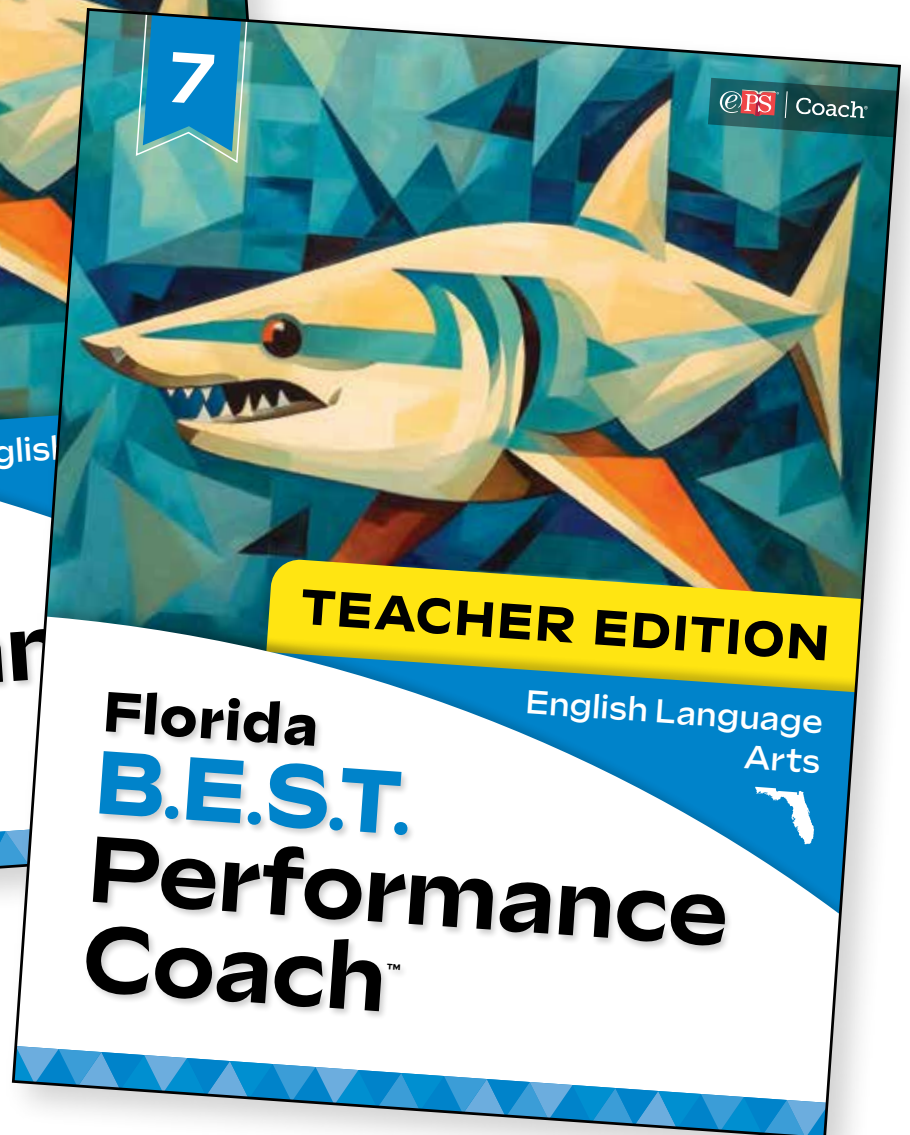


SAMPLER

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Analyze Informational Texts

1 GETTING THE IDEA

At times, you will read two or more nonfiction texts on the same topic. This is especially true in science and history classes, when you may read multiple texts to answer a question or to speak and write about a topic knowledgably. When you read multiple texts, it's important to be able to evaluate the texts, compare and contrast their content, and then synthesize, or combine, the information you read.

Evaluate

When reading multiple texts, a good strategy is to examine each text separately before you compare them. Different authors may write about the same topic, but text type, structure, and point of view may be very different. Here are some questions you might ask as you examine a text critically.

Text Considerations	Questions to Ask
text type	What kind of text is it?
structure	How is the information organized?
author's purpose	What is the author's purpose?
perspective	Does the author remain objective and neutral? Does the author show any bias?
style	What tone does the author convey through the use of words? Does the author include examples, comparisons, categories, analogies, or allusions?
central idea or claim	What is the central idea or ideas? What message does the author want to convey?
supporting reasons and relevant details	How does the author support the central idea or claim? Are the details and reasons clear, relevant, and supported by evidence?
evidence	What textual evidence does the author include? Is it based on fact, reasoned judgment, or speculation? Is there sufficient relevant evidence to support the claim?
text and graphic features	Does the text have subheadings, sidebars, or other text features that help readers locate information? Do the graphic features add to the understanding of the text?

Summarize or Paraphrase

After you evaluate each text, **summarize** each one. Identify the central idea and the supporting details, reasons, and evidence. Look for key words and phrases that will help you discuss the topic. Keep your summary free of personal opinions or judgments. Even when a text is biased, your summary should be neutral.

If you need to clarify the ideas in a particular part of the text, you can also **paraphrase** it, or retell all the details in your own words. Unlike a summary, which is shorter and contains only the most important ideas, a paraphrase is about the same length as the original text and contains all of the information.

Compare and Contrast

Once you have evaluated and summarized or paraphrased each text, you are ready to compare and contrast the texts. Use the answers to the questions you asked about the texts individually to guide you in your comparison.

Read these paragraphs from different sources. Underline the central idea in each. Then think about the text type and the structure of each paragraph. How does this help you identify the author's purpose and perspective?

The Plight of the Mountain Gorilla

Nearly half of the approximately seven hundred mountain gorillas remaining on Earth live on the forested mountain slopes of Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These docile creatures are larger than their lowland cousins, with males standing as tall as six feet. They live in communities of around thirty led by a dominant male, who is often called a silverback for the frost of silver hair along its back. The troop feeds on roots, shoots, wild fruit, and trees from their forest home. War and human interference greatly reduced the mountain gorilla's numbers, making them a critically endangered species. Conservation groups have helped prevent extinction of the species. Since their intervention, the population has remained steady and slightly increased.

Saving Mountain Gorillas

It's time to take action before another species becomes extinct. The mountain gorillas of Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are on the critically endangered list. Mountain gorillas face extinction from habitat loss, poaching, and disease, all at the hands of humans. War and civil unrest have contributed to their decreasing numbers as displaced people moved into their habitats and cut down trees for fuel and lumber products. Other animals were also affected. Conservation groups and individuals work to protect mountain gorilla habitats by encouraging ecotourism, raising environmental awareness, and assisting in the management of natural resources. You can help by making a donation to help fund a conservation group.

Both texts deal with the same topic—mountain gorillas. Yet they have different text types, perspectives, central ideas and relevant details, and evidence. How does the text type affect the perspective from which the author writes?

Make additional comparisons between the texts. Think about the structure, style, and language of each and how these factors help you evaluate the reasons and evidence presented.

- Is the reasoning sound and backed with sufficient evidence?
- Are all the details relevant? Why or why not?
- Do the paragraphs present similar facts? Is there any conflicting information?

As you compare and contrast texts, your knowledge about a topic increases. You can use specific information from the texts to make **generalizations**, or broad statements about the topic. You are better able to recognize sound reasoning and relevant evidence. You notice when irrelevant evidence is introduced or when evidence is missing. In the persuasive text, for example, the sentence “Other animals were also affected” is irrelevant. It doesn’t relate to the topic, which is the mountain gorilla.

At other times, you may find conflicting information. For example, an older source may have outdated information. The difference could also be because of how an author interprets or presents the facts. For example, in the persuasive text, the sentence beginning “War and civil unrest have contributed to their decreasing numbers . . .” implies that the gorillas’ numbers are still decreasing. Yet the academic article mentions that conservation efforts have stabilized their numbers and increased them slightly. When you encounter conflicting information, the more recent and academic sources are often the most reliable.

When you compare and contrast texts, you may find the same information presented in different ways. For example, the academic text states that “nearly half” of the gorillas live in a particular region, while another source might say “50 percent.” This is the same fact presented in different ways.

Language Spotlight • Academic Language

Nonfiction texts often contain domain-specific vocabulary that is used specifically when discussing a certain topic. They also include general academic vocabulary. These **academic vocabulary** words are terms that appear in many subjects and even in daily language. They include words such as *analyze*, *summarize*, *evidence*, and *theme*. Sometimes, you can use context to figure out the meaning of academic vocabulary. Read the sentences below. The underlined words are examples of academic vocabulary.

When you conduct a scientific investigation, it is important to follow the steps in the process in the precise order. If you don't, the results may not be what you expected.

How could you use these words when talking about other topics?

Read the passage.

Invaders Among Us

It sounds like a scene from a science fiction thriller—plants consuming buildings, mussels blocking water supplies, fish attacking boaters—yet these plant and animal invaders are real. They are nonnative species that enter the United States, either intentionally or by accident, and become harmful to an ecosystem, damage property, and harm people. They can also cost millions of dollars in repair and management costs. While some nonnative species are harmless, these are not.

Kudzu

In 1876, an ornamental plant from Japan was displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. The climbing vine had broad green leaves and fragrant purple flowers that hung in clusters. At first, the plant seemed to be harmless. In the mid-1930s to early 1950s, southern farmers were even encouraged to plant it for erosion control.

Once in a warm, humid climate, however, kudzu spread rapidly. A single vine can grow up to a hundred feet in length. Its thick tap root can measure seven inches in diameter, grow up to six feet long, and weigh as much as four hundred pounds. An established plant grows a foot a day and covers anything in its path. It kills the plants it covers by blocking out sunlight. In addition, it has been known to break branches, uproot trees and shrubs, and collapse buildings.

Asian Carp

In the 1970s, catfish farmers in the southern United States imported two species of Asian carp, the bighead carp and the silver carp, to keep their ponds algae free. Unfortunately, flooding caused the ponds to overflow and released the carp into the Mississippi River. Ever since, the fish have been moving north into other rivers and toward the Great Lakes.

Asian carp eat between 5 and 20 percent of their body weight each day. The average adult carp weighs around thirty pounds, but some grow to over a hundred pounds. They have no natural predators and are killing native marine life that depends on plankton for food.

The Asian carp population exploded in the 1990s. Between 1994 and 1997, the commercial catch of the bighead carp increased from 5.5 tons to 55 tons. However, the increase doesn't help the fishing industry because the value of carp is low compared to other fish. The carp also pose a threat to boats and boaters. Silver carp are startled by the sound of boat motors and leap as high as ten feet out of the water. The "flying" fish land in boats, damage property, and injure people.

Burmese Pythons

Over a dozen years ago, Burmese pythons began taking up residence in Florida's wetlands. Pythons are popular pets, but pet owners fail to realize that the nonvenomous snakes are among the largest in the world, reaching lengths of twenty-six feet. Whether the pythons escaped or were intentionally released by pet owners when they got too large, the pythons are now one of the top predators in Florida's Everglades National Park.

Today it is estimated that tens of thousands of pythons live in the Everglades, where they are disrupting an already delicate ecosystem. Sightings of birds and mammals are down by as much as 99 percent in some areas. Pythons have even been known to prey on alligators.

Kudzu, Asian carp, and Burmese pythons are just three examples of how successful invasive species harm ecosystems in multiple ways. While managing the spread of these invaders is important, making sure new invasive species aren't introduced is equally as important.

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Read this sentence from the passage.

Its thick tap root can measure seven inches in diameter, grow up to six feet long, and weigh as much as four hundred pounds.

Which definition **best** defines the word root as it is used in the sentence?

- A. the condition of being settled in a certain place or society
- B. a feature that offers support and draws minerals and water from the soil
- C. the main component of a word from which it derives its meaning
- D. a number multiplied by itself a certain number of times to produce another number

Hint Think about how the word is used in the sentence. What context clues help you choose the correct definition?

- 2** Which statement from the passage explains the spread of kudzu in the United States?
- A.** In 1876, an ornamental plant from Japan was displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.
 - B.** The climbing vine had broad green leaves and fragrant purple flowers that hung in clusters.
 - C.** At first, the plant seemed to be harmless.
 - D.** In the mid-1930s to early 1950s, southern farmers were even encouraged to plant it for erosion control.

Hint Ask yourself how and why kudzu was used to connect key ideas in the text.

- 3** Which of the author's claims lacks evidence?
- A.** Plant and animal invaders may sound like science fiction, but they are real.
 - B.** Invasive species can enter the United States intentionally or by accident.
 - C.** Nonnative species can harm an ecosystem, damage property, and harm people.
 - D.** Invasive species can cost millions of dollars in repair and management costs.

Hint Review each of the claims and the information the author provides to support it. If a claim does not have additional information to support it, then that claim lacks evidence.

- 4 This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

What are the two central ideas of the passage?

- A. Plant and animal invaders may sound like science fiction, but they are real. Kudzu, Asian carp, and Burmese pythons are all examples of invasive species.
- B. Invasive species can enter the United States intentionally or by accident. Nonnative species can harm an ecosystem, damage property, and harm people.
- C. Invasive species can enter the United States intentionally or by accident. Invasive species can cost millions of dollars in repair and management costs.
- D. Nonnative species can harm an ecosystem, damage property, and harm people. Invasive species can cost millions of dollars in repair and management costs.

Part B

Which details from the passage **best** support the answer in Part A? Choose **two** answers.

- A. A single vine can grow up to a hundred feet in length.
- B. . . . [kudzu] has been known to break down branches, uproot trees and shrubs, and collapse buildings.
- C. In the 1970s, catfish farmers in the southern United States imported two species of Asian carp, the bighead carp and the silver carp, to keep their ponds algae free.
- D. Asian carp eat between 5 and 20 percent of their body weight each day.
- E. Today it is estimated that tens of thousands of pythons live in the Everglades . . .

Hint Remember that a central idea is what a text is mostly about. In this passage, the central ideas are what the author most wants readers to learn about invasive species. Most of the other details in the text should relate to those ideas.

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

Reading Guide

What have you learned about ecosystems that would explain the effects of losing one species in an ecosystem? How does this help you understand what might happen if a nonnative species is introduced?

Based on the introductory paragraphs, what are the two central ideas the author will develop?

In paragraph 4, which central idea is being supported?

Invader Alert

You have probably learned that the loss of even one species can have devastating effects on an ecosystem. Have you ever wondered, though, what happens if a species is introduced to an ecosystem? Fortunately, most nonnative species have little or no impact. If a nonnative species lacks competitors or predators, however, it becomes invasive and spreads quickly. It can crowd out native species and cause environmental problems. It can also cost millions of dollars a year to keep the invasive species in check and even more to help a damaged ecosystem recover.

So what is being done about invasive species, and how should you help? The U.S. government works with state governments, agencies, and environmental groups to stem the spread of invaders. Here are a few examples of invasive species and how you can help.

In the Water

Southern catfish farmers brought Asian carp to the United States to help keep their ponds clear of algae. The carp weren't a problem until they escaped into the Mississippi River during floods. Ever since, the carp have been swimming north, entering other river systems and devouring algae that native fish and water creatures rely on. The invasive carp can grow to four feet in length and weigh as much as one hundred pounds. Without a natural predator, the carp population continues to grow. In addition, the destructive fish harm property and boaters when they leap out of the water and land in their boats.

To keep the carp from reaching the Great Lakes, a system of electric barriers was built in 2002. So far, \$200 million have been spent trying to contain the fish. Today, the barriers are being reinforced, and a mobile system is being designed to assist in emergency situations. Other controls, such as netting, hydrologic solutions, and chemical controls, are also being explored.

Reading Guide

Which invasive species was introduced to the United States by accident? Which was introduced intentionally?

How does the author organize the text in each section? How does this reinforce the central ideas?

What is the author's point of view concerning invasive species?

These controls won't make a difference if you don't help. When fishing or boating, don't transfer species from one body of water to another. This includes cleaning boats and dumping water that might be left in boat wells and bait buckets. Eggs and larvae of invasive species that you can't see may be in the water. In fact, recreational boats are responsible for the spread of another invasive species, zebra mussels. Zebra mussels cling to the hulls of recreational boats that visit the Great Lakes. When the boats go to another lake without being cleaned, the species is introduced to the new lake.

On the Land

Kudzu is a Japanese vine brought to the United States for the centennial in 1876. The plant wasn't a problem until southern farmers were encouraged to plant it in the 1930s as forage for grazing livestock. The weather and soil conditions suited kudzu. Soon the plant was growing up to a foot a day, covering plants and buildings in its path. The vines destroy crops and timber resources and topple trees and buildings with their weight. Vines grow to be a hundred feet long, with some roots reaching an amazing twelve feet into the ground. To make matters worse, new roots can sprout along a vine to start a new plant.

In 1953, kudzu was removed from the list of permissible plants by the U.S. government. In spite of this, kudzu continues to spread. It is estimated that kudzu covers seven million acres of land and costs utility companies \$1.5 million a year just to remove it from power lines. To rid an area of kudzu, the vine is cut at the base, and all parts of the plant are destroyed. Areas must be continually mowed to prevent growth. Chemical herbicides and burning help destroy roots, but it can still take several years to reclaim land from kudzu.

You can help by planting only native species in your yard. If you do find and remove an invasive species, destroy all plant parts or bag the plant and dispose of it properly. Some plants, such as kudzu, have been transported hundreds of miles in fill dirt that contained plant roots or seeds. Wherever you go, make sure you don't take an invader with you or bring one home. Clean the soles of your shoes and wash your clothing to ensure that seeds and plant parts don't travel with you.

Reading Guide

Was the introduction of the python to the Everglades intentional or accidental? Explain your reasoning.

What is the purpose of Python Patrol?

How does the law invoked by the Florida Legislature attempt to stem the spread of invasive species?

At Home

Today, the Florida Everglades has a new predator that threatens its delicate balance of nature. This predator is the Burmese python, a snake that grows to an astonishing twenty-six feet. Originally purchased as pets, the snakes either escaped from pet owners or were intentionally released when they got too big. The pythons eat birds and mammals that are prey for other Everglades species. Some pythons even attack and eat alligators.

To fight the problem, The Nature Conservancy in Florida started Python Patrol. Python Patrol has two hundred responders throughout the state who will come to the aid of citizens who spot a python. In addition, the Florida Legislature banned the ownership of eight reptiles in 2010, including the Burmese python. These reptiles are classified as conditional species. This means people owning these reptiles before the 2010 law went into effect can keep the animals if they microchip and cage the reptiles properly.

You can help by being a responsible pet owner. If you can no longer care for an exotic pet, contact a pet store or veterinarian to learn how to find a new owner for the pet. This includes tropical fish, snakes, lizards, spiders, and other animal species.

The solution to invasive species begins with you. Read the latest news about invaders in your state. Become knowledgeable about the problems they pose and how you can help. Find out what plants, insects, or animals you should watch for and what to do if you spot an invasive species. Remember, you may be the first line of defense in stopping an invader.

Answer the following questions.

- 1** Read this sentence from the passage.

Have you ever wondered, though, what happens if a species is introduced to an ecosystem?

Which definition **best** defines the word introduced as it is used in the sentence?

- A.** provided with background information
 - B.** caused to become acquainted
 - C.** led or brought into a place
 - D.** brought in knowledge of something
- 2** Which central idea is developed in the passage?
- A.** what happens when an ecosystem loses a species
 - B.** the areas in which the most invasive species are found
 - C.** how invasive species are introduced to an ecosystem
 - D.** how you can help stop invasive species

- 3 Read the following sentences from the passage.

In addition, the Florida Legislature banned the ownership of eight reptiles in 2010, including the Burmese python. These reptiles are classified as conditional species. This means people owning these reptiles before the 2010 law went into effect can keep the animals if they microchip and cage the reptiles properly.

Which central idea from the passage is supported by the sentences?

- A. Invasive species can cause serious environmental problems.
- B. Conservation groups and local and federal governments are working to stop the spread of invasive species.
- C. Efforts to contain invasive species cost millions of dollars.
- D. People should become knowledgeable about what they can do if they encounter an invasive species.

Answer the following questions about both passages in this lesson.

- 4 The authors of “Invaders Among Us” and “Invader Alert” present facts about invasive species in the United States. Which statement from “Invader Alert” adds to the information provided in “Invaders Among Us”?

- A. Southern catfish farmers brought Asian carp to the United States to help keep their ponds clear of algae.
- B. Without a natural predator, the carp population continues to grow.
- C. It is estimated that kudzu . . . costs utility companies \$1.5 million a year just to remove it from power lines.
- D. The pythons eat birds and mammals that are prey for other Everglades species.

- 5 Based on **both** passages, what generalization can you make?

- A. Nonnative species can continue to cause problems decades after they are first introduced in an area.
- B. Commercial fishermen benefit from the large Asian carp population.
- C. In Florida, the Burmese python is the most common snake kept as a pet.
- D. All nonnative species have a negative impact on ecosystems.

- 6 This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Which of the following **best** explains each author’s purpose for writing about invasive species?

- A. The author of “Invaders Among Us” tries to convince readers that invasive species are dangerous. The author of “Invader Alert” explains the costs of controlling invasive species.
- B. The author of “Invaders Among Us” informs readers about different types of invasive species. The author of “Invader Alert” presents claims to persuade readers that they can help stop the spread of invasive species.
- C. The author of “Invaders Among Us” wants to entertain readers with stories about invasive species that sound like science fiction. The author of “Invader Alert” describes how invasive species were introduced in the U.S.
- D. The author of “Invaders Among Us” describes how invasive species have spread from one area to another. The author of “Invader Alert” seeks to inform readers about how to care for species such as kudzu.

Part B

Which details from the passages **best** support the answer in Part A? Choose **two** answers.

- A. It sounds like a scene from a science fiction thriller—plants consuming buildings, mussels blocking water supplies, fish attacking boaters . . .
- B. Unfortunately, flooding caused the ponds to overflow and released the carp into the Mississippi River.
- C. Kudzu, Asian carp, and Burmese pythons are just three examples of how successful invasive species harm ecosystems in multiple ways.
- D. It can also cost millions of dollars a year to keep the invasive species in check and even more to help a damaged ecosystem recover.
- E. So what is being done about invasive species, and how should you help?

- 7 The passages “Invaders Among Us” and “Invader Alert” both give information about invasive species in the United States. How do the authors take different approaches to the same topic? Write an essay analyzing how the authors emphasize different evidence and present different interpretations of the facts. Use evidence from **both** passages to support your response.

Writer’s Checklist

PLAN before you write

- Make sure you read the question carefully.
- Make sure you have read the passages carefully.
- Think about how the question relates to the passages.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze the information from the passages as you write your essay.
- Make sure you use evidence from the passages to support your response.
- Use precise language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions in your essay.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- I stayed focused on answering the question.
- I used evidence from the passages to support my response.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

STANDARDS CORRELATIONS

Florida B.E.S.T. Standards Correlations

Standard	Grade 7	Lesson(s)
Reading		
Reading Prose and Poetry		
ELA.7.R.1.1	Analyze the impact of setting on character development and plot in a literary text.	1, 3, 12
ELA.7.R.1.2	Compare two or more themes and their development throughout a literary text.	1, 2, 3, 4
ELA.7.R.1.3	Explain the influence of narrator(s), including unreliable narrator(s), and/or shifts in point of view in a literary text.	1, 4, 13
ELA.7.R.1.4	Analyze the impact of various poetic forms on meaning and style.	2, 4, 12
Reading Informational Text		
ELA.7.R.2.1	Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts.	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16
ELA.7.R.2.2	Compare two or more central ideas and their development throughout a text.	5, 8, 9, 15
ELA.7.R.2.3	Explain how an author establishes and achieves purpose(s) through diction and syntax.	5, 6, 7, 9
ELA.7.R.2.4	Track the development of an argument, analyzing the types of reasoning used and their effectiveness.	6, 7, 9, 16
Reading Across Genres		
ELA.7.R.3.1	Analyze how figurative language contributes to tone and meaning and explain examples of allusions in text(s).	2, 3, 4, 12
ELA.7.R.3.2	Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.	9, 14, 15
ELA.7.R.3.3	Compare and contrast how authors with differing perspectives address the same or related topics or themes.	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14
ELA.7.R.3.4	Explain the meaning and/or significance of rhetorical devices in a text.	3
Communication		
Communicating Through Writing		
ELA.7.C.1.2	Write personal or fictional narratives using narrative techniques, a recognizable point of view, precise words and phrases, and figurative language.	11, 13
ELA.7.C.1.3	Write and support a claim using logical reasoning, relevant evidence from sources, elaboration, a logical organizational structure with varied transitions, and acknowledging at least one counterclaim.	11, 12, 16
ELA.7.C.1.4	Write expository texts to explain and analyze information from multiple sources, using relevant supporting details and a logical organizational pattern.	11, 14, 15, 17
ELA.7.C.1.5	Improve writing by planning, revising, and editing, considering feedback from adults and peers.	11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17
Following Conventions		
ELA.7.C.3.1	Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level.	11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17
Researching		
ELA.7.C.4.1	Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources, and generating additional questions for further research.	7, 14, 17
Creating and Collaborating		
ELA.7.C.5.2	Use digital tools to produce and share writing.	11, 14, 17

Standard	Grade 7	Lesson(s)
Vocabulary		
Finding Meaning		
ELA.7.V.1.1	Integrate academic vocabulary appropriate to grade level in speaking and writing.	9
ELA.7.V.1.2	Apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots and affixes to determine meanings of words and phrases in grade-level content.	4, 5
ELA.7.V.1.3	Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15
ELA Expectations		
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.	covered throughout program
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.	
ELA.K12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.	
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.	
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.	
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.	



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Grades 3–8



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