



NJSLA Research Simulation Task

Grade 4 Writing

Lesson 5: Drafting the Prose Constructed Response Outline

Rationale

- ✚ Outlining is the most effective prewriting strategy for structuring an essay. On NJSLA's Research Simulation Task, test scorers want to see clearly developed introductions, support paragraphs, and conclusions. Students will benefit from taking some time during the assessment to briefly construct an outline.

Goal

- ✚ To construct an outline as a prewriting activity for the PCR prompt on the Research Simulation Task

Task Foci

- ✚ **CCSS W.4.1:** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- ✚ **CCSS W.4.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- ✚ **CCSS W.4.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
- ✚ **CCSS W.4.5:** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 4 [here](#).)

Objectives

- ✚ Students will construct an outline in order to organize their response to the PCR prompt.

Materials

- ✚ Lined paper to write outline (per student)
- ✚ The Basic Outline Handout
- ✚ Texts from Lesson 3
- ✚ Student work from Lessons 3-4

Procedures

- ✚ Tell students that today they will use their opening topic statements, reasons, and textual evidence from the previous lessons to draft an outline for an essay on the Research Simulation Task.
- ✚ Distribute the Basic Outline Handout. If outlining is a new concept to your students, take some time to explain its basic function as a prewriting strategy for organizing an essay.
- ✚ Ask the students, **“How do you know the best way to organize your paper?”**
- ✚ Since this outline is to be constructed during a test, students won’t have time to be as thorough as they could be for a take-home assignment. Explain some tips for quickly composing an outline.
 - Complete sentences are not necessary. Phrases and key words are just as useful. In an outline, a writer wants to capture the essence of their argument; he or she can worry about syntax and diction when drafting and revising the essay.
 - Supporting quotations do not have to be written out completely, but what students do capture needs to be accurate. One way to quickly capture a quotation is to jot down the first and last word of the quotation and the paragraph where it is located. (NJSLA’s texts have numbered paragraphs) (e.g. “The...quotation.” (P 4))
- ✚ Tell your students that they have x minutes to construct an outline using their opening topic statements, reasons, and textual evidence from Lessons 3-4 (Set a time for your students to complete outlining depending on how familiar your students are with the process). Because they already have the information they need to fill in the outline, in this exercise their primary task is figuring out where to put it.
- ✚ When they were coming up with their reasons in Lesson 4, they might not have thought about arranging them in a logical order. They’ll have the chance to do that now.
- ✚ While students are drafting their outlines, circle around the room and help any who may be having trouble organizing their ideas or who may be stuck on where to place information.
- ✚ Tell students when time is up.
- ✚ In closing, ask students to share what they found difficult and what they felt they did successfully.
- ✚ Collect the outlines. Students will need them for Lesson 6.

Assessment

- ✚ Check that students’ outlines show evidence of understanding essay structure. Their body paragraphs should follow a logical order (compare/contrast, cause/effect, chronological, etc.) that fits their opening topic. Each body paragraph should contain one main reason and each reason should clearly defend the opening topic. Supporting details should clearly indicate relevance to the main point of the paragraph.

Extension Activities

- ✚ Have students share their outlines with partners, in small groups, or as a class, to give them the opportunity to see how their peers built their outlines.

The Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Restate the prompt
- B. Name the Author(s) and Titles
- C. A short summary of your reasons
- D. Opening topic (a direct answer to the writing prompt)

II. First Body Paragraph

- A. Topic sentence (what this paragraph will discuss, your reason)
- B. Introduce the evidence
 - 1. Who says it? (the author, an expert)
 - 2. What is its context? (What idea is the author discussing at this point in their article?)
- C. Evidence from the text (cited accurately)
- D. Explanation/Analysis of the evidence: How does it prove your opening topic?
- E. Closing sentence (wrap up the paragraph to effectively transition to the next paragraph)

III. Second Body Paragraph

- A. Topic sentence (what this paragraph will discuss, your reason)
- B. Introduce the evidence
 - 1. Who says it? (the author, an expert)
 - 2. What is its context? (What idea is the author discussing at this point in their article?)
- C. Evidence from the text (cited accurately)
- D. Explanation/Analysis of the evidence: How does it prove your opening topic?
- E. Closing sentence (wrap up the paragraph to effectively transition to the next paragraph)

IV. Third Body Paragraph

- A. Topic sentence (what this paragraph will discuss, your reason)
- B. Introduce the evidence
 - 1. Who says it? (the author, an expert)
 - 2. What is its context? (What idea is the author discussing at this point in their article?)
- C. Evidence from the text (cited accurately)
- D. Explanation/Analysis of the evidence: How does it prove your opening topic?
- E. Closing sentence (wrap up the paragraph to effectively transition to the next paragraph)

V. Conclusion

- A. Summarize your argument.
- B. Restate your opening topic (using different words)