**Module Task Pitfalls**

1. Wrong use of template

1. Authors select an argumentative template when they are actually asking students to do informational or explanatory writing. This pitfall is sometimes called the “false argument.”

2. Authors select an informational template when they are actually asking students to develop and defend an argument. This pitfall can be called, “should be an argument.”

3. The first part of the teaching task doesn’t match the second part of the teaching task. This pitfall is sometimes referred to as the “mixed-up purpose” pitfall.

2. Task answerable without texts

3. Grand thematic question

1. This can be a tricky one. There are two versions, the second easier to fix. The first one looks like text answerable without texts.
   * 1. Grand thematic optional question + grand thematic content in the task
     2. Grand thematic optional question + solid, focused task.

4. Texts answer the question—no room for multiple responses

5. Built-in bias

6. Central to the discipline:

1. Is the topic central to the discipline? Does your topic even match your discipline? Does your cognitive demand match your discipline?

2. Does the task focus on pop culture topics or content? If so, it is probably not central to the discipline unless it is associated with related content that would be considered central to the discipline.

3. Is the product central to the discipline? If not, then this can be enough to be a fatal flaw in task design.

7. Content too broad or too narrow/insignificant/ not worthy of the time

8. Problematic text/s

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| **Pitfall** | **ELA** | **History/Social Studies** | **Science** | **Elementary—**  **Multi-disciplinary** |
| 1. Wrong use of template (wrong cognitive demand or writing mode; or two parts of template don’t match/aren’t aligned--this is the mixed up purpose) | Task IE2, Description    After reading Robert Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” and Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Bells," write an essay in which you describe which author creates more effective emotional effects using sound devices. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    8th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task IE4, Analysis    What will it take to raise voter participation? After reading "Where Have All the Voters Gone?” and “Many will mark this election by not voting,” write a legislative proposal in which you analyze the best legal changes to increase participation, providing examples to clarify your analysis. What conclusions or implications can you draw? Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    A.P. U.S. History | Task IE2, Description    After researching scientific articles on carbon emissions, write a report in which you describe why legislation requiring factories to pay for the right to emit carbon is so important. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    8th Grade Science | Task, A3, Explanation    After reading the book *Where Do Recyclable Materials Go?*, the article “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”, and viewing three YouTube videos, write a report in which you explain your reasons for which items should be recycled. Support your opinion with evidence from the text/s.    2nd Grade Science |
| **Pitfall** | **ELA** | **History/Social Studies** | **Science** | **Elementary—**  **Multi-disciplinary** |
| 2. Task answerable without the texts | Task A4, Analysis    After reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* and various informational texts about parenting, write an essay in which you argue what makes a good father. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    9th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task IE2, Description    After researching various texts on the Athenians and Visigoths, write a letter to your future self in which you describe what values and traditions you want to be remembered for after you graduate. Support your response with evidence from the text/s.    9th Grade Humanities | Task A4, Analysis    After reading informational texts on recycling, write an essay in which you argue why recycling matters and whether you and your family should recycle. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    6th Grade Science | Task IE2, Description    After reading several personal challenge essays on the Internet, write an essay in which you describe the most important challenge you have met. Support your response with evidence from the text/s.    4th Grade Literature (ELA) |
| 3.Grand thematic question | Task IE1, Definition    What does it mean to be free? After reading Toni  Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*, write an essay in which you define freedom and explain which characters in the novel are or become free. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    11th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task A4, Analysis    Do the society and the times in which you live help to shape who you are? After reading textbook chapters and other informational texts, write an essay in which you argue how our lives are shaped. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    11th/12th Grade Social Studies | Task IE2, Description    How does life begin? After researching informational texts on the physical characteristics of a planet and its distance from the sun, write an essay in which you describe how life can begin. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    6th Grade Science | Task IE2, Description    Are learners born or made? After reading informational articles on cognitive science and excerpts from the book *Mindset*, write a report in which you describe how people become learners. Support your response with evidence from the text/s.  5th Grade Science |
| **Pitfall** | **ELA** | **History/Social Studies** | **Science** | **Elementary—**  **Multi-disciplinary** |
| 4. Texts answer the question--no room for multiple responses | Task IE2, Description    After reading an excerpt from *Three Cups of Tea* (Young Reader’s Edition), write an essay in which you describe how Greg Mortensen responded to getting lost in the high mountains of Pakistan. Support your discussion with evidence from the text.    6th Grade Literature (ELA)  R3 | Task IE3, Explanation    After researching informational texts, including Herodotus, on the early Phoenician circumnavigation, write a news report in which you explain who the critical explorers of Africa were during the Phoenician period. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    8th Grade World History | Task IE2, Description    After reading selected informational texts on rock formation and the rock cycle, write an essay in which you describe the rock cycle, how rocks are formed, and where they are found. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    7th Grade Science | Task IE3, Explanation    After reading the books *Why Should I Save Energy?* and *Save Energy, and article A Family Can Save Energy Every Day*, write a letter to your parents in which you explain three ways a family can save energy and reduce the use of fossil fuels. Support your response with evidence from the text/s.    3rd Grade Science |
| 5. Built in bias | Task A4, Analysis    After reading William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies,* write an argumentative essay in which you argue whether children posses the capacity for extreme violence. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    7th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task A4, Analysis  After researching datasets that show declining voter participation rates in the U.S., write an essay in which you argue whether Americans are good citizens. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    11th Grade US History | Task A4, Analysis  After reading "Human Climate Meddling Got Start Long Before Dawn of Petroleum Era", viewing the National Geographic "Human Footprint" documentary, and the video, ”Top Ten Ways Man is Destroying the Environment” write an essay in which you argue whether humans are having an impact on the environment. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.  8th Grade Science | Task A3, Explanation    After researching *Among the Hidden, The China Challenge, and Somalia: Famine's Youngest Victims* write an article in which you explain whether governments should have the right to control the population. Support your opinion with evidence from the text/s.    4th Grade Social Studies |
| **Pitfall** | **ELA** | **History/Social Studies** | **Science** | **Elementary—**  **Multi-disciplinary** |
| 6. Central to discipline (pop culture, product, | Task A4, Analysis    Do violent video games contribute to youth violence? After reading various articles on the effects of violent video games, write a letter to your parents in which you argue your position on the question. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    6th Grade Literature (ELA)    . | Task A4, Analysis    Should we have laws that prohibit cell phone use while driving? After reading informational texts on cell phone use while driving, write an essay in which you argue whether we should have laws banning cell phone use while driving. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    7th Grade Social Studies | Task IE3, Explanation    After researching graphs and written explanations on disease prevalence in the US, write a report in which you explain how a selected disease compares to Type 2 Diabetes. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    9th Grade Science | Task IE2, Description    After reading *Harvesting Hope* by Kathleen Krull, as well as other texts about the life of Cesar Chavez, write an essay in which you describe how Cesar Chavez’s actions reveal his character traits. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    3rd Grade Literature (ELA) |
| 7. Content too broad or too narrow/ insignificant— not worthy of the time | Task IE1, Definition    After researching both fiction and non-fiction texts about piracy, write a 1,000 word expository essay in which you define piracy and explain multiple perspectives on the morality of piracy. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    8th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task A9, Evaluation  After reading primary sources on women’s roles during wartime over the course of the 20th century, write a report in which you discuss women’s roles and evaluate how they changed over time. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.  11th Grade US History | Task IE3, Explanation    How does density vary for different substances? After researching selected texts on density, write a report in which you explain how density varies when you test different substances. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.  7th Grade Science | Task IE3, Explanation  After researching informational texts and watching a video, write a report in which you explain the causes and effects the Maya society had on the economy, government, culture, traditions, religion, trade and science. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.  5th Grade Social Studies |
| 8. Problematic text/s (too narrow, too broad, reading level, too many, too few) | Task IE3, Explanation  After reading *The Great Gatsby*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams*, write an essay in which you explain how a character succeeds or fails in an effort to move to a higher social class. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    11th Grade Literature (ELA) | Task IE1, Definition  After reading Abraham Lincoln’s "Gettysburg Address," Martin Luther King’s "I Have a Dream,” John F. Kennedy’s "First Inaugural Address," William J. Clinton’s "Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial Address," Henry V’s "St. Crispin’s Day" Speech (From Henry V, Act 4 Scene 3 by William Shakespeare), Chapter 17: Concerning Cruelty and Clemency (From 'The Prince' by Niccolo Machiavelli), Lincoln’s "Letter to Mrs. Bixby" Scene (Abraham Lincoln, Transcribed from 'Saving Private Ryan' by Stephen Spielberg), and Lt. Col. Hal Moore’s "Deployment Address" Scene (Transcribed from 'We Were Soldiers' by Randall Wallace) write an essay in which you define leadership and explain the characteristics necessary to become an effective and successful leader. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.  10th Grade Social Studies | Task IE1, Definition    After researching the books, *An Inconvenient Truth, Climate Confusion, The Global Warming Debate, Global Warming, The Down-to-Earth Guide to Global Warming,* articles, websites, watching videos, and listening to speeches on global warming, write a report in which you define global warming and explain the causes and effects of global warming. Support your discussion with evidence from the text/s.    6th Grade Science | Task A3, Explanation    Is Percy Jackson really a hero? After reading *The Lightning Thief* and other pieces of literature on heroes, write essay in which you explain your reasons why Percy Jackson is or isn’t a hero. Support your position with evidence from the text/s.    4th Grade Literature (ELA) |