University</u>, “The dietary habits of rat and man are almost identical.”
	Domain specific and general academic vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is time that serious attention be paid to helping more of these people become more imaginative and creative with their aerosols.

Literary Response Text Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	To propose and defend an interpretation of a text- often, but not always, based on analysis of the characters, setting, plot, theme, or author’s craft.	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/ Position Statement	The reader knows Gonzalo thinks he is clever for coming up with the equation because it is something that is not taught in school and “Big Brain, Mr Smoltz, [Gonzalo’s] eighth grade math teacher, hasn’t even heard of it.” Since teachers are usually thought to be more knowledgeable than students, but in this case Gonzalo points out that he has more knowledge than his teacher, the reader knows he feels he is clever. Additionally, Gonzalo feels proud of the equation. The reader knows Gonzalo is pleased with himself for coming up with the equation because he names it after himself by calling it “Garcia’s Equation.” Typically, people assign their name to something if they feel particularly proud of it. Therefore, Gonzalo feels both clever for creating the equation and proud of the equation.
	Series of reasons and supporting evidence and elaboration, including quotes and paraphrases directly from the text under study, that support the position statement.	
	Conclusion/ Reiteration of position	
Language Features	<p>Connectives and conjunctions (i.e. however, similarly, therefore)</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (i.e. can, should, must, ought to)</p> <p>Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief</p> <p>Citation phrases (i.e. In line 3, the author...; According to the text...)</p> <p>Domain specific (i.e. metaphor, onomatopoeia) and general academic vocabulary</p>	

Mathematical Explanation Text Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	To explain how a problem was solved or how a problem could be solved.	
Text Organization and Structure	Introduction/ Position Statement	<p>There is \$60 left to spend. With that money, I would buy 2 magnet kits. Each magnet kit is \$30. $\\$30 + \\$30 = \\$60$. I would then buy three packages of poster boards. One package of poster boards costs \$5 so three would cost \$15. $\\$60 + \\$15 = \\$75$ but I have a coupon for 20% off my purchase. I will only need to pay 80% of the original cost: $.80 \times \\$75 = \\60. After that I will have spent all of the money that is left.</p>
	Causal or sequential explanatory sequence of steps.	
	Conclusion that includes the complete solution and/or the final step(s) to arrive at the solution.	
Language Features	<p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, as a result, therefore, etc.</p> <p>Clarifying connectives: For example, that is, to illustrate, in other words</p> <p>Passive voice that removes agency (the doer) in actions or focuses on a process (e.g., <i>The decimal is converted to a fraction because the other terms are fractions</i>).</p> <p>Prepositional phrases that provide detail about where or when things are, why things occur, or how things compare to other things (e.g., <i>the sum of all the sources, a common denominator for all the X values, 2020 is between 2019 and 2021</i>).</p> <p>Domain specific and general academic vocabulary.</p>	

Mathematical Argument Text Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

Purpose	To propose, defend or refute an approach to a mathematical problem, idea, or analysis	
Structure	Position Statement or claim	If I need 2 pounds of chicken to make my recipe, I should do my chicken shopping at Raley’s. Even though Raley’s charges \$5.99 per pound and Von’s charges \$5.49 per pound, the 20% coupon that I have for Raley’s makes their chicken a better deal. After the coupon, my chicken from Raley’s will cost \$9.59 while the chicken from Von’s would have cost \$10.98.
	Evidence and supporting elaboration that may include computation, data, statistics and the author’s interpretation	
	Optional conclusion/ Reiteration of position	
Language Features	<p>Connectives and conjunctions (<u>Therefore</u>, the solution provided is proven false; <u>Further</u>, the equation is incorrectly written; <u>Therefore</u>, the final answer is inaccurate.)</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (The student <u>should</u> change the scale of the graph to intervals of 10s; The student <u>can</u> write the solution in this form because it will not change the solution.)</p> <p>Evaluative language that indicates author’s belief (Using this approach would get the solution <u>faster</u> than the one provided; Option A is a <u>more efficient</u> method of graphing the function.)</p> <p>Evidence with citation phrases (<u>According to</u> Figure 3.5, “The rate of consumption of Harry and Potter is almost identical, except at point C.”)</p> <p>Domain specific and general academic vocabulary (Based on the <u>function</u> $y=3x + 5$, the <u>y-intercept</u> is <u>located</u> at <u>coordinate</u> (0,5).)</p>	

Sources and Further Reading

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Excerpt from The Life Cycle of a Salmon by Bobby Kalman (approx. 900L)

A salmon is a fish. Fish are vertebrates. A vertebrate is an animal that has a backbone. A backbone is a row of bones in the middle of an animal's back. Like most fish, salmon are bony fish. Bony fish have hard skeletons.

A salmon has a sleekly shaped body. This shape allows a salmon to move easily through water. The salmon swims using body parts called fins. It has strong muscles in its body. The muscles control the fins. They also give the salmon a lot of power. Salmon are strong swimmers!

A salmon's body is covered with tough, thin scales. Scales protect a salmon when it rubs against objects such as jagged rocks. The scales are coated with a layer of mucus, or a slimy substance. Mucus helps the salmon move its body easily through water.

Salmon begin their lives inside eggs as embryos, or developing animals. Tiny salmon, called alevins, hatch from the eggs in the early spring. Alevins cannot swim. After about a month, alevins grow into fry that can swim and find food. When they are a few months old, some species of fry develop parr marks, or spots. These fry are known as parr. When fry and parr are ready to leave their freshwater homes, they are called smolts. Smolts swim to saltwater habitats where they continue to grow. Fully grown salmon return to freshwater, where they become mature.

STEPS FOR ANALYZING TEXTS

Focus/Questions	Analysis
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main purpose of the text?• Does the text have multiple purposes throughout?	
<p>Structure/Organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the text(s) or portion of the text structured/organized?• What structural/organizational stages are included in the text? (See genre cheat sheet)	
<p>Language Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What language does the text afford the reader to use to talk and write about at the text, paragraph, sentence and/or word level?	

Explanation Texts Cheat Sheet (Grades 4–6)

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Text Organization and Structure	<p>Identification and description of thing to be explained.</p> <p>Causal or sequential explanatory sequence of events.</p> <p>Sometimes, but not always, there is a conclusion, which may reinforce the description of the thing that has been explained.</p>	<p>All owls are equipped with special adaptations that make them efficient predators. Keen eyesight allows them locate quarry even on dim nights. Sensitive, directional hearing helps locate concealed prey. Some species can even hunt in complete darkness using sound alone to guide them to a successful kill. An owl’s flight is silenced by special wing feathers, that muffle the sound of the air rushing over the surface of the wing. This allows owls to hunt by stealth, taking their victims by surprise. It also allows owls to listen for prey movements while still flying.</p>
Language Features	<p>Generalized participants vs. individuals (“owls eat” and not “an owl ate”).</p> <p>Long noun phrases. (Spectacled owls have striking masks that are formed by their dark circles of disk feathers surrounded by white plumage around their eyes.)</p> <p>Simultaneous connectives: as, while, during, etc.</p> <p>Sequential connectives: first, next, finally, before, etc.</p> <p>Causal connectives: when, because, so that, due to, etc.</p> <p>Passive voice that removes agency (the doer) in actions or focuses on a process. (Old growth forests are cut down to create farmland. Tracking devices are placed on the wings to monitor flight and hunting patterns.)</p> <p>Nominalization that condenses large amounts of information into a noun or noun phrase. (Chemical contamination is considered to be one of the most detrimental threats to owl populations.)</p> <p>Verbs in the timeless present tense.</p>	

Text 1

Computers are machines which allow people to electronically work with and save complex information very efficiently. They are also becoming part of our social lives. The basic computer system has two parts, the hardware, including parts such as a monitor, keyboard, printer, scanner and mouse or touch pad, and the software which includes the Operating System (OS).

Hardware is the physical part of computers which means it can be seen and touched. It includes the Central Processing Unit (CPU), which does the actual work of computers, the circuit board or motherboard, and built in disk drives. Information is entered into computers from a keyboard or from storage devices like USBs, DVDs or MP3 players. The monitor screen shows the information which has been put into the computer. The mouse or touch pad is used for navigation of the screen.

Software is the information that computers use to manage (e.g. open, run, create, save, convert) other information. This information is referred to as a program or application and is stored on a disk which is a storage device. The Disk drive is the mechanism that runs the disk. The Random Access Memory or RAM is where computers store the information which is currently being used. The operating system most commonly used on personal computers is "Windows" which is produced by Microsoft.

Business people regularly use computers to perform their work. Through the use of computers, they create professional looking documents that can be quickly shared with their peers and clients. Students and people in the community use computers to learn and, through internet service providers, create programs and platforms in digital communities for social networking.

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?

Text 2

Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Pakistan. As a child, she became an advocate for girls' education when the Taliban began to destroy girls' schools. She gave speeches publicly criticizing the Taliban for their ban on girls' education. At eleven years old, Malala began blogging for the BBC, where she described living under the Taliban's law against girls' education.

With this growing public platform, she continued to speak out for the right of all women to an education. She was awarded Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize in 2011. Her advocacy resulted in the Taliban issuing a death threat against her.

On October 9, 2012, a gunman shot 14-year-old Malala when she was traveling home from school. The shooting resulted in a massive outpouring of support for Malala. She survived the attack, and has continued to advocate for girls' education. On her 16th birthday, she addressed the United Nations. In 2014, seventeen year-old Malala became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?

Text 3

During the Civil Rights Movement there was much debate about the effectiveness of violent versus non-violent tactics. Despite the conflicting points of view that existed at the time, it is clear that violence should not create more violence. In a 1965 interview, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. indicated that violence and oppression could lead to more violence when he said, "It is not a threat but a fact of history that if an oppressed people's pent-up emotions are not nonviolently released, they will be violently released." However, he went on to argue that, "a strong man must be militant as well as moderate."

While violence can lead to more violence, it doesn't have to. Each group or individual has a choice in how to react. As King proved, a strong individual can choose to be moderate rather than violent, even when dealing with a brutal situation. Although other civil rights leaders of the era believed that violence could and should create more violence, King clearly demonstrated that much can be accomplished without resorting to more violence.

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?

Text 4

Food is taken in by the mouth and is cut and chewed by the teeth. The muscular tongue turns the chopped up food and this helps to mix the food with the saliva from the salivary glands. The saliva contains an amylase enzyme (also known as ptyalin) which begins the digestion of starch and changes this to a simple sugar called maltose. The tongue then moves the moistened food to the back of the mouth where swallowing pushes the ball of food (bolus) into the esophagus.

Muscular movements called peristalsis push the food down the esophagus into the stomach. Once the food arrives, the stomach secretes hydrochloric acid, the enzymes pepsin, which begins digestion of proteins, and rennin, which works on milk. The partly digested food called chyme passes through the pyloric sphincter into the first part of the small intestine.

The first part of the small intestine is the duodenum. The duodenum receives fluids from the pancreas and gall bladder that continue digestion of food. First the alkaline nature of the bile and an enzyme called trypsin is then able to continue the breakdown of proteins to amino acids. The intestine walls have small protrusions which are richly supplied with blood vessels. The now simple food molecules are absorbed through the walls of these villi into the blood stream.

Water is absorbed from the remaining food in the large intestine and the remaining waste passes through the colon to the anus where it is expelled.

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?

Text 5

When my great grandmother Anna was a little girl, long before she came to America, she lived in a small *shtetl* with her mother, papa, and baby sister Magda, near Tver in Russia. Life was made harder yet whenever the czar's soldiers came. "Why do they do this to us, Momma?" Anna cried to her mother. As her mother rocked Anna and Magda in her arms, she whispered, "I don't know my child, I don't know..."

When it was safe, Anna's mother took them into the kitchen. Soon Anna's papa came home. When they all sat down, Anna's mother placed two candlesticks on the table. She climbed up on the warming stove and pulled down something that was lovingly covered with an embroidered cloth. Underneath was a magnificent china tea set. It was Friday and the sun had set.

Anna's mother lit the candles and whispered prayers that began Shabbat. "Tell us again, Momma... Tell us about the tea set," Anna teased...

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?

Text 6

I know that the sum of all the sources of greenhouse gas emissions should equal 1. My plan was to subtract the sum of the given sources from 1. The remaining fraction would be the fraction of electricity.

First, I needed to convert 0.125 into a fraction because the other terms were fractions. 0.125 as a fraction is $\frac{1}{8}$. Then, I wrote the equation $\frac{x}{10} + \frac{x}{8} + \frac{x}{5} + \frac{x}{4} + Y = 1$ with Y representing electricity. Next, I had to find a common denominator for all of my 'x' values. It was 40. Then, I converted the x values into equivalent fractions and got $\frac{4}{40} + \frac{5}{40} + \frac{8}{40} + \frac{10}{40}$. When I added those up I got $\frac{27}{40} + Y = 1$. Last, I subtracted $\frac{27}{40}$ from 1 and got $\frac{13}{40}$.

Therefore, the amount of electricity that contributes to greenhouse gas emissions is $\frac{13}{40}$ of the total amount.

To which genre is this excerpt most closely aligned?

What elements of the text's structure and language helped you determine the genre?