

Anatomy of an LDC Module

Modules written by the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) are designed to support core-content teachers in implementing the Common Core Standards. A standard format provides clarity and support for teachers as well as the flexibility to be creative. Each module focuses on a specific teaching task and includes the skills students need to be successful, a set of mini-tasks to guide instruction, and a scoring guide or rubric to help assess the students' rate of success. Based on student success, teachers can decide whether to repeat the task with different content or move on to a new one. This is a sample module written by a high school social studies teacher who taught it over several weeks.



1. What task?

TEMPLATE TASK 2

(Argumentation/Analysis)

[Insert essential question]
After reading _____
(literature or informational
texts), write a/an _____
(essay, report, or substitute)
that addresses the question,
and support your position
with evidence from the text(s).

L2 Be sure to acknowledge
competing views.

The Literacy Design Collaborative is a project funded by the Gates Foundation. This module was designed for the LDC by Kathy Thiebes, a social studies teacher at Centennial High School, Gresham, Oregon.

What task sets clear, measurable goals for learning?

BACKGROUND

Every society operates with a mixed economic system, combining the influences of market and command models in order to form a functioning economy and government. Individual countries have unique combinations of market and command influences depending on how they prioritize different economic goals.

PROMPT

What combination of market and command systems do you believe creates an ideal mixed economy? After reading informational and opinion texts, write an essay that addresses the question and supports your position with evidence from the texts. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

EXTENSION (OPTIONAL)

You will participate in a formal class debate about the future of America's economic system using your essays and other research to defend your market and command preferences on different topics (health care, welfare, education, taxes, etc.).

2. What skills?

3. What instruction?

What skills do students need to succeed on the teaching task?

Skills Cluster 1: Preparing for the Task	
Bridging conversation	Ability to connect the task and new content to existing knowledge, skills, experiences, interests, and concerns.
Task and rubric analysis	Ability to understand and explain the task's prompt and rubric.

Skills Cluster 2: Reading Process	
Pre-reading	Ability to select appropriate texts and understand reading strategies needed for the task.
Active reading	Ability to understand reading strategies needed for the task and develop an understanding of a text by locating words and phrases that identify key concepts, facts, or information.
Note-taking	Ability to read purposefully and select relevant information, and to summarize and/or paraphrase.
Organizing notes	Ability to prioritize and focus notes and other information.

Skills Cluster 3: Transition to Writing	
Bridging conversation	Ability to transition from the reading or researching phase to the writing phase.

Skills Cluster 4: Writing Process	
Initiation of task	Ability to establish a claim and consolidate information relevant to the task.
Planning	Ability to develop a line of thought and the text structure appropriate to an argumentation task.
Development	Ability to construct an initial draft with an emerging line of thought and structure.
Revision & editing	Ability to apply revision strategies to refine development of an argument, including line of thought, language, tone, and presentation.

How will teachers teach students to succeed on the teaching task?

Pre-test:	The pre-test is a short multiple-choice test on the Comparing Economic Systems content and a short written response. The pre-test is used to gain insight into students' basic understanding of the content and their general writing ability.	
Mini-task:	In a quick-write response, what is your first reaction to the task prompt? What strategies did you use to interpret this prompt?	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Short response
Mini-task:	In your own words, write a brief explanation of what the task is asking you to do (students respond below the quick-write).	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Short-response rubric translation
Rubric:	Students will translate the rubric in their own words.	

Mini-task:	What strategies do you use to help you process your reading?	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Reading strategy list
Mini-task:	1) Use annotation techniques and other reading strategies to demonstrate your reading process and your level of interaction with the text.	Pacing: 3 class periods Product: Annotated articles
Mini-task:	Summarize the articles and respond to focus questions to demonstrate the depth of your understanding.	Pacing: 3 class periods Product: Notes and short response
Mini-task:	Prioritize relevant information in the "organizing notes" section of your Writer's Notebook.	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Notes and graphic organizer

Mini-task:	In a quick-write, give a brief overview of your essay. How will it be constructed and what is your central argument?	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Short response
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Mini-task:	1) Write a formal claim in your Writer's Notebook using your quick-writes, notes, and article information to ensure a strong controlling idea. 2) Write a draft introduction that will set the context for your claim.	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Paragraph
Mini-task:	Create an outline including key elements drawn from your research and arrange it in some logical order (e.g., chronologically, sequentially).	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Outline/plan
Mini-task:	Write a rough draft of your essay consisting of 4-5 paragraphs. Include an introduction, 2-3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion.	Pacing: 1 class period Product: Rough draft
Mini-task:	Apply revision strategies for clarity, logic, language, cohesion, appearance, and conventions.	Product: Revised draft
Final Draft:	Submit your final draft before or on the due date for scoring and feedback.	

4. What results?

Student work samples

An opening paragraph with a claim

Market and command economies are the two main economic systems that exist in the world today. While market economies are based on individual work and command economies are based on government involvement, no country has a pure market or command system. The ideal economy is an equal combination of command and market systems—a democratic socialist economy—because it emphasizes the best aspects of both systems: freedom and security.

A paragraph that develops a claim by addressing counter-arguments and citing details

While some say that having the government regulate major services such as health care and transportation drives taxes too high, David Kestenbaum of NPR news interviewed Danish citizens whose view of their democratic socialist system proves otherwise: “Income tax is high even for the middle class, and yet a lot of people are okay with it.” Denmark seems to be the perfect example of how the public is content with government-regulated services despite high taxes (“Denmark Thrives Despite High Taxes”). Although America is currently in a recession, it might benefit from democratic socialist influence by increasing taxes in order to improve public services. Paul Krugman of the *New York Times* points out that without increasing taxes, “In the short run, those state and local cutbacks are a major drag on the economy, perpetuating devastatingly high unemployment.” The United States can’t continue cutting social services that keep the middle class intact while giving the rich tax cuts in the name of economic freedom (Friedman).

How good is good enough?

Example of this module’s rubric

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced	
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position.	
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose. [L2] Makes no mention of counter claims.		Establishes a claim. [L2] Makes note of counter claims.		Establishes a credible claim. [L2] Develops claim and counter claims fairly.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal. [L2] Develops claims and counter claims fairly and thoroughly.	
Reading/ Research	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.		Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.	
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. [L3] Makes no connections or a connection that is irrelevant to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations. [L3] Makes a connection with a weak or unclear relationship to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. [L3] Makes a relevant connection to clarify argument or claim.		Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim. [L3] Makes a clarifying connection(s) that illuminates argument and adds depth to reasoning.	
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.	
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.	
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.	