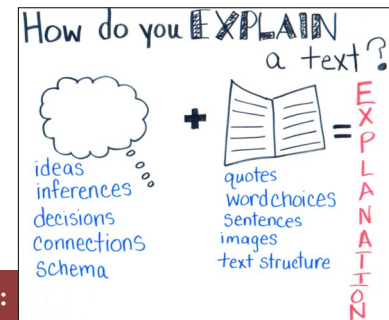


THE ANCHOR STANDARD CHALLENGE # 12



What are the Anchor Standards?

The AZ English Language Arts K-12 Anchor Standards, the “backbone” of the Standards, describe the literacy skills which *all students need when they graduate*. There are **10** anchor standards for **reading** and **writing** and **6** for **speaking & listening**.

What purpose do they serve?

Keeping the college and career focus at the forefront of Kindergarten through grade 11/12 implementation is critical as the anchor standards are essential to understanding the structure and cohesive nature of the AZ ELA Standards. It is this unique design that supports the preparation of all students to be successful in school, from the beginning of school, and proficient in the Essential Skills of Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening required for an Arizona Diploma.

Where do I find them?

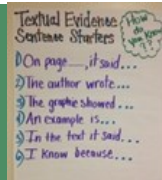
The AZ ELA Anchor Standards can be found on <http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/k-12standards/english-language-arts-standards/>.

Visit <http://coconino.az.gov/1893/ELA-Anchor-Standards> to view previous Anchor Standards Challenges.

What is the challenge?

Create the *Most Creative and Used* School Anchor Charts by teachers, administrators and students...

1. Every week/biweekly add a new Anchor Standard to the work/lunchroom. As teachers implement the Anchor Standard at their grade levels have them record it on the chart! Bonus... At staff meetings have discourse around the Anchor Standard.
2. Create Anchor Standard Charts for students. See the great anchor chart that has been used in many classrooms.
3. Share your success with us by sending us pictures, anecdotes, and videos of your use of Anchor Charts. Send information to kdonatell@coconino.az.gov. A special prize will be awarded to the school that has the most success using the charts!



Writing Anchor Standard # 2:

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.2 Explained

As far as importance goes, informative/explanatory writing is a cousin to argumentative writing. Appendix A states that these two modes of writing are dominant in postsecondary education and are also dominant in the standards of well-performing countries. What exactly is informative/explanatory writing?

How does the AZ Department of Education define informative/explanatory texts?

According to Appendix A, informative/explanatory writing seeks to accurately convey information. It's purposes are:

- to increase readers' knowledge of a subject
- to help readers better understand a procedure or process
- to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept

How does informative/explanatory writing differ from argumentative writing?

With argumentative writing, the aim is to get students to believe that something is true. With explanations, the aim is to answer questions about why or how because truthfulness is assumed. Argument seeks to persuade; explanation seeks to create understanding. Compare these two writing prompts:

- Was Alexander the Great truly great?
- How did Alexander the Great Hellenize the Middle East?

Notice how the first prompt brings up a debatable point; to tackle it, the writer will have to analyze available evidence, come to her own conclusion, and then marshal the evidence to advance her claim. In the second prompt, the spread of Hellenism is not debatable. The writer simply needs to summarize the tactics that Alexander used to spread Greek culture.

What skills do students need to write informative/explanatory texts?

There are three main skills that W.CCR.2 mentions: selecting, organizing, and analyzing content. There are also two important qualities mentioned in W.CCR.2: accuracy and clarity. For my money's worth, the best way to get students there is modeling those skills and qualities, both through pointing them out in professional mentor texts and writing examples of them in front of students.

As students practice this mode of writing, they'll become increasingly adept at clearly and accurately explaining a topic, and they'll start to get an eye for selecting and incorporating relevant examples. The key is giving them practice, whether it be with quick, paragraph-length explanations or of lengthier pieces.

Adapted from: <http://www.teachingthecore.com/common-core-w-ccr-2-explained/>

