

## Assessment Commentary

In task 3: Assessing student learning, you will write a commentary, responding to the prompts below. Your commentary should be **no more than 10 single-spaced pages, including the prompts**.

### 1. Analyzing Student Learning

a. Identify the specific standards/objectives measured by the assessment you chose for analysis.

**11.2 CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS (1763 – 1824):** Growing political and economic tensions led the American colonists to declare their independence from Great Britain. Once independent, the new nation confronted the challenge of creating a stable federal republic. (Standards: 1, 5; Themes: TCC, GOV, CIV, ECO)

11.2c Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to a convention whose purpose was to revise the Articles of Confederation and instead resulted in the writing of a new Constitution. The ratification debate over the proposed Constitution led the Federalists to agree to add a bill of rights to the Constitution.

Students will examine the weaknesses and successes of government under the Articles of Confederation.

**NYS Shift 6:** Students constantly build the transferable vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts. This can be done effectively by spiraling like content in increasingly complex texts.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8**

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

b. Provide the evaluation criteria you used to analyze student learning.

Students were graded using the holistic rubric shown below:

CRITERIA/SCORE	1	2	3	4
<b>Use of Discourse Markers</b>	Student uses 2 or fewer discourse markers in reaction.	Student uses 3 discourse markers in reaction.	Student uses 4 discourse markers in reaction.	Student uses 5 or more discourse markers in reaction.
<b>Accuracy of Content</b>	Concepts and facts are non-existent or unrelated to text	Concepts and facts are inserted but not analyzed or are improperly placed in context	Concepts and facts are accurate and reflect upon ideas/information from the text.	Concepts and facts are accurate and exhibit comparing and contrasting
<b>Vocabulary Use</b>	Student did not use any content based vocabulary	Student incorrectly used content based vocabulary	Student will sometimes correctly incorporate content based vocabulary in writing/response	Student consistently includes content based vocabulary in writing/response
<b>Commentary</b>	Student did not comment on partner's writing	Student commented but focused on their own ideas	Student analyzed partner's writing and compared <b>or</b> contrasted ideas	Student analyzed partner's writing and compared <b>and</b> contrasted ideas

Numerical grades will be determined by dividing the number of earned points by the number of possible points.

Example: 13 earned points of 16 possible points =  $13/16 = 81$

*c. Provide a graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes student learning for your whole class. Be sure to summarize student learning for all evaluation criteria described above.*

<b>SCORE RANGE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING SCORE RANGE / NOTES</b>
<b>90-100</b>	17 - Excellent use of discourse markers in both tasks to compare/contrast with strong vocabulary use.
<b>80-89</b>	31 - Use of discourse less markers in commentary task - less compare/contrast used and/or referenced excerpts.
<b>70-79</b>	10 - Lack of use of discourse markers, mostly accurate content but little comparing/contrasting is evident.
<b>60-69</b>	3 - Accurate content, little use of discourse markers/vocabulary to compare/contrast or support claims.
<b>50-59</b>	5 - Inaccurate content and little use of vocabulary/discourse markers
<b>49 or Below</b>	3 - Incomplete (2 absences)

Overall many students in the class demonstrated comprehension of the content presented in the lesson. Many students showed improvements in their abilities to read text, interpret meaning, and apply material through writing.

Nearly 25% of students successfully used 5 or more discourse markers while presenting accurate and complex analysis of the provided texts using content based vocabulary and also wrote constructive feedback to their partner's work (shown in example C). These students were also able to include information from previous lessons and units in their writing and analysis. Students that were able to achieve this level included analysis of quotes from referenced text analysis that helped support their claims as they compared and contrasted the groups. This level of achievement is often found with students that possess higher reading levels of comprehension and vocabulary recognition as well as refined writing skills.

Nearly 75% of students completed both tasks within the assignment at or above an 80 range. Students successfully demonstrated an understanding of the content knowledge, often linking Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments to ideas learned in previous units. Students who fell short of the higher range of achievement were unable to reference specific elements of the text in their analysis as shown by Student B's sample. Many students in this range also wrote commentary relating back to their own original thoughts rather than focusing on providing feedback for their partner's work. Sample B also demonstrates the style of feedback a student in this range would provide to their partner and is found in the "comments" section. There is minimal feedback given by their partner that relates to the essay.

Students that struggled with the task were unable to successfully implement discourse markers into their writing. Many students accurately interpreted the text and utilized elements such as vocabulary or quotes in their writing but failed to link ideas together at a high level using markers or through comparing and contrasting work in the comment section. These students show the ability to engage high level texts to form knowledge but struggle to critically analyze and build relationships between text and analytical writing. Student A provides an example of this achievement level as the essay includes accurate facts and some content based vocabulary but ultimately fails to provide any analysis of the texts or relationships to their ideas of Federalism. The comment section on Student C's sheet shows an example of lower level feedback. The student who provided this feedback did not comment on the structure, development, or analysis of their partner's work. Minimal critiquing was noted in comparison to the comments on Student "A's" sheet.

The use of content based vocabulary, including names, documents, and groups, was present at each level. Students were able to build upon the skills addressed within the New York State Shifts (6) and Common Core Standards outlined in the lesson's goals. The differences between each level was most commonly found in the fluidity of the discourse markers used, the ability to support claims using samples from text, and the level of depth of analysis of historical context presented through the writing sample.

*d. Use evidence found in the **3 student work samples and the whole class summary** to analyze the patterns of learning for the whole class and differences for groups or individual learners relative to understanding, using or demonstrating the ability to do the following.*

- *Facts and concepts*
- *Interpretations and analysis skills*
- *Building and supporting arguments*

In the examples provided, each of the three students successfully completed both of the required tasks. However the focus of each shared sample will be the area titled "reaction" - the "comments" section has been completed by other students during task 2 of the double entry journal assignment and was an exercise to provide feedback and reflection on writing techniques and styles.

Each included sample showcases the different levels of student achievement commonly found at the completion of the assessment. Example A exemplifies the lower level achievement of students in the class. Student A was able to accurately utilize content based vocabulary including adjectives and proper nouns while also connecting ideas from past units. Vocabulary such as Federalists, Alexander Hamilton, and Articles of Confederation were used correctly. By referencing concepts from previous lesson segments that relate directly to the ratification of the Constitution and the Federalist Papers such as the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, Student A demonstrated a fair amount of skills in regards to understanding major facts and concepts of the content. Student A's example is representative of lower level achievement in the assessment due to the absence of analysis of the text and the ability to use discourse markers to build or support their writing. While the information discussed is accurate, there is no relationship built to the text. The provided excerpts should be referenced and relationships drawn to the events presented as done in Samples B and C.

Student B's example is representative of the majority of students in the classroom. Similar to Student A, this student's work shows an accurate understanding of the content presented in class. Many concrete facts and concepts are accurately conveyed using vocabulary similar to Student A with additional terms such as Constitutional Convention, James Madison, Shay's Rebellion, Thomas Jefferson, King George, Anti-Federalists, and Bill of Rights appearing.

Student B has linked more ideas together by referencing content from previous lessons to specific members of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist groups to further build their claims. The use of discourse markers is fluid and helps build a more complete claim but the student has not been successful in analyzing the provided texts within the writing sample. Throughout the student's writing I was able to connect one reference to the text but the specific excerpt the student analyzed was not given although they mentioned the number of the Federalist Paper referenced. The factual information presented was accurate and while it appears the student properly analyzed the text there is not enough connections drawn to consider it to be top-tier work.

Example C is an exemplar display of the assessment. Student C fluidly inserted discourse markers to draft a sound writing sample that included accurate facts, content vocabulary, and analysis of the provided texts. Similar to Student B, Student C's writing contained the same set of content vocabulary. Student C also utilized relative information from past lessons to further build their argument discussing the Federalist and Anti-Federalist

stances over the impending Constitution. Compared to Sample B I was clearly able to see the links between events, names, and concepts. The student also specifically compared and contrasted the two sides and inserted excerpts from quotes in appropriate places within their writing instead of simply referencing a number or document as Student B had done. The number of examples provided to support claims and the level of depth built by including details and specific terms helped Student C demonstrate a strong control over their comprehension of content and writing skills.

## **2. Feedback to Guide Further Learning**

*Refer to specific evidence of submitted feedback to support your explanation.*

*a. In what form did you submit your evidence of feedback for the focus 3 students.*

- **Written directly on work samples or in a separate document**
- In audio files; or
- In video clips from the instruction task (provide a time-stamp reference) or in a separate video clip.

Feedback for the attached assessments was provided directly on work samples. My feedback is written in colored pen to easily distinguish it from student work. I also use a highlighter to show areas that are exceptionally well done or call for attention.

*b. Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to the standards/objectives measured.*

The feedback I have provided addresses the requirements outlined in the rubric with the ultimate goal of preparing the students for college level writing. I will highlight key elements within their writing including the proper use of content based vocabulary and the use of discourse markers to build strong claims. When writing feedback in bulleted or narrative format I often “sandwich” my comments, beginning and ending with positives and offering recommendations in the middle to avoid discouraging students as much as possible.

Student A’s feedback commends the factual information presented and highlights the proper use of discourse markers that was required in the task. After noting tasks the student succeeding in I singled out one area they should improve upon. As noted in research conducted by Timperely Hattie published in *Educational Research*, feedback should be as focused as possible to achieve one or two targeted goals at a time. By providing specific areas for students to improve in the likelihood of seeing growth will increase. The Common Core Standard of analyzing a source (CCSS 11.2) and establishing relationships to content writing was a weakness in this example. Although other students had developed ideas in more depth, this student showed significant growth from previous writing tasks. Additionally, their ability to use specific terms and provide examples to support their claims was present in this piece therefore I chose to give feedback that will promote the skill of connecting text sources to claims made in writing assignments.

Their basic understanding of the NYS content standards targeted in the lesson plan were achieved and shown through writing as students at this level. Student A was able to identify key points of the Federalist argument and relate them to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation so I praised them for that effort in my commentary. The student was also reminded to complete all parts of the task but no points were taken away in this instance. My goal for student A and other students still struggling to link descriptive and detailed events and concepts together with text is to keep them engaged and encouraged in their writing so I attempt to “sandwich” any constructive feedback between at least two positives comments.

Student B’s feedback was structured the same way. Because of Student B’s ability level shown through previous writing samples I was able to focus more on whether or not the student had included an accurate analysis of the text source in the assignment. Similar to Student A, the

factual evidence provided in support of claims was consistent and accurate but had more depth and clearly demonstrated understanding of the social studies content standards outlined in the lesson.

The proper use of content based vocabulary was also found throughout the writing. The student's strength of discussing the larger pictures with detailed support allowed me to concentrate my feedback on higher level and more frequent use of text in the writing. Unfortunately, Student B did not provide direct reference to specific excerpts given in the provided texts. Student B alluded to the text but did not provide me with the quote or partial quote from the reference. The sample showed the correct use of discourse markers and more were included than the five required. Because of the strong technical elements shown I am able to ask this student to work on including a more detailed analysis of text in their next written assignment. I can also encourage the student to make simpler adjustments and smaller steps in order to reach the next level of writing which is directly citing evidence from texts to build claims.

In the final sample, Student C used a wealth of facts from multiple classes in conjunction with accurate interpretations of the excerpts provided to construct a thorough short essay that completed the task at a high level. As with the majority of students that reflect Student A and Student B's samples, Student C and others in this range clearly demonstrate a high degree of understanding of the social studies content standards targeted. This group also exhibited examples of higher order thinking processes such as analyzing text and events, applying information to form relationships, and evaluating arguments made by different parties. Similar to Student B, there was a significant amount of content based vocabulary used to make accurate claims but Student C was able to refer to specific excerpts and use text from a quotation to support statements and make stronger claims.

*c. How will you support students to apply the feedback to guide improvement, either within the learning segment or at a later time?*

In this assessment, students have the opportunity to comment on other students' work and it allows them to have the experience of assessing writing from a different perspective. One of my goals is to have students recognize the strengths and weaknesses of other students' writing so they may apply new knowledge to their own skillsets.

The most common error found throughout the assignment was the utilization of referenced text applied in the construction of the essay. Approximately 55 percent of students, including Student A and Student B, did not reference or cite a specific excerpt or part of an excerpt from the text provided. This will be addressed in a later learning segment as students will be completing a Document Based Question (DBQ) that requires them to use and cite fragments of passages to support claims. I will also be focusing on groups of students that showed similar struggles before the next writing assignment.

Students that struggled to properly complete the assignment or use discourse markers will receive additional supports in class through differentiated tasks based around content standards during a future learning segment.

I will assign struggling students differentiated readings that contain discourse markers and ask them to text code the passages by underlining these words and phrases, noting what type of essay is being written, and they will draw brackets then summarize chunks of text looking for claims made by the author. This activity will help students recognize the proper use of discourse markers and analyze the additional strength made to claims as they are clearly announced and supported with details and facts.

Students who successfully completed the assessment will continue to receive feedback that will help them reach higher levels of writing. In addition to content, students may complete tasks that focus in on proper grammar or the use of more difficult vocabulary. I may also ask these students to support claims with a set minimum of supportive details and scaffold their learning by introducing more rigorous texts. These students may also review exemplar essays

that contain higher tiered vocabulary and broad concepts and be asked to text code the reading as well as practice the vocabulary through the construction of Frayer Diagrams.

Prior to the next writing assignment is given all students will participate in an activity that requires them to set realistic goals for their writing skills. Students will identify specific areas of strengths and weaknesses and refer back to the double entry journal assessment for ideas to work on.

I will also be recommending differentiated targeted areas for improvement to each student before the next writing assignment is given and meet individually with students who were unable to score above a 50 to ensure they are setting clear and realistic goals as well as focusing on areas I feel they could improve on the most.

If students continue to struggle I will approach them to receive additional help during study halls and after school periods. I will also contact cooperating teachers in the English department and special education (when applicable) to receive additional supports and develop a comprehensive plan to improve the student's writing.

### 3. Evidence of Language Understanding and Use

You may provide evidence of students' language use **from one, two, or all three of the following sources:**

- 1-Use video clips from Task 2 and provide time-stamp references for language use.
- 2-Submit an additional video file named "Language Use" of no more than 5 minutes in length and provide time-stamp references for student language use (this can be footage of one or more students' language use). Submit the clip in Task 3 Part B.
- 3-Use the student work samples analyzed in Task 3 and cite language use.

*When responding to the prompt below, use concrete examples from the video clips (using time-stamp references) and/or student work samples as evidence. Evidence from the clips may focus on one or more students.*

*Explain and provide evidence of the extent to which your students were able to use or struggled to use language (selected function, vocabulary, and additional identified language demands from Task 1) to develop content understandings.*

**3** - The student work samples illustrate the varied abilities to compare and contrast historical ideas and facts based on text and presented content. More than 84 percent of students earned a 70 or above on the assessment due to their proficiency in the comparing and contrasting of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist parties. Student B and Student C were both successful as they cited historically accurate claims regarding each side and both used at least one discourse marker from their guide to help them show the differences. These two students, as well as many others, used information from class and the readings to identify and explain the arguments, advantages, disadvantages, and leaders of each side. Student C provided an exemplar sample from the 17 students who earned a score of 90-100. Their reference and accurate use of a specific quote from the reading and exceptional depth of information with a high level of content vocabulary showed their mastery of the content through this assessment.

Student A was unsuccessful in comparing and contrasting the two sides. Their sample presents historically accurate information but only focuses on the Federalist advantages. It neglects the Anti-Federalist stance and there is no use of discourse markers that represent the function of comparing and contrasting.

All three students were successful in the use of content based vocabulary and Student B and Student C utilized an exceptional amount of terms from the discipline in their essay. Content based vocabulary including: Federalist, Anti-Federalist, central government, Articles of Confederation, King George, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Shay's

Rebellion, citizen, and George Washington were correctly used throughout all three samples. Each term was accurately aligned to an idea, document, or side that was the topic of the assignment.

This assessment ultimately supports students' abilities to properly create a discourse that focuses on expository writing through the analysis of content and text to make claims based on historical facts and concepts.

**2** - In the video titled *Language Use*, students are participating in a hook called an Agree or Disagree. The prompt for the lesson is "The Federal Government should have more power." I have explained the directions for students and after they have had time to consider the prompt they are allowed them to move to the side of the room that corresponds with their belief as posted by a hung sign.

Throughout the hook I call upon three students to share their thoughts. At the 1:21 mark, the first student justifies their belief by providing explicit examples of why the government should have more power. They also accurately use content based vocabulary including: *treaties*, *unified*, and *centralized government* as they build an argument.

At the 1:58 mark the second student also builds an argument by providing explicit examples and scenarios while using content based vocabulary such as *federal government*, *regulate trade*, and *unified* - which they explain in detail for the class.

The last student called upon receives assistance from a classmate to explain the government's need for greater power. They cite a specific example, *Shay's Rebellion*, and build an argument to justify their opinion based on facts. He is able to identify the event and explain the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation it exposes as part of their justification for believing the government needs more power at the time.

I support the class by providing immediate feedback on their success in creating arguments using specific examples and reasoning to successfully justify opinions. I continue to relate the activity to the construction of a document based question, a task they will be completing in future lessons and on the State Regents' Exam. Their ability to discourse on a given topic is shown in this clip.

Similar to the assessment shared above in **task 3.3**, this activity supports students' language development as they actively engage in discourse regarding the topic at hand. Students in the video and assessments similar to this in the lesson segment use facts and concepts from class to support claims. Their analysis and evaluation of information allows them to justify their arguments in written or oral discourse.

#### **4. Using Assessment to Inform Instruction**

*a. Based on your analysis of student learning presented in prompts 1c-d describe next steps for instruction.*

- *For the whole class*
- *For the 3 focus students and other individuals/groups with specific needs*

The data from the assessment shown in the table above (1c) depicts a relatively successful level of content comprehension. Nearly 85 percent of students were able to demonstrate accurate knowledge of content and more than 70 percent showed levels equivalent of proficiency through their writing by using content based vocabulary and linking ideas together to past events from the class and provided texts. My goal for the students is to have 70 percent reach a mastery level by incorporating supportive quotations from texts into their claims.

After all students have completed both tasks of the assignment I will review an exemplary sample I have written and model the process I have taken to complete the essay. I will differentiate by providing two options at various points along the essay that are examples of "at level" work and "higher level" work. The main differences will be the depth and frequency of

references to text highlighted by the use of discourse markers. Students will be asked to participate by critiquing my sample and choices while listing areas I could improve on and areas where they could apply the information to in their writing. This will also help them establish writing goals for future assignments.

Before the next writing assignment students will have the opportunity to work on specific areas for growth. Students that were in the lowest range of content and writing abilities will continue to focus on skills that help them learn content. In my opinion this group struggled because of chronic absenteeism and had gaps in knowledge. To combat this I will continue posting lesson material and supplements online that they can access at home or in public libraries. Hard copies will also be available to them.

The majority of students, such as students A and B struggled to include document based text in their claims. Prior to the next writing assignment I believe it would be best to complete a document based question essay regarding the next content standard, the United States Constitution, because it will allow me to scaffold and differentiate their learning. As the instructor I will be able to set expectations and goals with each student and spiral vocabulary and the rigor of texts provided. For more accomplished readers I can utilize text with higher Lexile ranges that concern the same content.

As a whole class I will guide students through their similar documents and help them begin organizing the writing by creating a graphic organizer. This will help all students understand what text they should incorporate in each claim before they analyze their differentiated documents and finish the graphic organizer.

Students of all abilities will text code their documents. This will require them to use symbols and underlining to identify concepts, notate analysis, evaluate concepts, and continue to build on their content based vocabulary by identifying trouble words and researching their meanings with my guidance.

The text coding will also help students engage the information found in the text and students at the highest level, such as Student C, will be more likely to recognize and utilize actual excerpts from the texts they are provided with.

At the end of the next writing assignment I will evaluate student growth in the key areas I identified from the sample and also in the areas students recognized as target areas for improvement.

*b. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of the student learning. Support your explanation with principles from research and/or theory.*

The next steps of instruction outlined above will support student learning through differentiation and constructivism. Applying Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the assignment of a document based question will allow me to present content at various levels based on students' prior work samples. As seen in table 1c, students have

Each student will receive constructive criticism from myself and their peers before completing the DBQ. Research done by Lipnevich and Smith published in *Educational Training Services* and a study conducted by Hattie and Timperley published in *The Review of Educational Research* both found that approximately 80 percent of students performed better and were more engaged with work after receiving positive commentary and constructive criticism. Upwards of 50 percent of improvement was credited towards receiving constructive, focused, and timely feedback.

A study by Thiede, Anderson, and Therriault (2003) at the University of Chicago further discuss the importance of teacher modeling in conjunction with constructive criticism. Their research found that students perform better when they are aware of their own thinking. Metacognition can be modeled throughout the guided learning during the construction of the graphic organizer. I will model my own thinking process as an example to students and openly

engage them through conversation to assess their understanding of information processing. This will hopefully provide students with an example of how they should be processing material into graphic organizers and improve their abilities to recognize key concepts found within text based material.

Additionally, the creation of a graphic organizer will help students construct knowledge and organize text into meaningful passages. Novak's (1991) and Merkle and Jefferies' (2001) studies found graphic organizers to help students develop relationships with concepts, link past learning to new content, and reinforce structural and decoding analysis. Merkle and Jefferies also suggest incorporating student input into whole-class constructed graphic organizers. Novak also believes that graphic organizers help students self-assess and this would be beneficial for higher level achievers such as Student C to visually evaluate the quality and quantity of authentic text supporting their claims. Furthermore, Miller's chunking theory supports the use of graphic organizer as students are more likely to store information in their long term memory by making meaningful connections to content. Ellis and Howard's (2007) research published in *Current Practice Alerts* (2007) believe images serve as visual cues for connections that build understanding of information. They also found that students could access information at differentiated levels and identify the purpose of readings with more ease. Because I am the only teacher in the classroom, the graphic organizer is the best practice to scaffold learning with class sizes of 20 or more students at different levels.