**

**For the Leader of the Activity**

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Professional Development Planning Page

A guide for the leader of the activity

**Purpose:**

* To identify the core elements of Common Core aligned Writing.
* To refine and deepen understanding of grade level expectations in the CCSS.
* To trace a developmental progression of skills in student writing.

**Audience:** K-12 educators, administrators, ELA and content area specialists

**Grouping:** Groups of two or three, single or multiple grade levels

**Materials:**

* Progression of student work K-5 and/or 6-12.
* *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Record Sheet.
* Copy of appropriate CCSS writing standards

**Approximate Time:** 30 minutes- 2 hours

Time needed for this activity will vary based on the needs and skills of the group. The elementary pieces are fairly short, and can generally be read and analyzed in less than an hour. The upper grade progressions can take quite some time. Consider selecting a representative sample if time is limited.

**Advance Preparation:**

1. Copy one packet (student work samples, Protocol and Record Sheet) for each participant:

* Print the full set of student responses (K-5 or 6-12). All of the pieces in each set are written in response to a text-based prompt using the same focusing question.
* Arrange the student samples in a grade level progression (lowest grade to highest).
* Add one *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Protocol and Record Sheet to the front of each packet.

2. Copy the appropriate Common Core Writing Standards or ask that participants bring their own copies of the standards.

3. If desired, prepare a group copy of the *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Record Sheet to be projected electronically or displayed on a piece of chart paper. This copy can be used to record the group’s observations while debriefing.

\*Optional: You may choose to copy or display one or more of the grade level prompts used by the students. Stimulus texts and prompts for each grade level are part of the *In Common* Resource. They can be downloaded from the Achieve the Core website (www.achievethecore.org).

4. Please note that this activity centers on observation. Participants **should not use their copies of the standards until after observations on the entire set of pieces have been discussed and recorded.** Be sure to try this activity yourself using the pieces chosen and recording sheet provided before leading. You may want to use the annotated version of the student samples (also available www.achievethecore.org ) to deepen and extend your thinking about the student pieces and their relationship to the standard.

**Leading the Activity:**

1. Introduce the activity and collection of student work samples, using the short PowerPoint or the written *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Protocol included in this resource.
2. Group participants as desired. The activity works best if done in pairs or groups of three. Group members may teach the same grade level or represent multiple grade levels.
3. Hand out materials (listed above).
4. Review directions for completing the activity on the *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Protocol, calling attention to the recording sheet provided.
5. Circulate, answering questions and extending thinking as participants observe, record and reflect on the student work.
6. Debrief by sharing observations as a full group. Discuss the differences and similarities noticed from one grade level to the next (a *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Summary Sheet with sample responses has been included for your reference).
7. Help participants synthesize and summarize what they have learned using the reflection questions on the bottom of the recording sheet:

* Based on your observations, what are some core descriptors that define this writing type?
* What patterns do you notice in the way expectations change over time?

From observations made about how the student pieces change from one grade to the next, the group should derive essential characteristics of the targeted Common Core writing standard at each grade level. They will also discover common elements that recur at all grade levels, with increasing sophistication as students become competent writers.

1. As a group, develop a short written response to each of the synthesizing questions. Arrange for everyone to get a copy of this group synthesis (This can be e-mailed to participants, created in a Google Doc, printed out and photocopied or even copied by hand by participants).
2. Distribute and collect the Exit Ticket. Be sure to respond to questions and use this feedback before repeating the activity with a different writing type or grade level span.

**Optional Customized Packets of Student Work:**

*How Does Your Garden Grow?* can be adapted to all writing types and grade levels using free, downloadable student samples from the In Common collection, available on achievethecore.org. To create your own customized packet, follow the directions below:

Directions for using the *In Common* Collection to create a packets of student work:

* Go to:

<http://achievethecore.org> and search for *In Common* or *Student Writing Samples*

* Choose a writing type to focus on (Opinion/Argument, Informative/Explanatory or Narrative).
* Click on *On Demand Writing*
* Print the transcribed (unannotated) versions of a full set of student responses (K-5 or 6-12) All of the pieces in a given set are written in response to the same focusing question.
* Arrange the student samples in a grade level progression (lowest grade to highest).
* Add one *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Protocol and Record Sheet to the front of each packet.
* Copy one packet (student work samples and record sheet) for each participant.
* Copy the Common Core Writing Standards for the writing type and grade levels addressed, or ask that participants bring their own copies of the standards.

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Common Ground Protocols: Using the *In Common* Collection to Better Understand the CCSS

[http://www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org/) www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Observation, Discussion and Reflection Protocol for Participants

**Overview:** In this exercise, you will compare student pieces within a grade cluster and note the similarities and differences. The pieces in your packet have been written to a set of uniform prompts purposefully designed to produce student pieces in the same writing type, on the same topic, across a range of grade levels. Analyzing these pieces can help you distill the core elements of each writing type and gain a better understanding of expectations at each grade level.

**Purpose:**

* To identify the core elements of CCSS aligned writing in a particular writing type.
* To refine and deepen understanding of grade level expectations in the CCSS.
* To trace a developmental progression in CCSS aligned writing in a specific writing type.

**Protocol:**

*Note: This activity centers on observation, please do not use your copy of the Common Core Standards until the final step in the protocol. When analyzing pieces, focus on the information expressed and how it was expressed, not on mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.).*

1. Read the first piece in the packet. What elements of effective writing are evident in this sample? Discuss your observations with a partner.
2. Read the next piece. How is this piece similar to the previous piece? How is it different? Record your observations on the *How Does Your Garden Grow?* Record Sheet.
3. Continue reading, analyzing and discussing each piece. Be sure to capture your thinking on the record sheet as you work.
4. When you have finished, synthesize your observations by responding to the questions at the bottom of the recording sheet.
5. Now look at any one of the Common Core Writing Standards in the grade span and writing type you have just studied. Reflect: How might this exercise help educators to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of a particular writing standard?

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**Writing Type:**

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Record Sheet

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key Differences** | **Grade** | **Similarities in All/Most Pieces** |
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Based on your observations, what are some core descriptors that define this writing type?

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What patterns do you notice in the way expectations change over time?

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| *A Common Ground Protocol www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org* |

*Please reflect briefly on this activity below.*

What are the key elements in this writing type at your grade level?

How will what you have learned in this activity help you in planning writing instruction?

What questions do you have about this writing type?

What would make this activity more effective? What suggestions do you have for future activities?

Thank you!

**Exit Ticket**