

# COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course:** Common Core: Implementing the Writing Standards Grades 6-8

**Presenter:** Meesha Brown

**Credits:** 3 Graduate Credits

## Course Overview

In this course, you will learn how to implement the Common Core State Standards for grades 6-8 writing instruction in your own classroom, whether you teach English language arts or high school science. You will examine the organization of the standards to see how the demand for more sophisticated writing increases over time. You will also explore in detail the 10 anchor standards that run through the two grade bands of K-5 and 6-12, including text types and purposes, production and distribution of writing, research to build and present knowledge, and range of writing.

## As you take this course, you will:

- Listen to experts.
- Watch real classroom learning.
- Read research and best practice.
- Access an application toolkit that provides resources, lesson plans, and graphic organizers.

## Learning Objectives

In this course, you will explore:

- 1) The Common Core writing standards and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model.
- 2) The key elements of Common Core opinion/argumentative writing.
- 3) The key elements of Common Core informational/explanatory writing.
- 4) The key elements of Common Core narrative writing. 5) The key elements of Common Core research writing.
- 6) The Common Core approach to writing across all content areas.
- 7) A variety of ways to assess student writing, including baseline, formative, and summative assessments.

## Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Integrate the Common Core writing standards, the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model into your classroom, and the key elements of Common Core opinion/argumentative writing.
- 2) Guide students through the process of developing Common Core opinion/argumentative writing at your grade level and the key elements of Common Core narrative writing.
- 3) Guide students through the process of developing Common Core informational/explanatory writing at your grade level and the Common Core approach to writing across all content areas.
- 4) Guide students through the process of developing Common Core narrative writing at your grade level.
- 5) Guide students through the process of developing Common Core research writing at your grade level.
- 6) Integrate writing across content areas at your grade level.
- 7) Use baseline, formative, and summative assessments to guide students through the writing process.

**Grades 6-8 course adaptations and materials:**

This course addresses the specific demands of the Common Core Standards for Writing in the middle school years. There are classroom demonstrations across grades 6-8 showing the ways in which a teacher can instruct students when developing writing skills and receiving feedback. In addition, participants will see how the standards progress and grow in sophistication over time by walking through the standards and viewing exemplars of student work. Lastly, participants will be provided an application toolkit in the unit that provide grade-specific resources including graphic organizers, suggested projects, lesson plans, and instructional tools to use in their planning and instruction.

**Course Resources**

Included within each unit are readings, resources, and materials available to download, save, and print. Please make sure you access all materials for each unit by clicking on the “Resources” tab to the right of the screen.

At the end of each unit, you will find a KDS Application Toolkit that includes resources that can be used for implementation the next day, e.g., graphic organizers, project ideas, suggested texts and all onscreen graphics that are available to print or download.

**Methods of Instruction and Evaluation**

- Videos (presentations consisting of interviews and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the course which ask participants to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and next steps for their practice)
- Checks for Understanding (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding)
- Discussion forum (prompts that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts) § Pre and Post survey
- Mid-Course Project and Final Capstone Project

**Academic Honesty** KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else’s work as one’s own, and includes failing to cite sources for others’ ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant.

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org).

**Grading Policy (using rubric 1-4 scale system)**

Total grade for the course is a culmination of performance grades

A: 3.4 – 4.0

B: 2.7 – 3.3

C: 2.0 – 2.6

F: >2.0

**Percentage of Course Credit**

Course grade is determined by the following:

- |                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Reflections              | 15% |
| ▪ Checks for understanding | 25% |
| ▪ Mid-course project       | 25% |
| ▪ Final Capstone project   | 35% |

In order to complete the requirements of the course, you must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, checks for understanding), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

**Checks for Understanding and Reflection Rubric**

| Assessment               | Underdeveloped (1)  | Basic (2)  | Proficient (3)  | Distinguished (4)   |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Checks for understanding | 65% or below  | 66-79%   | 80-89%  | 90-100%   |
| Reflection Question      | <p>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has not addressed the questions posed. Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</p> | <p>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</p> | <p>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content.</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</p> | <p>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content.</p> <p>Participant has made responses to prompts personally meaningful and relevant to his or her teaching practice.</p> |

## Course Calendar

### Unit 1: Introduction to the Common Core State Standards for Writing

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the Common Core writing standards and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to integrate the Common Core writing standards and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model into your classroom.

#### Readings:

- Fisher, D. (2008). Effective use of the gradual release of responsibility model. Retrieved from [https://www.mheonline/\\_treasures/pdf/douglas\\_fisher.pdf](https://www.mheonline/_treasures/pdf/douglas_fisher.pdf).
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC: Authors.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Glossary of Terms, Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical Subjects, Appendix A*. Washington, DC: Authors.
- Tyre, P. (2012, September). The writing revolution. *The Atlantic*, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/the-writing-revolution/309090/>.

### Unit 2: Writing Opinions/Arguments

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the Common Core writing standards and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to integrate the Common Core writing standards and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model into your classroom.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

#### Readings:

- Ferlazzo, L. & Hull-Sypniewski, K. (2014). Teaching argument writing to ELLs. *Educational Leadership*, 71(7), 46-52. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr14/vol71/num07/TeachingArgument-Writing-to-ELLs.aspx>.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Glossary of Terms, Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical Subjects, Appendix A, Writing*. (pp. 23-25). Washington, DC: Authors.

### Unit 3: Writing Informational/Explanatory Texts

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the key elements of Common Core informational/explanatory writing.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to guide students through the process of developing Common Core informational/explanatory writing at your grade level.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

#### Readings:

- Gallagher, K. (2014). Making the most of mentor texts. *Educational Leadership*, 71(7), 28-33. Retrieved from ASCD. Retrieved from [www.ascd.org/publications/educationalleadership/apr14/vol71/num07/Making-the-Most-of-Mentor-Texts.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationalleadership/apr14/vol71/num07/Making-the-Most-of-Mentor-Texts.aspx).
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Glossary of Terms, Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical Subjects, Appendix A, Informational/Explanatory Writing*. (p. 23). Washington, DC: Authors.

### Unit 4: Writing Narrative Texts

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the key elements of Common Core narrative writing.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to guide students through the process of developing Common Core narrative writing at your grade level.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

#### Readings:

- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Glossary of Terms, Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical Subjects, Appendix A, Narrative Writing*. (pp. 23-24). Washington, DC: Authors.
- Wolpert-Gawron, H. (2013). Common Core in action: narrative writing. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/common-core-in-action-narrative-writing-heather-wolpertgawron>.

### Unit 5: Research and Writing

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the key elements of Common Core research writing.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to guide students through the process of developing Common Core research writing at your grade level.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

#### Readings:

- Werner-Burke, N. (2014). Revamping the classroom research project. *Educational Leadership*, 71(7), 40-44. Retrieved from ASCD. Retrieved from [www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr14/vol71/num07/Revamping-the-Classroom-Research-Project.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr14/vol71/num07/Revamping-the-Classroom-Research-Project.aspx)

### Unit 6: Writing Across Content Areas

#### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore the Common Core approach to writing across all content areas.

#### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to integrate writing across content areas at your grade level.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

#### Readings:

- National Council of Teachers of English. (2011). Reading and writing across the curriculum. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CC/0203mar2011/CC0203Policy.pdf>.

## Unit 7: Assessing Student Writing

### Objectives

In this unit, you will explore a variety of ways to assess student writing, including baseline, formative, and summative assessments.

### Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to use baseline, formative, and summative assessments to guide students through the writing process.

**Resource:** KDS Application Toolkit related to the unit topic that provides project ideas, reading suggestions, and templates to support classroom planning and instruction.

### Readings:

- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). The bridge between today's lesson and tomorrow's. *Educational Leadership* (71)6, 10-14. Retrieved from ASCD. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar14/vol71/num06/The-BridgeBetween-Today's-Lesson-and-Tomorrow's.aspx>.

## Unit 8: Epilogue

Course closing and opportunity to reflect back on learning.

You will review the questions you had about the Common Core and writing at the start of the course to see what learning gains have occurred.

## Assessment

### COMMON CORE: IMPLEMENTING THE WRITING STANDARDS MID-COURSE PROJECT

#### Description:

The purpose of this project is to have you identify a grade-level text for an explanatory/informative writing assignment using the resources within the KDS Application Toolkit (found in the resource section), so you can create an introductory lesson to begin the writing project and implement your lesson plan. You will use this opportunity to reflect on your practice and determine how best to modify or enrich your planning and instruction.

#### Identify a CCSS-aligned text to use and introductory lesson for the writing assignment:

Using the list of text suggestions in the KDS Application Toolkit for your grade level, identify a relevant text to use in this assignment and design an introductory lesson plan that includes the following information:

- **Standards:** The CCSS standards that this writing assignment will address.
- **Unit Goal:** The end goal of this writing project for students in content and skills (using backwards planning design, i.e., starting with the standards and designing learning experiences told reaching those standards).
- **Text:** The text and process by which students will mine the text for information.
- **Guided Instruction:** A guided-release process in which students first see teachers model the process, then students have an opportunity to practice through student collaboration, and finally students do independent practice.
- **Resources:** Tools/handouts needed for the lesson (e.g., graphic organizers, text samples, prompts).
- **Assessment:** A check for understanding to use to gauge learning from the lesson (e.g., feedback from the students, an exit ticket, or cold call).

### Reflect on Practice

Write a one-paragraph reflection assessing the planning and delivery of your lesson. Identify areas of strength (instructional plans and delivery) and areas for change (to develop). Use your own observations and student performance data/feedback to address the following:

- What went well in the lesson and what would you replicate in other lessons?
- What would you do differently and how would you make those changes?
- Did you cover everything you needed to get the students started?
- How well did the students understand the information?
- What did you learn from the students' performance data?
- What other observations did you have and what will be your next steps?

When you've completed your Mid-course Application Project, upload your **lesson plan** and **reflection** for the course.

**Alternate assignment (when you're not in a classroom or out for summer):** Design the lesson plan and reflect on what you think your students might struggle with on the assignment. Share the lesson with a colleague and reflect with them if they think the lesson is clear and provides practical scaffolds. What's missing in the lesson and needs modification?

### Mid-course Project Evaluation:

| Project component                   | Underdeveloped (1)   | Basic (2)   | Proficient (3)  | Distinguished (4)  | Score |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|-------|
| <b>Quality of lesson plan (25%)</b> | Develops a standards-based lesson plan that lacks several critical components.                       | Develops a standards-based lesson plan that lacks one critical component.             | Develops a standards-based lesson plan that includes all critical components.                   | Develops a standardsbased lesson plan that includes clear and concise components and demonstrates planning mastery.  |       |
| <b>Text selection (25%)</b>         | Selects a text for the lesson, but is not clear about how it relates to building standards mastery.  | Selects a text for the lesson but loosely aligns it to demands of the standards.      | Selects a text for the lesson and includes a rationale and clear connection to the standards.   | Selects a text for the lesson and includes a rationale and clear connection to the standards. Includes additional texts that can scaffold the learning for all students. |       |
| <b>Assessment (25%)</b>             | Identifies a less rigorous assessment for the lesson and is not clear about how it measures mastery. | Identifies a broad assessment for the lesson that is too narrow to inform next steps. | Identifies a rigorous assessment that clearly measures student learning and informs next steps. | Identifies a rigorous assessment that clearly measures student learning and collects relevant data points for instruction.   |       |
| <b>Reflection on practice (25%)</b> | Provides a narrow reflection on strengths and changes from lesson implementation.                    | Provides a brief reflection on strengths and changes from lesson implementation.      | Provides a thorough reflection on strengths and changes lesson implementation.                  | Provides a comprehensive reflection on strengths and changes from lesson implementation and provides action steps.   |       |



### Mid-course Project Performance Summary

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_/100%

Qualitative feedback:

### COMMON CORE: IMPLEMENTING THE WRITING STANDARDS FINAL CAPSTONE PROJECT

#### **Description:**

The purpose of this project is to have you identify a writing assignment from the KDS Application Toolkit for your grade level and relevant subject area. Once identified, you will write a sample exemplar anchor paper and an anchor paper that lacks the critical criteria to have examples to talk through with students and/or colleagues about the differences in quality and presentation of the assignment. Following the development of the papers, you will take notes on the content and skills you employed to complete the assignment, which will help inform how to scaffold a unit plan for the assignment.

#### **Anchor Papers**

Identify a writing assignment within the KDS Application Toolkit and develop two anchor papers: one that exemplifies the highest quality written work and one that shows students an incomplete example.

#### **Develop anchor papers that demonstrate:**

- **Structure:** The way your students should organize their writing assignment at your grade level (i.e., topic sentence, supporting details, and thesis statement).
- **Evidence:** The use of textual evidence in details, paraphrasing, and/or quotations to show how you took the information from a text and translated into your paper.
- **Citation:** The appropriate use of citations throughout your writing.
- **Presentation:** An example of how you want the content displayed for this assignment.

#### **Learning Tracker**

As you are developing both your exemplar and incomplete anchor papers, ask yourself these questions and take notes to inform your instructional planning:

- What was your preparation process for this assignment?
- What steps or process cycles did you use throughout the assignment (e.g., identification of textual evidence, identification of sources)?
- What background knowledge did you use in completing the assignment?
- How much time did it take to complete the assignment from start to finish?
- What reading and writing skills did you have to use throughout development?

When you have completed your Final Capstone Project, upload your **anchor papers** and **learning tracker** for the course.

**Alternate assignment (when you're not in a classroom or out for summer):** N/A

**Final Capstone Project Evaluation:**

| <b>Project component</b>                     | <b>Underdeveloped (1)</b>  | <b>Basic (2)</b>   | <b>Proficient (3)</b>  | <b>Distinguished (4)</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|--|--|--|--|---|--------------|
| <b>Quality of anchor papers (25%)</b>        | Develops anchor papers that lack several critical components.                      | Develops anchor papers that lack one critical component.                           | Develops anchor papers that include all critical components.                               | Develops anchor papers that include clear and concise components and demonstrates planning mastery and could be an exemplar.                          |              |
| <b>Learning tracker (25%)</b>                | Provides a short and broad list of skills and steps needed to complete assignment. | Provides a broad list of skills and steps needed to complete assignment.           | Provides specific skills and list of content knowledge needed to complete assignment.      | Provides specific skills and list of content knowledge needed to complete assignment. Provides process steps that could translate into a lesson plan. |              |
| <b>Reflection on practice (25%)</b>          | Provides a narrow reflection on knowledge demands from designing anchor papers.    | Provides a brief reflection on strengths and changes from designing anchor papers. | Provides a thorough reflection on strengths and changes made from designing anchor papers. | Provides a comprehensive reflection on strengths and changes from lesson implementation and provides action steps.                                    |              |
| <b>Quality of capstone application (25%)</b> | Demonstrates little understanding of standards-based writing assignment.           | Demonstrates some understanding of standards-based writing assignment.             | Demonstrates understanding of standards-based writing assignment.                          | Demonstrates understanding of standards-based writing assignment and shows clear steps for translating the CCSS writing expectations.                 |              |

**Final Capstone Project Performance Summary**

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_/100%

**Qualitative feedback:**