

The goal of English language arts (ELA) is for all students to read, understand, and express their understanding of complex, grade-level texts. To accomplish this goal, students must understand how words work to develop meaning. Students must also be able to manipulate the written word and express thoughts in a way that delivers meaning accurately and clearly. To develop this understanding requires not only a basic knowledge of grammar, but also an ease of use with language and the ability to represent the same idea in multiple ways.

The ELA Guidebooks lessons include both explicit grammar instruction and grammar taught in context of students' writing. The lessons make use of **mentor sentences** from the unit texts to serve as models for students to imitate in their own writing in grades 6-12. For grades 3-5, lessons include strategies from **The Writing Revolution**® (TWR®) to build students' writing capacity across the units following a writing progression.

Use this guide to

1. Understand what students' written language should look like at each grade level.
2. Target specific grammar skills through **mentor sentences** in grades 6-12 and **The Writing Revolution**® activities for grade 3-5.
3. Identify places where students are missing knowledge about language and locate from an earlier grade level what to work on individually or during small-group instruction.

For example, if a few students in grade 6 are having difficulties varying sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style, use the list at the top of grade 6 to identify in what grade students were originally taught the skill. Go to that grade level (grade 5 in this instance), to locate possible resources to use when working with the grade 6 students individually or during small-group instruction.

GRADE 6

Students should enter sixth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-5)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1 and 3)
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-5)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-5)
- Differentiate when to use formal and informal English (grade 4)
- Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for reader interest, meaning, and style (grade 5)

GRADE 3

Students should enter third grade being able to

- Write in print and cursive (grades K-2);
- Use basic parts of speech correctly (grades K-2);
- Use basic subject/verb agreement (grade 1);
- Produce complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation (grades K-2);
- Use commas in a series to separate single words and contractions correctly (grades 1-2);
- Generalize learned spelling patterns (grade 2);
- Consult reference materials to check spelling (grade 2);
- Know the difference between formal and informal English (grade 2).

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter third grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout third grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to
 - a. Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood)
 - b. Use regular and irregular plural nouns (e.g., lifeàlives)
 - c. Use correct subject/verb agreement and pronoun/antecedent agreement
 - d. Use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs correctly depending on what they modify
 - e. Use subordinating conjunctions correctly
 - f. Form complex sentences
 - g. Use quotation marks in written dialogue
 - h. Choose words and phrases for effect

Lessons throughout the grade 3 ELA Guidebooks units support this work. Embedded **TWR**® optional activities and core supports can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave third grade](#).

GRADE 4

Students should enter fourth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-3)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1 and 3)
- Produce complete simple, compound, and complex declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences (grades K-3)
- Use commas in a series to separate single words, contractions, and quotation marks with dialogue correctly (grades 1-3)
- Generalize learned spelling patterns and consult reference materials to check spelling (grades 2-3)
- Choose words and phrases for effect (grade 3)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter fourth grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout fourth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Use relative pronouns, relative adverbs, and modal auxiliary verbs
 - b. Form and use prepositional phrases
 - c. Use commonly confused words correctly
 - d. Recognize and correct fragments and run-on sentences
 - e. Use commas with quotation marks and before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence
 - f. Choose punctuation for effect and words and phrases to convey ideas precisely
 - g. Differentiate when to use formal and informal English

Lessons throughout the grade 4 ELA Guidebooks units support this work. Embedded [TWR](#)[®] optional activities and core supports can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave fourth grade](#).

GRADE 5

Students should enter fifth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-4)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1 and 3)
- Produce complete simple, compound, and complex declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences (grades K-3)
- Use commas in contractions, with quotation marks, to separate single words in a series, and before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence (grades 1-4)
- Spell grade-level words correctly and consult reference materials to check spelling (grades 2-4)
- Choose words, phrases, and punctuation for effect and to convey ideas precisely (grades 3-4)
- Differentiate when to use formal and informal English (grade 4)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter fifth grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout fifth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions
 - b. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense
 - c. Use correlative conjunctions
 - d. Use commas in a series of phrases or clauses
 - e. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence
 - f. Use a comma to set off the words yes and no and in direct address
 - g. Punctuate titles of works
 - h. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for reader interest, meaning, and style

Lessons throughout the grade 5 ELA Guidebooks units support this work. Embedded **TWR**[®] optional activities and core supports can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave fifth grade](#).

GRADE 6

Students should enter sixth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-5)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1 and 3)
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-5)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-5)
- Differentiate when to use formal and informal English (grade 4)
- Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for reader interest, meaning, and style (grade 5)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter sixth grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout sixth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Ensure pronouns are in their proper case
 - b. Use intensive pronouns
 - c. Correct vague pronoun use or inappropriate shifts
 - d. Use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements
 - e. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language
 - f. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style
 - g. Maintain consistent style and tone

Lessons throughout the grade 6 guidebook units support this work. Access [additional lessons for grade 6](#) that can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave sixth grade](#).

GRADE 7

Students should enter seventh grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-6)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1, 3, and 6)
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-6)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-6)
- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (grade 6)
- Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style (grades 5-6)
- Maintain consistent style and tone (grade 6)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter seventh grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout seventh grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Choose sentence types to signal differing relationships among ideas
 - b. Place phrases and clauses in a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced or dangling modifiers
 - c. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives
 - d. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy

Lessons throughout the grade 7 guidebook units support this work. Access [additional lessons for grade 7](#) that can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave seventh grade](#).

GRADE 8

Students should enter eighth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-6)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1, 3, and 6)
- Place phrases and clauses in a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced or dangling modifiers (grade 7)
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-7)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-7)
- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (grade 6)
- Choose language that expresses ideas precisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy (grade 7)
- Vary sentence patterns by choosing sentence types to signal differing relationships among ideas and for reader/listener interest and style (grades 5-7)
- Maintain consistent style and tone (grades 6-7)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter eighth grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout eighth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Form and use verbs in active and passive voice and in various moods to achieve particular effects
 - b. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood
 - c. Use punctuation to indicate a pause or break and an ellipsis to indicate an omission

Lessons throughout the grade 8 guidebook units support this work. Access [additional lessons for grade 8](#) that can be used with individual students or during small-group instruction to support students in developing their writing skills.

View an example of what students should produce when they [leave eighth grade](#).

GRADES 9/10

Students should enter ninth grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-6, 8)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1, 3, and 6)
- Place phrases and clauses in a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced or dangling modifiers (grade 7)
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-7)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5, 8)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-8)
- Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language (grade 6)
- Choose language that expresses ideas precisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy (grade 7)
- Vary sentence patterns by choosing sentence types to signal differing relationships among ideas and for reader/listener interest and style (grades 5-7)
- Maintain consistent style and tone (grades 6-8)

View an example of what students should produce when they [enter ninth grade](#).

Students should build on this foundation throughout ninth and tenth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Use parallel structure
 - b. Use various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations
 - c. Use a semicolon to link two or more closely related independent clauses and use a colon to introduce a list or quotation
 - d. Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual

View examples of what students should [produce in high school](#).

GRADES 11/12

Students should enter eleventh grade being able to:

- Use parts of speech correctly (grades K-6, 8)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement (grades 1, 3, and 6)
- Place phrases and clauses in a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced or dangling modifiers (grade 7)
- Use correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement
- Place phrases and clauses in a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced or dangling modifiers
- Use commas correctly (grades 1-7)
- Use other punctuation correctly (grades 1-5, 8-10)
- Use parallel structure (grades 9-10)
- Spell correctly (grades 2-10)
- Use various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations (grades 7-9)
- Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (grades 9-10)
- Maintain consistent style and tone (grades 6-10)

Students should build on this foundation throughout eleventh and twelfth grade.

1. *Reinforce the skills students gained in earlier grades.* When conducting shared writing or displaying models of student writing, locate examples and discuss with students how those examples are formed correctly.
2. *Expand student skills.* Explicitly teach students how to:
 - a. Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references as needed
 - b. Observe hyphenation conventions
 - c. Vary syntax for effect, consulting references for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading

ADDITIONAL TEACHER RESOURCES FOR BUILDING GRAMMAR KNOWLEDGE

[WriteAlong Lessons from Imagine Learning](#)

Site includes interactive, targeted editing and revision lessons for grades 3-8. Each lesson includes a video and a student practice sheet with formative assessment.

[Mechanics from the Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)

Site includes information and examples for some of the more difficult grammatical concepts, such as sentence clarity, dangling modifiers, parallel structure, and gerunds, infinitives, and participles (verbals).

[Grammar Presentations at Grammar Bytes!](#)

Site includes handouts and PowerPoint presentations for a wide variety of grammatical skills and concepts, which are free to teachers. Enroll in online grammar tutorials through the same sponsor, using the [directions to register](#).

[Grammar Exercises at Grammar Bytes!](#)

Site includes student practice exercises in comma splices and fused sentences, fragments, irregular verbs, commas, parallel structure, misplaced and dangling modifiers, apostrophes, pronoun agreement, pronoun case, pronoun reference, subject-verb agreement, and word choice.

[Image Grammar](#)

Harry Noden introduces the idea of “brushstrokes” to enhance student writing at the sentence level. The text provides lessons for each brushstroke—participial, absolute, appositive, adjectives shifted out of order, action verbs. This is best suited for grades 7-12.

[Grammar Instruction from Jeff Anderson](#)

The “Write Guy,” Jeff Anderson provides direction on integrating explicit grammar instruction using student writing. He has written several professional texts that support this work for teachers.

The following writing samples represent student work which meets the grade-level standards for reading, writing, and language. Given these are samples, they do not represent the only way a student might meet the grade-level standards. These samples also do not represent a specific performance level on an assessment.

Each writing sample is annotated for alignment to the grade-level standards for language (L.1, L.2, L.3).

END OF GRADE 2

Things sure have changed since the ox-cart man was alive! My family does not grow food **or** make things for market throughout the year. My family doesn't have anything to sell in town in October. We go to the grocery store when we need a **cooking pot, food, or candy** and buy it with money. It also does not take us ten days to get to the store. **We take** a car, and it only takes us ten minutes. We do not plan our meals for the season anymore. My parents make a grocery list and plan meals for a couple of weeks. Sometimes my parents pick up fast food at a restaurant. We also do not make candles for light. **We have electricity, and we buy our candles at the store.** Technology makes it easy to produce large amounts of goods and services at a time. Foods and goods can be purchased on computers, and kids **don't** have to help grow and make food. That is how things have changed.

Use of a coordinating conjunction

Correct pronoun and noun use

Correct use of commas in a series

Subjects and verbs agree

Compound sentence with proper capitalization and punctuation

Correct use of contractions

END OF GRADE 3

Louisiana Purchase - Opinion Writing

The American citizens' lives were improved after the Louisiana Purchase because they gained valuable new land and resources. Some Americans wanted the Louisiana Purchase for resources because the land was very valuable. Specifically, they were hoping to find a better life for their family and they needed more land for farming and businesses. In addition, Americans needed the Port of New Orleans because rivers allowed the people to transport their goods to market. After completing the deal with Napoleon, the American citizens were able to expand their land and trading. Consequently, American citizens benefited greatly from the purchase of the Louisiana territory.

The Native Americans benefited the least from the Louisiana Purchase because they lost their land and lives. Many people invaded the new territory, but the Native Americans did not want all these strange people invading and trampling their land. Additionally, the United States took over the land and they hoped that if the Native Americans adopted their way of life they could all live together in peace. However, the United States government wanted all of the Native Americans to move to a land that had been "reserved" for them because they would actually be isolated from the European Americans. Some of the Native Americans refused to sign the treaties that would send them to the reservations, so the United States government forced them to move. In conclusion, the Native Americans did not gain better lives after the purchase of the Louisiana territory.

Correct pronoun/antecedent agreement

Use of a subordinating conjunction

Superlative adjective

Use of coordinating conjunction with proper punctuation

Use of transitions
Comparative adjectives

END OF GRADE 4

American Revolution – Opinion Writing

Dear King George III,

This war is justified! You have mistreated the colonists and taxed us unfairly. We deserve freedom!

How have you mistreated us? First, you enforced the Quartering Act and unfair law. You forced colonists to take care of the British Soldiers. They invade our houses and use all of our supplies for free. Also, you created the Navigation Act, a law saying we can only trade with England. This is unfair because we aren't able to sell the goods we work hard making. Clearly, you are not a kind king who cares for his people!

You have taxed us unfairly! We have no representation in Parliament. We cannot vote, so we have no say in the taxes we pay. You make us pay the Stamp Act and Tea Act, two unfair taxes. The Stamp Act taxes every piece of paper. That is ridiculous! The Tea Act is unfair because it taxes everyone's favorite drink. Why would you do that? The taxes are outrageous!

After your mistreatment, we deserve to be free! We want the freedom of religion. We deserve to go to church where we want. We also want the freedom to choose where we live. We fought hard during the French and Indian War. We should be able to live on that land. Ultimately, the colonists want to be free!

In closing, this war was justified. We have fought against you and deserve justice!

Sincerely,

George Washington

Use of a modal auxiliary

Use of a prepositional phrase

Correct use of a comma before a coordinating conjunction

Correctly use frequently confused words

Use of a relative pronoun

END OF GRADE 5

Shutting Out the Sky - Opinion Writing

Although traveling to America afforded myself and my family a wealth of opportunity, it was not worth the grave sacrifices we had to make to have a chance at the American Dream. Traveling to America was an option for us immigrants. We had to make a lot of sacrifices when we left our home in Italy. While traveling to America afforded myself and my family a wealth of opportunity it was not worth the grave sacrifices we had to make to have a chance at the American Dream.

The living conditions within New York City were deplorable. The tenements we lived in were cheaply built and dilapidated. It was clear that no improvements had been made, even as more people kept moving in. We stayed in dark, airless rooms with lots of smelly garbage. We also didn't have an inside toilet.

Because money was our number one priority, us children were expected to work or peddle all day. I stood in line with hundreds of other men and waited for hours, but still couldn't find work. So I started peddling in the streets among the large crowds filled with other panhandlers hurting my success. Because there were no jobs, saving money was hard, so there were many nights we didn't eat. The jobs that were available for children had poor conditions, and left kids overworked with illnesses and body pain.

School was not an option for us. It was my responsibility to help the family with money. I worked jobs during the day and had other responsibilities at home too. I had to cook, clean, and keep up the house. Everybody had to work, even the girls, so that left no time for school.

The risks in moving to America were not worth it. We had many problems, like us not being able to attend school because we have to work. Emigrating to America wasn't worth all of this.

Form and use perfect verb tense

Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions

Use of a comma following an introductory element

END OF GRADE 6

The central theme of both “Steve Jobs’ Stanford Commencement Address” and “The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination” by J.K. Rowling is that failure can be productive and can lead to success. Although presented somewhat differently, both Jobs and Rowling give a similar message to the college graduates. They describe events in their own lives that have led them to believe that without failure there can be no success.

Steve Jobs introduces the idea of failure being beneficial when he describes his experiences at Apple. He says that it was not until he was fired by Apple, the company he started, and had nothing to lose that he felt free enough to be successful. He says, “It turns out getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me.” Job goes on to explain that during that time period he started the NeXT company and Pixar and got married. All of these events were the result of his failure at Apple. Even though he was devastated and embarrassed at being a public failure, Jobs loved what he was doing. He pushed through failure to be successful.

Similarly, in her speech “The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination,” Rowling indicates failure is beneficial because it means “a stripping away of the inessential.” Rowling says the time in her life when she failed was a dark time. Unlike Jobs, she didn’t know what she wanted to do and her failure wasn’t public. Like Jobs, though, she points out that the experience of failure was painful. Rowling goes on to explain that during that dark time of her life she was able to strip away what wasn’t important and finish only the work that mattered to her. She says that you “never truly know yourself, or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by adversity.” Rowling, like Jobs, learns about herself and what is most important. The pain from failure allows her to become as successful as she is today.

Neither Jobs nor Rowling has an easy time becoming the successful people the world knows today. These two remarkable people used their experiences from failure to persevere and succeed. Although their failures were different, the results were the same. Both Jobs and Rowling were personally successful and successful in the eyes of the world.

Use punctuation to set off non-restrictive elements

Sentence patterns are varied for meaning, reader interest, and style

Use pronouns in the proper case

Pronouns have clear antecedents and are in proper number and person

END OF GRADE 7

A Christmas Carol tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, who learns that valuing money and work over relationships with others can lead to a bad fate. Scrooge is a miserly, uncaring man at the beginning of the story. He is a man of “business.” He focuses only on his work and doesn’t take time for relationships with others. When the Ghost of Jacob Marley, Ebenezer Scrooge’s late business partner, appears, Scrooge says, “But you were always a good man of business...” (Dickens 24). The ghost then teaches Scrooge what he should learn about life, which is the same lesson that Dickens teaches the reader. The “business” of mankind is to show kindness and compassion to all. Dickens teaches this theme through the points of view, actions, and interactions among various characters.

Marley’s Ghost has to “walk abroad among his fellow men” (Dickens 23). Marley’s Ghost visits to warn Scrooge that Scrooge may end up the same way. Scrooge is frightened by the ghost’s warning and point of view. Scrooge believes Marley did all the right things by focusing on work, and Scrooge cannot understand why Marley might have such a terrible fate. Marley’s Ghost responds, “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!” (Dickens 24). When the ghost says “my trade,” he means his work, and the ghost says his work is not as important as mankind. Marley’s Ghost realizes caring for others and focusing on people is more important than work.

Then Scrooge observes the ghost’s chains. The ghost points out that Scrooge’s own “ponderous chain” is longer than his was “seven Christmas Eves ago” (Dickens 23). This shows the reader that all people, like Marley and Scrooge, create their own “chains” to wear based on how they treat others. The chain could be light or it could be heavy and it all depends on what they consider important when interacting with others. This means that Scrooge will have the same fate as Marley unless he changes his ways.

The Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and To Come visit Scrooge. They show him the links on the chain he has already created, the links he is adding to his chain, and the links he will add if he continues to care more about work and money than his fellow man. The Spirit of Christmas Past reminds Scrooge of the girl he loved but gave up for his own selfish desires. The Spirit of Christmas Present shows Scrooge images of Tiny Tim and the Cratchits who love and enjoy being together even though they don’t have much money. The Spirit of To Come predicts Tiny Tim’s death. Then Scrooge “with an interest he had never felt before” (Dickens 55) shows concern for Tiny Tim and begins to understand Marley’s Ghost’s warning. Scrooge realizes that he must make mankind his business and choose the needs of others over greed and selfishness. Scrooge promises to live by the lessons each Spirit has taught him and live a life full of joy, compassion, and understanding.

Marley’s Ghost shows what can happen if people choose greed and selfishness over love and understanding. Through the way the characters think, act, and interact in *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge and the reader learn that focusing on business or work will lead to a bad fate and focusing on relationships and compassion for others will lead to a good fate.

Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives

Signal differing relationships among ideas by choosing among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences

Place phrases and clauses within a sentence and ensure there are no dangling or misplaced modifiers.

END OF GRADE 8

Roosevelt's Reasons for Promoting Conservation

Theodore Roosevelt speaks to a group of governors, statesmen, and conservationists when he delivers his speech "Conservation as a National Duty." In the speech, Roosevelt identifies conservation as a priority. He describes his passion for conservation and gives several reasons why we need to stop wasting natural resources. He argues that conservation is an issue of the progress, patriotism, and morality of the American people.

Roosevelt begins his speech by saying the American people have become more civilized. He claims that civilization has led to "a steadily increasing growth...from the actual resources of the country." Roosevelt goes on to describe how people who live in cities don't understand the demands they make upon nature because they are no longer close to nature. This leads to his argument that progress is dangerous because as we become dependent on natural resources and seek more of them, we think less about how we will replace resources and what we will do when they run out.

In the second part of his speech, Roosevelt describes how using shared resources is what brought the country together and resulted in the development of the Constitution. He argues, "the wise use of all our natural resources, which are our national resources as well, is the great material question of today." Roosevelt claims that conservation is about patriotism because we have to ensure our nation can continue as it has before with "the lead over all nations." Even though our nation has grown and developed together, Roosevelt says "our position in the world has been attained by the extent and thoroughness of the control we have achieved over nature." Thus, if we don't consider how that growth has led to destruction and think about how we are going to continue to develop as a nation, Roosevelt warns our resources could disappear and our nation would be in danger.

Lastly, Roosevelt indicates conservation is an issue of morality and doing what is right for generations to come. He says, "As a people we have the right and the duty, second to none other but the right and duty of obeying the moral law." Roosevelt says, "Dark will be the future!" if we do not think about what we are or are not doing for future generations. He compares thinking about the future of resources to a man wisely using his property for the well-being and future for his children. Roosevelt believes that we should use what we have wisely and leave it better for those to come.

After explaining why conservation is needed, Roosevelt ends his speech by providing examples of what states are doing to protect national resources. He claims it is our duty as citizens to consider conservation as one part of the larger "problem of national efficiency, the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the Nation." Roosevelt argues that conservation must be a priority to ensure progress continues, to guarantee the greatness of our nation, and to leave our resources in a good place for future generations.

Use active voice to achieve a particular effect

Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission

Correctly use verbs in the conditional mood

END OF GRADE 9

Mention the word teenager and you are likely met with the same stereotypical reaction: What's wrong with them? Many would describe their traits as moody, reckless, erratic. For centuries, these words have been used to describe the behavior and decision making of teens, and yet little research has ever been done to uncover the why...until now. While many still hold the belief to be true that teen brains are wired to engage in risky behavior and the parts of the brain responsible for self-control are far from developed, recent studies have proven this to be nothing more than a stereotypical myth. What researchers and psychologists have discovered is that the teen years are instead a time of enormous opportunity as well as a highly functional and adaptive period of brain development. Contrary to popular belief, it turns out that being a teenager actually has a positive impact on one's decision making ability.

One of the researchers debunking the myth that teens are wired to engage in risky and dangerous behavior is B.J. Casey of Weill Cornell Medical College. Casey explains that part of the bad rap teens have suffered has come from studies suggesting that teens make dangerous and risky decisions because the reward systems in their brains are especially sensitive, while the parts of the brain responsible for monitoring self-control are not fully developed. A new study from Casey's lab suggests something different. Jon Hamilton of NPR reported on Casey's study in his article "Teen Brains Are Malleable and Vulnerable, Researchers Say," explaining its design. Teens and adults were asked to play a game where they got points for correctly answering questions about the motion of dots on a screen. As they did so, researchers measured activity in brain regions involved in decisions and rewards. "When a lot of points were at stake, teens actually spent more time studying the dots than adults and brain scans showed more activity in brain regions involved in making decisions," Hamilton reported. "Instead of acting impulsively, the teens are making sure they get it right," Casey says, supporting her claim that teen's sensitivity to rewards can sometimes lead to better decision making than that of their adult counterparts.

David Dobbs, writer for National Geographic Magazine, shares a similar belief to that of Casey. Like Casey, Dobbs acknowledges that we are used to seeing teens and the decisions that they make as a problem, however, he argues that the very traits that many despise them for- excitement, novelty, risk- are exactly the things that make them more adaptive and productive, both as individuals and as a human species. In his article, Dobbs uses findings from Laurence Steinberg, a developmental psychologist specializing in adolescence at Temple University, acknowledging that 14-17 year-olds are the biggest risk-takers and it is this age group that statistically dies of accidents of almost every sort (other than work related) at high rates. What Steinberg discovered, however, is that these teenage risk-takers "use the same basic cognitive strategies that adults do, and they usually reason their way through problems just as well as adults. Contrary to popular belief, they also fully recognize they're mortal. And, like adults,..., teens actually overestimate risk." The reason they take more risks, Steinberg explains, is not that they don't understand the dangers, but because in situations where risk can get them something they want, they value reward more heavily than adults do. Dobbs, including research from both Steinberg and the same BJ Casey that Hamilton reported on, writes, "Researchers such as Steinberg and Casey believe this risk-friendly weighing of cost versus reward has been selected for because, over the course of human evolution, the willingness to take risks during this period of life has granted an adaptive edge...This responsiveness to reward thus works like the desire for new sensation: It gets you out of the house and into new turf." Therefore, the more a teen seeks novelty and makes risky decisions, the more likely they are to succeed as they transition into adulthood.

In conclusion, because teen brains are wired to more heavily value reward than adults, this positively affects their ability to make sound and wise decisions that will benefit them later in life. The next time you find yourself cringing at the perceived impulsive or maddening behavior of a teenager, remember, it is these very traits that the teen brain has evolved to exhibit that hold the key to successful lives as adults; adults who were wise enough as teens to take the risks that eventually led them to highly valued rewards.

Make effective choices
for style

Demonstrates
understanding of figurative
language

Demonstrates
understanding of domain-
specific words

Uses a semicolon to link
two clauses

END OF GRADE 10

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and author, has spoken about the need to view people as more than mere “abstractions,” to treat each and every person with dignity. Rebecca Skloot illustrates this belief in her depiction of the legacy of Henrietta Lacks, a poor woman, whose life was cut short by cervical cancer, but whose cells have gone on to unlock the secrets of treatments and vaccinations that have saved millions of lives. Unlike other science writers, Skloot uses narrative style to bring the story of Henrietta Lacks to life and explain the scientific concepts of her many valuable contributions to science in a way that is more accessible. Other science writers, such as Robert D. Truong, et. al. use a more objective and distant tone. While Truong acknowledges the humanity of Henrietta Lacks, he argues that the legacy of HeLa cells is unique and cautions against using HeLa research as a precedent for paying patients for tissue samples. Skloot uses details about Henrietta Lacks’s life, conversational diction, and easily accessible metaphors in order to reveal that the issues surrounding Lacks’s legacy is a story that touches everyone. In contrast, Robert D. Truong, et. al. in their article for the magazine *Science*, “Paying Patients for Their Tissues” takes a clinical, cold approach, emphasizing the ethical debate over the legacy of HeLa cells and downplaying the human legacy of the woman they came from.

In Skloot’s writings she deftly weaves details of Lacks’s life together to create an empathetic picture of the woman behind the cells and the controversy. She describes the day that Lacks was diagnosed by describing how her family, her husband, the father of her five children, “two still in diapers” waited outside the hospital (Skloot 13). She skillfully continues to trace the path that Henrietta took that fateful morning, past the statue of Jesus, and into the waiting area where she tells the receptionist, “I got a knot on my womb...The doctor need to have a look” (Skloot 13). While Henrietta is no longer able to share her side of the story, Skloot is adamant that this book is “a work of nonfiction” (xiii). She explains in the foreword of the book that she used multiple interviews and meticulous medical and historical research to accurately recreate the life of Henrietta. In fact, Skloot defends her choice to be authentic with a quote from Henrietta’s relative: “If you pretty up how people spoke and change the things they said, that’s dishonest. It’s taking away their lives, their experiences, and their selves” (xiii). It was this unwavering dedication to the truth that ultimately allowed Skloot to earn the trust and respect of Deborah Lacks, Henrietta’s youngest daughter. During their first telephone call, Deborah unloaded all of her frustration:

Again and again, she said, “I can’t take it no more,” and “Who are we supposed to trust now?” More than anything, she told me, she wanted to learn about her mother and what her cells had done for science. She said people had been promising her information for decades and never delivering it. “I’m sick of it,” she said. “You know what I really want? I want to know, what did my mother smell like? For all my life I just don’t know anything, not even the little common things, like what color did she like? Did she like to dance? Did she breastfeed me? Lord, I’d like to know that. But nobody ever say anything” (53).

This conversation was the beginning of a wild adventure in which Skloot pairs up with Deborah and chases down the ghost of her mother, the woman behind the cells. It highlights the point that despite the fact that many people around Deborah knew Henrietta’s truth, the legacy of who she was was a complete mystery to the daughter she died too early to know. During this journey to satisfy her own curiosities about the mother of HeLa, Skloot manages to give Deborah a sense of peace and a greater understanding of who her mother was, faults and all. She refuses to let Henrietta’s legacy be an “abstraction,” but rather allows us all to see her as “a universe with its own secrets, with its own treasures, with its own source of anguish, and with some measure of triumph,” and therefore heeds the warning of Elie Wiesel that is prominently displayed as the epigraph of the book.

Make effective choices
for style

Use a prepositional phrase
to convey meaning

In addition to filling in the blanks about who Henrietta Lacks was as a person, Skoot also uses simple metaphors along with rich, vivid imagery paired with a conversational tone to help the reader understand the scientific aspects of the story. Rather than break up the narrative flow, Skloot seamlessly integrates complex science into terms that all readers find accessible. For instance, she describes the physical appearance of a cell by comparing it to a fried egg: “It has a white (the *cytoplasm*) that’s full of water and proteins to keep it fed, and a yolk (the *nucleus*) that holds all the genetic information that makes you you” (3). Not only is this explanation simple enough for everyone to understand, it also makes what happens to HeLa much more personal. Skloot’s use of the second person point of view gently nudges the reader to understand that one’s cells are a part of his or her identity and biological legacy. It is within the “yolk” of the cells that genetic material lives and gets passed on to one’s children. Therefore, while HeLa cells are a modern medical marvel that some argue have a legacy in their own right, they are still very much a part of the woman they killed and the family she left behind. This juxtaposition of ideas depicts the contrasting positions of patients and the conglomerate of scientists, who make up the medical research community.

While Skloot clearly stands firm with the Lacks family and provides them with a voice, she also spends a great deal of time acknowledging a counterclaim by defending the intentions of a scientific community that was making advances faster than the law could keep up. When Henrietta presented to Hopkins, her doctor, Howard Jones, and his boss, Richard Wesley TeLinde, were fiercely dedicated to determining the best course of treatment for cervical cancer. Thus, when they reached out to Dr. George Gey, the head of tissue research at Hopkins, to start collecting samples from cervical cancer patients, they had the noblest of intentions. For instance, TeLinde believed, “If he could prove that carcinoma in situ and invasive carcinoma looked and behaved similarly in the laboratory, he could end the debate, showing that he had been right all along, and that doctors who ignored him were killing their patients” (Skloot 29-30). Likewise, Gey’s dream to have an immortal human cell line was also born of noble intent. He often referred to the cells as his “precious babies” and openly shared them at no profit to himself or Johns Hopkins in the name of research (58). In the end, Gey made the decision to protect the identity of Henrietta Lacks even though he knew very well her true identity. While many might argue that in refusing to acknowledge Henrietta’s contributions Gey robbed her of her legacy, his insistence on her anonymity also could have prevented the backlash of the violation on privacy that her family went on to face and still struggles with to this day. While Skloot is somewhat sympathetic to the doctors that were operating without the foresight to understand the implications of their actions, she spends a great deal of time at the end of the book calling for legislation and reform to consent and privacy laws. Also in choosing to tell the story through Deborah, the one Lacks family member who was willing to sacrifice the financial legacy of her mother for the human one, Skloot manages to remain true to the memory of the woman. However, Skloot’s contributions to the Henrietta Lacks Foundation and her call for clarity around “where the people who donate those raw materials fit into the marketplace,” speaks volumes (Skloot 322). While she realizes that the laws of the time did not account for consent, privacy, and compensation, she pushes the readers to search for where the balance lies.

Use a verb phrase to add variety

By contrast Robert D. Truong, et. al, adopts a clinical style, more appropriate for a lab than an explanation of the debate over patients and their rightful compensation. The authors' style is appropriate to their intended audience, the scientific community, but the average person would hardly be expected to rally around the language of "financial compensation," "mitigation," and "residual clinical tissue" (Truong 37-38). This tone and diction allows the reader to quickly forget the humanity of the woman mentioned briefly in the first paragraph as, "the woman who was the source of the first immortal cell line (HeLa)" (Truong 37). However, in focusing on the legacy of HeLa, rather than Henrietta, Truong and his colleagues craft an argument that warns readers about getting swept up in the sentimental narrative that is *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The authors explain that while it might appeal to the reader's sense of fairness when Christopher Lengauer, a Hopkins faculty member, mentions that the Lacks family should have been compensated, "it requires critical examination before becoming accepted as precedent regarding payments to patients" (Truong 37). Additionally, rather than using a conversational tone and rich, figurative language to convey complex scientific concepts, Truong, et. al. use confusing tables and allude to abstract court cases that make it difficult for the average reader to follow along. In employing this style, the authors feed into the same divisive attitude that creates an uneasy trust between the medical community and their patients.

Conforms to style guidelines

Like Skloot, Truong, et. al. do take care to acknowledge the counterclaim. However, rather than appealing to the readers' emotions, they rely on cold, hard logic. When referencing that in the case of Ted Slavin, it was decided that individuals did have the right to seek payment for renewable tissues, such as blood (most of which is donated freely for the common good), they are quick to steer the conversation to the *Moore* decision in which it was decided that ownership of human tissue is forfeited after removal. They attempt to wrap this argument up tightly by concluding that "a plausible rationale for justifying such payments is that they are made in exchange of a service, rather than for the transfer of property" (38). While this may seem like a sound claim, one might wonder why someone could not get paid for the service of donating a kidney in the same way. If the rulings mentioned above make this distinction, it is not relayed to the reader of this article.

Truong, et. al. use the conclusion of the article, set off by its proper subtitle, to drive their point home. While the authors understand that the story of Henrietta Lacks as told by Rebecca Skloot is "moving and compelling," they warn that it should not be used to set medical precedent for compensation of tissue. They state:

Although one can point to the many injustices Lacks endured as a poor woman without access to medical care, the use of her residual tissue, involving no risk or burden to her does not demand any form of compensation. Furthermore, compensating such patients may have unintended consequences that could work to decrease the availability of tissue for research, and may paradoxically become a source of injustice (38).

While Skloot makes the reality of Henrietta Lacks real for the reader, so that they feel compelled to honor her legacy and fight for change, Troung and his fellow authors seem to rely on fear to motivate readers to side with them. They seem consumed with making the general public understand that there is real and tangible danger looming overhead if researchers do not have free and open access to “residual tissue” that is removed without “risk or burden” (38). Yet they seem to be altogether blind to the risk and burden that the removal of those cells and the research that followed brought upon her family. They are hoping that the reader will be able to separate the scientific legacy of HeLa from the personal legacy of Henrietta Lacks that Skloot so artfully conveyed.

Conforms to style guidelines

While both works are adamantly fighting for control over Henrietta’s immortal legacy, they are fighting very different battles. Skloot’s portrayal of Henrietta’s story shows that the humanity of her legacy should be emphasized ahead of the medical industry’s race to sell a cure. She hopes to firmly instill in the reader that society should be cautious anytime a human’s parts are considered separated from the humanity of the person who created those parts. Her all inclusive approach in a braided narrative form allowed for her to paint the full picture of Henrietta’s legacy: Henrietta and the cells, Deborah and Rebecca, and the entire Lacks family. Despite the fact that Troung and his colleagues make some valid claims, their refusal to acknowledge Henrietta and her family in their hunger to justify the use of “residual tissue” comes off as lacking. If scientist want to continue to solicit donations in the name of research for the common good, they need to acknowledge the unjust mistakes of the past and fight to remove inequity, so that research done in the name of the common good can, in fact, be for the good of all, even the Lackses.

Use a prepositional phrase to convey meaning
