



# College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action

Foundational  
Unit

# 4

WORKSHOP MATERIALS  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

---

## CREATING HIGH-QUALITY WRITING PROMPTS

Produced Under U.S. Department of Education  
Contract No. ED-VAE-13-C-0066 With StandardsWork, Inc.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## For Participants: Part One, Identifying High-Quality Writing Prompts

- Directions for Participants ..... 1
- Worksheet: Writing Prompts for *The Words We Live By:*  
*Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* ..... 2
- Resource: CCR Anchor Standards ..... 3
- Resource: Excerpt from *The Words We Live By:*  
*Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* ..... 6

## For Participants: Part Two, Generating a High-Quality Writing Prompt

- Directions for Participants ..... 7
- Resource: CCR Anchor Standards ..... 8
- Resource: Eleanor Roosevelt’s Speech to the Members of  
the American Civil Liberties Union ..... 11
- Resource: Identifying Questions Worth Answering Answer Key for  
Eleanor Roosevelt’s Speech to the Members of the American  
Civil Liberties Union..... 12

## For Facilitators

- Answer Key for Part One: Writing Prompts for *The Words*  
*We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* ..... 13
- Answer Key for Part Two: Writing Prompts for Eleanor Roosevelt’s  
Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union..... 13



## Directions for Participants: Part One

1. Get out your copies of:
  - *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*
  - CCR Anchor Standards
  - Worksheet: Writing Prompts for *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*.
2. Work with a partner to determine which prompt is aligned to the CCR Standards and which prompt is not. For each of the two prompts you are examining, ask the following questions as you determine which prompt is stronger.
  - Is the question worth asking?
  - Does it provide students with an opportunity to explore what they have learned from the text?
  - Does it ask students to include evidence from the text in their response?
  - Does the prompt use the language of the CCR Standards where appropriate?
  - Is the prompt reasonable for the time and energy allotted?
3. After you have decided which prompt is the best, use the CCR Anchor Standards to determine which reading, writing, and language standards are embodied in the aligned writing prompt.
4. Share your results with the group at your table.
  - What is the value of the text-dependent prompt compared with the other prompt?
  - What CCR reading, writing, and language standards do you think students would address when working on responses to this prompt?
  - What changes in current practice might this type of writing require?

## **Worksheet: Writing Prompts for *The Words We Live By:* *Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution***

*Prompt 1:*

The Constitution of the United States is one of the best-known documents about the rights of humans ever written. Yet it was written by men who themselves denied others (their own wives, mothers and daughters, people of color, people who rented rather than owned their homes) the same rights they were protecting in the Constitution. Write an essay exploring the irony of this fact. You can draw on the writing we studied, other parts of the Constitution, or other sources to write this essay.

*Prompt 2:*

Consider the claims made about the purpose of the Constitution and the source of its legitimacy traced in the excerpt from Linda R. Monk's *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. How does Thurgood Marshall's presence on the Supreme Court illustrate the evolution of the Constitution? Use evidence from the excerpt to develop your answer.

## Resource: CCR Anchor Standards

### Reading CCR Anchor Standards<sup>1</sup>

CCR Anchor 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCR Anchor 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCR Anchor 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCR Anchor 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR Anchor 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCR Anchor 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCR Anchor 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCR Anchor 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCR Anchor 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCR Anchor 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anchor Standards 1-9 include the following additional parenthetical statement: “(Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.)”

## **Writing CCR Anchor Standards**

CCR Anchor 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCR Anchor 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCR Anchor 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCR Anchor 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR Anchor 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCR Anchor 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCR Anchor 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCR Anchor 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCR Anchor 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## **Speaking and Listening CCR Anchor Standards**

CCR Anchor 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCR Anchor 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCR Anchor 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCR Anchor 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR Anchor 5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCR Anchor 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Language CCR Anchor Standards:**

CCR Anchor 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCR Anchor 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCR Anchor 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCR Anchor 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

CCR Anchor 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCR Anchor 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**Resource: Excerpt from Monk  
*The Words We Live By:  
Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution***

**From “The Preamble: We the People”**

The first three words of the Constitution are the most important. They clearly state that the people—not the king, not the legislature, not the courts—are the true rulers in American government. This principle is known as popular sovereignty.

But who are “We the People”? This question troubled the nation for centuries. As Lucy Stone, one of America’s first advocates for women’s rights, asked in 1853, “‘We the People’? Which ‘We the People’? The women were not included.” Neither were white males who did not own property, American Indians, or African-Americans—slave or free. Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American on the Supreme Court, described the limitation:

“For a sense of the evolving nature of the Constitution, we need look no further than the first three words of the document’s preamble: ‘we the people.’ When the founding fathers used this phrase in 1787, they did not have in mind the majority of America’s citizens . . . the men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 could not . . . have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme Court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave.”

Through the Amendment process, more and more Americans were eventually included in the Constitution’s definition of “We the People.” After the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment gave African-Americans citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote nationwide, and in 1971, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment extended suffrage to eighteen-year-olds.



## Directions for Participants: Part Two

1. Read the Roosevelt text and the high-quality, text-dependent questions written for it.
2. Use the essential understanding or central idea identified to begin framing the prompt. A great prompt should get students to their own grasp of that essential understanding.
3. Discuss possible prompts with your partner(s).
4. Examine the CCR Anchor Standards for reading and writing to determine which standards you want to have students focus on in fulfilling this prompt.
5. Agree on and write a prompt. Discuss whether it will produce writing for building an argument (CCR Writing Standard 1) or explanatory or informative writing (CCR Writing Standard 2), and label it.
6. Discuss the prompts you and your colleagues developed, and determine which of them best meet the following criteria:
  - Require students to gather, organize, and present evidence from what they read.
  - Expect students to return to the text.
  - Use the language of the CCR Standards where appropriate.
  - Give writers an opportunity to explore what they learned from the text.
  - Require an exploration of the most essential ideas from the text.
  - Are reasonable in terms of the time and energy allotted to students to complete the task.

## Resource: CCR Anchor Standards

### Reading CCR Anchor Standards<sup>2</sup>

CCR Anchor 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCR Anchor 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCR Anchor 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCR Anchor 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR Anchor 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCR Anchor 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCR Anchor 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCR Anchor 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCR Anchor 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCR Anchor 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

---

<sup>2</sup> Anchor Standards 1-9 include the following additional parenthetical statement: “(Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.)”

## **Writing CCR Anchor Standards**

CCR Anchor 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCR Anchor 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCR Anchor 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

CCR Anchor 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR Anchor 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCR Anchor 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCR Anchor 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCR Anchor 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCR Anchor 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## **Speaking and Listening CCR Anchor Standards**

CCR Anchor 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCR Anchor 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCR Anchor 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCR Anchor 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR Anchor 5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCR Anchor 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **Language CCR Anchor Standards**

CCR Anchor 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCR Anchor 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCR Anchor 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCR Anchor 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

CCR Anchor 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCR Anchor 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## **Resource: Eleanor Roosevelt's Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union**

Chicago, March 14, 1940

Now I listened to the broadcast this afternoon with a great deal of interest. I almost forgot what a fight had been made to assure the rights of the working man. I know there was a time when hours were longer and wages lower, but I had forgotten just how long that fight for freedom, to bargain collectively, and to have freedom of assembly, had taken.

Sometimes, until some particular thing comes to your notice, you think something has been won for every working man, and then you come across, as I did the other day, a case where someone had taken the law into his own hands and beaten up a labor organizer. I didn't think we did those things any more in this country, but it appears that we do. Therefore, someone must be always on the lookout to see that someone is ready to take up the cudgels to defend those who can't defend themselves. That is the only way we are going to keep this country a law-abiding country, where law is looked upon with respect and where it is not considered necessary for anybody to take the law into his own hands. The minute you allow that, then you have acknowledged that you are no longer able to trust in your courts and in your law-enforcing machinery, and civil liberties are not very well off when anything like that happens; so I think that after listening to the broadcast today, I would like to remind you that behind all those who fight for the Constitution as it was written, for the rights of the weak and for the preservation of civil liberties, we have a long line of courageous people, which is something to be proud of and something to hold on to. Its only value lies, however, in the fact that we profit by example and continue the tradition in the future.

We must not let those people in back of us down; we must have courage; we must not succumb to fears of any kind; and we must live up to the things that we believe in and see that justice is done to the people under the Constitution, whether they belong to minority groups or not. This country is a united country in which all people have the same rights as citizens. We are grateful that we can trust in the youth of the nation that they are going on to uphold the real principles of democracy and put them into action in this country. They are going to make us an even more truly democratic nation.

## Resource: Identifying Questions Worth Answering Answer Key Eleanor Roosevelt’s Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union

Use the following key to label the questions below. Questions can receive more than one mark/fulfill more than one category. If you answer N to a question in step 1, you do not need to work with the question again until step 4.

1. **Y/N:** Could a student find evidence in the essay to answer this question?
2. **D:** Does a reader have to dig deep to answer this question?
3. **V:** Does the question ask about a vocabulary word in the essay?
4. **\*:** Is this a question worth asking? If not, could you revise it to make it worth asking?

<b>Y/N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>Questions and Tasks</b>
N	--	--	--	<del>What broadcast had Eleanor Roosevelt listened to?</del>
Y	D	--	*	What had Roosevelt forgotten? What had she almost forgotten? Why do you think she began her remarks in this way?
Y	D	V	*	A cudgel is a weapon, basically a club. In paragraph two, what contradiction does Roosevelt introduce in the sentence about cudgels and finish in the sentence after it?
Y	--	--	--	What does the word “that,” which begins the fourth sentence in paragraph two, refer to? Explain.
Y	D	--	*	What has to happen to make sure the long line of courageous people who fought for civil liberties continues in the future? Where did Roosevelt talk about this?
Y	--	--	*	According to Roosevelt, what does it mean to “take the law into your own hands”? Why is it so important to preserving democracy that people <i>not</i> take the law into their own hands?
N	--	--	--	<del>Why was Roosevelt an important voice on the issues of civil liberties and justice?</del>
Initially N but Y with revision in italics.				<i>According to Roosevelt, how are the youth of the nation going to make the United States “an even more truly democratic nation”?</i>

## **Answer Key Part One: Identifying High-Quality Writing Prompts** ***The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution***

### *Prompt 1:*

The Constitution of the United States is one of the best-known documents about the rights of humans ever written. Yet it was written by men who themselves denied others (their own wives, mothers and daughters, people of color, people who rented rather than owned their homes) the same rights they were protecting in the Constitution. Write an essay where you explore the irony of this fact. You can draw on the writing we studied, other parts of the Constitution, or other sources to write this essay.

### *Prompt 2:\**

Consider the claims made about the purpose of the Constitution and the source of its legitimacy traced in Linda R. Monk's excerpt from *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. How does Thurgood Marshall's presence on the Supreme Court illustrate the evolution of the Constitution? Use evidence from the excerpt to develop your answer.

\*CCR-aligned prompt

## **Answer Key Part Two: Generating a High-Quality Writing Prompt** **Eleanor Roosevelt's Speech to the Members of the American Civil Liberties Union**

Answers will vary, but some prompts for the Eleanor Roosevelt speech may include:

- *What thread unites Roosevelt's themes of justice for working people, preserving a law-abiding society, and respecting those who struggled before us?*
- *What is the only thing that will make the sacrifices of the "long line of courageous people" who came before us worthwhile? Develop your answer by tracing the argument Roosevelt makes through this speech.*