

Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in **English Language Arts**

Oregon Teacher's Guide and Lesson Sparks

About This Guide

In Oregon, leaders envision Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as extending beyond a specific curriculum or standalone program, moving from a focus on each individual's development to an approach that fully integrates other aspects of teaching and learning and supports all members of a school community in learning and thriving. To spark inspiration and provide guidance for teachers as they plan lessons that integrate Transformative SEL into their curricular focus, this resource offers examples of K–12 learning activities tailored to specific English language arts (ELA) and Transformative SEL standards in Oregon.

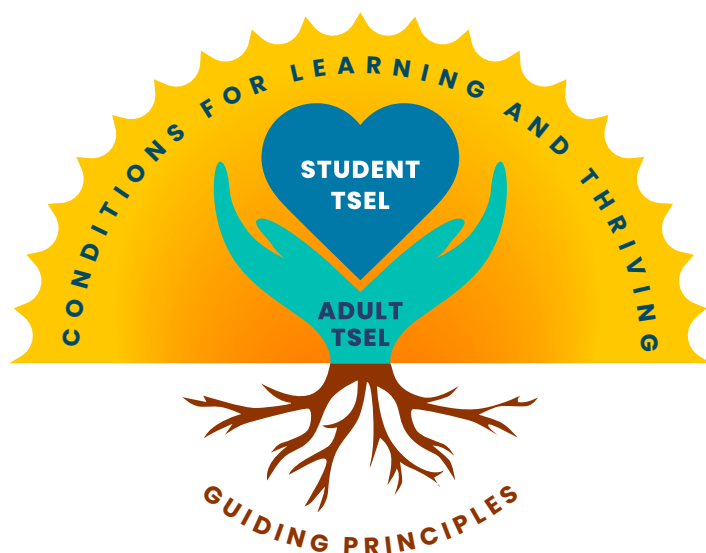
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Teacher's Guide to Transformative SEL Instruction

Just as an environmental ecosystem requires a balance of sunshine, water, nutrients, and a healthy atmosphere for plants to flower and bear fruit, the school ecosystem needs individuals, relationships, and the environment to work in interdependence so that everyone can flourish and thrive (Figure 1). For Transformative SEL to take root in schools, adults can reflect as learners on their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies so they can provide responsive, inclusive, and engaging learning opportunities for students. Teachers play an essential role as

Figure 1. Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework



the gardeners of the learning ecosystem, creating an environment where learning can flourish, developing relationships with and between students, and guiding students in their personal and academic journeys.

Academic instruction serves as the soil in this learning ecosystem, as instruction is full of opportunities for integrating Transformative SEL so that students can experience consistent, high-quality learning. A transformative approach to SEL instruction must consider not just individual students, but also the social systems around them by recognizing that

student actions and attitudes are influenced by systemic conditions. Conditions for learning and thriving therefore act as nutrients for instructional soil, as teachers should cultivate authentic partnerships, equitable policies, and thriving learning environments in order to meet the full range of students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

The Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in ELA Guide aims to help teachers create vibrant, engaging classroom communities that celebrate identity, build agency, cultivate belonging, foster collaborative problem-solving and encourage curiosity. Rather than offering one-size-fits-all lesson plans, this resource provides “lesson sparks”—ideas and practices that are intended to spark inspiration in teachers and can be used dynamically to help shift classroom practices and policies toward transformation. The guide refers frequently to the accompanying [Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool](#) which teachers can use as they engage in the processes of reflection, integration, and lesson planning.

This guide includes:

- Guiding Principles from the Oregon Department of Education
- Guidance on Transformative SEL, including how to embed it into instruction
- Information on and examples of Signature Practices grounded in Transformative SEL and ELA, organized by grade band
- Additional resources and inspiration for units and lesson plans

The companion [Lesson Spark Tool](#) offers:

- Reflection questions to demonstrate the necessary mindsets, values, and beliefs for Transformative SEL
- Guidance for instructional and Transformative SEL alignment
- A resource for planning Signature Practices

Guiding Principles

Figure 2. Oregon's Transformative SEL Guiding Principles



This guide is grounded in the guiding principles outlined in Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework and Standards (Oregon Department of Education, 2023). The principles are the roots of the learning ecosystem, serving as foundational values and beliefs that can lead to fruitful interactions, communication, and decision-making. The principles include **culturally responsive** education as a powerful pedagogical approach to cultivating Transformative SEL practices in students and adults by affirming and honoring their ways of being, knowledge, experiences, and cultures to promote engagement and learning. The principles also encourage teachers who bring a culturally responsive lens to their instruction to be **community responsive** and **strengths based** by centering and affirming students' lived experiences, perspectives, and contributions as assets for learning academic content. Finally, the framework is grounded in instruction that is **trauma informed** and in the **science of learning and development**, acknowledging the importance of recognizing behavior as communication while building consistent, positive routines to ensure all students are primed for new learning.



What is the relationship between culturally responsive education and Transformative SEL?

A transformative approach to SEL invites adults and students to see and understand the systems and structures that influence their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and interactions. Culturally responsive education offers an essential pedagogical approach for creating the conditions in which Transformative SEL can take root. Culturally responsive education stems from a long history of pedagogical research by scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, Django Paris, Geneva Gay, in addition to Shawn Ginwright, who brings a focus on healing-centered engagement, and Liza Talusan, who offers identity-conscious practices. By nurturing their self-identity, agency, and curiosity, culturally responsive teachers committed to Transformative SEL can harness the innate capacity of youth to actively create change in their own lives and the world.

How do teachers take a culturally responsive approach to their TSEL instruction?

- Teachers build on students' cultural identities, perspectives, and contributions as key assets in the classroom
- Teachers encourage intellectual risk-taking and emotional connection to academic content
- Teachers understand and address the role that toxic and traumatic stress (including racial oppression) can play in shaping students' histories as learners, without seeing them as victims
- Teachers support students to make sense of the world around them, so they can name and act upon the norms, values, institutions, and systems that produce and maintain inequities
- Teachers practice critical self-awareness by reflecting on how their multiple and intersecting identities inform and affect how they act, how they interact with others, and how they see the world around them



Each of these guiding principles is built into the sample activities throughout the guide. Teachers can use **Step 1** of the [Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool](#) to reflect on the current strengths and skills they bring to enacting Transformative SEL in your classroom. The tool's prompts are designed to get teachers thinking about their own learning journey in preparation for working with their students.

Continuum of Transformation

A transformative approach to SEL is not confined to a single person, lesson, or specific time of day and is not a one-size-fits-all program or curriculum. Instead, it is an ongoing process and practice of how adults and students show up for one another throughout the school day. SEL practices exist on a continuum, moving from personally responsible and participatory SEL to a Transformative SEL approach (Figure 3). Transformative SEL was developed to shift the focus of educators away from behavior management and toward creating the conditions that support respectful, dignifying, and affirming interactions among all students and adults along the continuum of transformation. Once conditions for learning and thriving are in place, students can learn to set goals, manage their behaviors, and ultimately participate, improve, and change institutions and systems to promote equitable outcomes (Jagers et al., 2019). Embedding Transformative SEL throughout the day has the potential to humanize the learning environment by honoring students’ and adults’ lived realities of race, class, culture, and other intersectional identities.

Figure 3. Continuum of Transformation



Transformative SEL in ELA

Learning to read fluently, write fluidly, and speak confidently are highly social endeavors enhanced by having an authentic audience. ELA teachers can cultivate Transformative SEL practices in students to support a classroom community in which students feel safe trying out skills, struggling while learning something new, and exploring perspectives different from their own. Reading both fiction and non-fiction offers the ideal opportunity for students to consider point of view and identity, and engaging in the writing process invites students to offer supportive and critical feedback while being mindful of their peers' desire to belong in the learning community. Discussion practices in the ELA classroom, whether informal think-pair-shares or more formal structures like Socratic seminars, are opportunities for students to explore taking a stand and responding to conflict when they have different perspectives.

In the ELA classroom, Transformative Social and Emotional Learning naturally aligns with core instructional practices. As readers, students must build self-awareness and monitor their comprehension through practices such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and self-questioning. In the ELA classroom students tackle complex texts and craft their own writing. This is an opportunity to develop agency and learner identity through structured opportunities to think critically, revise ideas, and persist through hard texts. For example, when students discuss character motivations, analyze an author's craft, or provide peer feedback, they're simultaneously developing social awareness and self-regulation skills.



Teachers can refer to **Step 2** of the [Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool](#) to help determine how instructional goals align with Transformative SEL standards. See [Appendix A](#) for a more detailed Standards Crosswalk to support curricular integration.

Explore Integrated Signature Practices

Oregon's Transformative SEL standards include guidance on practices and growth indicators. The guidance is intended to be broad enough to support adaptation while also specific enough to provide useful takeaways for adults to use with students across all contexts. Teachers may choose to adapt Transformative SEL from many different entry points, including:

- Aligning Transformative SEL standards with academic objectives by emphasizing student skillsets and outcomes in lesson planning

- Building a climate and culture for Transformative SEL, by placing student interests, needs, and learning styles at the center of instructional decision-making
- Integrating Transformative SEL through Student-Centered Instruction that puts collaborative problem-solving and student curiosity at the center of learning

Because Transformative SEL is an ongoing process, this guide describes how teachers can use Signature Practices as an entry point to Transformative SEL in the classroom by embedding predictable opportunities for relationship- and community-building and moving their practices along the continuum of transformation. Developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the three Signature Practices are Inclusive Welcome, Engaging Strategies, Intentional Close.

For each Signature Practice, this guide provides universal and content-specific examples of how Transformative SEL might look in the classroom. These examples are intended to demonstrate how teachers can weave classroom routines and strategies that align to their learning objectives and the Transformative SEL focal constructs.



Step 3 of the [Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool](#) provides space to identify how Signature Practices can help support student outcomes, and **Step 4** includes a template for teachers to sketch their own practices.

CASEL developed the Signature Practices in response to frequently asked questions such as “What does SEL look like? How can we start?” After teachers choose a curricular focus, using CASEL Signature Practices can help teachers instill their classroom with routines and interactions that nurture Transformative SEL focal constructs while also connecting to disciplinary learning outcomes.

The following sections provide guidance and examples for teachers to use in integrating Signature Practices into their classrooms.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE:

Inclusive Welcome



Consider opening each class period with a welcome that is inclusive and respects cultural and linguistic diversity, builds community, and sets the stage for learning.

Examples include:

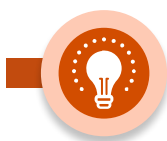
- ⦿ **Whole-group greeting activities**
- ⦿ **Deep breathing or mindfulness**
- ⦿ **Morning circles or rituals**
- ⦿ **Interactive do-nows**, such as peer-to-peer homework help or quick pair assignments

Engage students in square breathing as an **Inclusive Welcome** to help them focus on their breath and release tension before a potentially activating lesson such as peer review of a writing assignment.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ELA 11–12 LESSON SPARK:

Six-word Story

Students synthesize ideas at the start of an argumentative writing lesson by using the six-word story as an Inclusive Welcome. Students select a social issue they feel passionate about, then capture their topic in six words. The creative and concise constraints support thinking, writing, and curiosity.



See the 11–12 Lesson Spark in Appendix B for a more detailed lesson activity.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE:

Engaging Strategy



Consider embedding interactive or reflective opportunities that vary in complexity and style to allow students to grasp content while connecting learning to their experiences throughout the school day.

Examples include:

- **Think, Ink, Pair, Share** — silent time to reflect; time to write; partner discussions; close with a group share out
- **Mindful Minute Brain Break** — a calming activity, promoting focus and readiness to learn
- [Gallery Walk](#)
- [Pass It On](#)

Use a gallery walk as an **Engaging Strategy** to facilitate a discussion about a unit's essential questions.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ELA 6–8 LESSON SPARK:

Word–Phrase–Sentence

Students independently read and annotate the text, then share their selected word, phrase, and sentence in small groups. The open-ended inquiry supports agency and curiosity as students explain what stood out to them and why. The routine culminates in a whole-group discussion, where students reflect on how their choices connect their experiences to what they learned about their classmates.



[See the 6–8 Lesson Spark in Appendix B](#) for a more detailed lesson activity.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE: Intentional Close



Consider closing each learning experience by highlighting an individual or shared understanding of the lesson, reflecting on the process or the content, helping students identify next steps, or encouraging students to show appreciation for one another.

Examples include:

- [Future Me](#)
- [One-minute Accolade](#)
- [My Next Step](#) — invite students to commit to an action based on the lesson topic or experience
- [One Word Whip Around](#) — invite students to respond to a prompt or question with a one-word answer

Use the [One Word Whip Around](#) to prompt students to share how they are feeling as they close out a lesson that might have elicited strong emotions, such as having a discussion about complex topics, taking an assessment, or reading a challenging text.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ELA K-2 LESSON SPARK:

Community of Readers

Students spend a few minutes reflecting on the day's reading and the support they offered each other. Through partner discussions and celebratory hand signals, they acknowledge their learning milestones and the sense of belonging within their reading community.



[See the K-2 Lesson Spark in Appendix B](#) for a more detailed lesson activity.

Additional Inspiration

The external links below provide inspiration as teachers work to incorporate Transformative SEL into their ELA lesson plans. Please note that these resources are neither affiliated with nor endorsed by the Oregon Department of Education.

RESOURCE & DESCRIPTION	K-5	6-8	9-12
<u>Trauma-Informed Storytelling Practices (Voice of Witness)</u> This resource explores and outlines 10 key trauma-informed practices for storytelling work.		⊙	⊙
<u>StoryCorps</u> This archive of searchable stories (based on location, theme, length, etc.) provides opportunities for students to practice actively listening to perspectives that might differ from their own.	⊙	⊙	⊙
<u>Project Zero's Thinking Routines Toolbox</u> This toolbox highlights thinking routines—a set of questions or a brief sequence of steps used to scaffold student thinking—designed to deepen students' thinking and help make that thinking “visible.”	⊙	⊙	⊙
<u>ELA Unit Planning Guide (Facing History and Ourselves)</u> This guide provides a framework and classroom resources to help teachers design an ELA unit for middle or high school students centered on a book of the teacher's choosing. It includes two ready-to-use ELA units that integrate ELA and Transformative SEL instruction.		⊙	⊙

Conclusion

Having now seen a variety of integrated activities and model units or lesson plans, teachers can next use Step 4 of the Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool to plan Signature Practices that aim to move their instruction, student relationships, and the overall classroom culture and climate toward Transformative SEL.

As Transformative SEL is a process and approach rather than a discrete strategy or program, there is no singular, correct way to implement the approach in your classroom. Instead, Transformative SEL should be embedded throughout your content area learning and school

day interactions. This guide and its accompanying tool are designed to demonstrate the several different entry points and strategies teachers can adapt to build a Transformative SEL ecosystem in their school. Transformative SEL invites adults in the educational ecosystem to see themselves as co-learners alongside youths by learning about and critically reflecting on their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies (Jagers et al., 2019). As co-learning is essential to Transformative SEL, teachers might consider who they would identify as the members of their learning community and invite them to collaboratively explore this guide and tool.



Step 4 of the [Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool](#) provides space for teachers to design their own Signature Practices.

References

CASEL. (n.d.) *SEL 3 signature practices playbook*. <https://signaturepractices.casel.org/>

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032>

Oregon Department of Education. (2023). *Oregon's transformative social and emotional learning framework and standards*. [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20(2).pdf)

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APPENDIX A:

Crosswalk of Oregon ELA and Transformative SEL Standards

This crosswalk includes examples of alignments between the Oregon ELA Standards and the Transformative SEL practices. The alignments depicted are not intended to be exhaustive; rather, they include areas that are likely to be natural matches in instruction.

ELA: ANCHOR STANDARD	EXAMPLE ALIGNMENT WITH TSEL STANDARD
<p>1 – Reading</p> <p>Students will read attentively to grasp the text’s explicit content and make reasoned inferences, citing evidence to support their conclusions. They will identify central themes, track their development, and distill supporting details into concise summaries. Students will analyze character, event, and idea interactions within the text, understanding the nuanced meanings of words and how word choices influence tone. They will examine the structure of texts to understand how parts connect to the whole and how the author’s perspective affects the content. Finally, students will evaluate arguments and evidence across different texts and media, and to compare how various authors approach similar themes or topics.</p>	<p>Practice 1C: Reflect on and evaluate how one’s emotions, thoughts, and perspectives (including values, biases, and prejudices) can influence behavior.</p> <p>Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e. verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.</p> <p>Practice 3A: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities.</p> <p>Practice 5A: Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness while using critical thinking skills across various situations and environments.</p> <p>Practice 5B: Make informed choices and identify solutions for personal and social injustices after analyzing all types of information.</p>
<p>2 – Writing</p> <p>Students will write well-reasoned arguments supported by evidence, convey complex information with clarity, and craft narratives with detailed, structured sequences. They will focus on clear, audience-appropriate writing, continuously refining their work through revision and using technology for production and research. Critical to their skill set is the ability to conduct in-depth research, evaluate source credibility, integrate information without plagiarism, and draw evidence from texts for various writing tasks and time constraints.</p>	<p>Practice 1A: Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential (both personal and cultural).</p> <p>Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e. verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.</p> <p>Practice 5A: Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness while using critical thinking skills across various situations and environments.</p> <p>Practice 5C: Anticipate, reflect and evaluate the impacts of one’s choice and contributions in promoting personal, family and community well-being.</p>

ELA: ANCHOR STANDARD	EXAMPLE ALIGNMENT WITH TSEL STANDARD
<p>3 – Speaking and Listening</p> <p>Students will engage in discussions, valuing diverse perspectives and communicating their ideas effectively. They will critically assess information from various media, understand a speaker’s perspective and rhetoric, and present their findings in a coherent manner suited to the audience and purpose. Students will learn that using digital media and visual aids strategically can improve the audience’s comprehension, and adapting language to different contexts and tasks is essential, including the use of formal English when necessary.</p>	<p>Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e. verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.</p> <p>Practice 4A: Form authentic relationships that encourage autonomy while building cultural awareness and empathy through various forms of communication.</p> <p>Practice 4B: Demonstrate empathy and affirm other’s perspectives during teamwork and collaborative problem solving.</p>
<p>4 – Language</p> <p>Students will become proficient in English grammar and mechanics, make informed linguistic choices for clarity and style, and understand nuanced word meanings. They will independently expand their vocabulary for effective communication at a college and career level, including deciphering unfamiliar terms through context and resources.</p>	<p>Practice 1A: Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential.</p> <p>Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e. verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.</p>

APPENDIX B:

Transformative SEL in ELA Lesson Sparks

Grades K–2

SIGNATURE PRACTICE		Intentional Close: A Community of Readers	
Context In an elementary literacy block, students end their partner reading time by reflecting on their experience and acknowledging the support they offered to and received from their peers.			
Learning Outcome Students practice awareness of how their learning community supports their reading journey.		Classroom Format <ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole groupPartners	Time 7–10 minutes
Teacher Moves <ul style="list-style-type: none">Signal the end of reading time.Ask students to close their books and open their minds to think about their reading journey and how they support reach other.Give students think time to respond to one prompt:<ul style="list-style-type: none">“How did you help another reader?”“What did you learn from a friend?”“Who would you like to thank for helping you?”Ask students to turn to their partner to pair-share their response.Invite a few students to share with the whole group.Ask students to use hand signals for their celebrations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use sparkle fingers if you learned something new from a friend.Give me a thumbs up if you helped someone during our reading time.Make a heart with your hand if one of your friends helped you.Invite students to share, “What are the special strengths we each bring to our learning community?”			

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' inherent desire to celebrate and be celebrated by their peers. Although they might have different strengths and areas of growth as readers, they are all part of the same learning community. Giving students time to reflect on and celebrate different strengths helps them see differences as assets.



Content Connections

Reading 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 1A: Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential (both personal and cultural).

Practice 3A: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities.

Context

In a 4th grade unit on ecosystems, students engage with an informational text about the spotted owl in Oregon whose habitat has been decimated by logging. Students are learning that different people have different connections to the same topic and that these connections influence what people see and think.

Learning Outcome

Students practice active listening skills and engage in perspective-taking through a structured discussion.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Small groups

Time

15–20 minutes

Teacher Moves

Whole group

- Review the informational text that students are reading.
- Guide brainstorming of perspectives with the following prompt: “Who might have different viewpoints about this topic?”
- Record responses on board or chart paper.
- Allow students to review what their classmates wrote and probe the class to think of different people, animals, or objects that might have different ideas about the topic.

Small groups

- Divide class into small groups.
- Each group decides on a perspective to explore from the class brainstorm.
- Give students sentence starters:
 - I am thinking of ... (the topic) ... from the viewpoint of ... (the viewpoint you’ve chosen)
 - I think ... (Describe the topic from your viewpoint. Be an actor—take on the character of your viewpoint.)
 - A question I have from this viewpoint is ... (ask a question from this viewpoint)

Whole-group discussion

Sharing Perspectives

- Groups share their perspective-taking experience
- Other students practice active listening

Reflecting on Perspective-taking

- Why is perspective-taking important?
- What can we learn from looking at the world from another point of view?

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' experiences and identities by encouraging them to connect the diverse viewpoints brainstormed in class to their personal or community experiences with nature, animals, or environmental changes.



Content Connections

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Key Ideas and Details 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 3A: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities.

Practice 5A: Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness while using critical thinking skills across various situations and environments.

References or Attributions

Project Zero: [Circle of Viewpoints](#)

Context

In a middle school humanities class, students are reading informational texts. Students use the Word–Phrase–Sentence activity to provide a structured routine for conversation and a frame for closely examining language in a text.

Learning Outcome

Students identify key ideas from a shared text, collaborate to enhance text comprehension, and foster a strong sense of reader identity and agency.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Small groups
- Individual

Time

15 minutes

Teacher Moves

Explain that students will have time to read the informational text.

Individual

Encourage active reading and annotating.

Whole group

Share the Word–Phrase–Sentence card with students. Ask them to return for a second read of the text and to identify the following:

- A word that captured your attention or struck you as powerful
- A phrase that moved, engaged or provoked you
- A sentence that was meaningful to you and captures the core idea of the text

Let students know there is no right answer. They should select what is meaningful to themselves as a reader or person.

Individual

Students select a word, phrase, and sentence.

Small groups

In groups of three or four, ask students to share and record their choices, explaining why they selected them.

Assign group roles of facilitator, timekeeper, notetaker, and any other helpful classroom roles. Sharing and discussion should occur in rounds, so the discussion is facilitated. The first participant shares a word and explains why they chose it, inviting others to comment and discuss. The words are recorded and then the next person shares, records, and discusses until everyone has their turn. The group then moves to phrases and finally to sentences.

Whole group

Invite a whole-group reflection on the conversation. Each small group shares their responses. Help the class identify common themes that emerge from group responses and the implications or predictions they suggested.

Prompt students to answer the following reflection questions:

- How does the word, phrase, and sentence you chose connect to your experiences, interests, or identities?
- What did you learn about your classmates' experiences, interests, or identities?

Optional extension

Add an intentional close by inviting each group member to reflect briefly on their current understanding of the text and how using the routine contributed to their understanding of it.

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' desire to share their opinions with each other, especially when they know they will be listened to and taken seriously. This routine for conversation gives each student a chance to share their reasoning and invites them to reflect on how their choices might reflect their interests, identities, and experiences.



Content Connections

Reading Standard 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Speaking and Listening 5: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e., verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.

Practice 5A: Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness while using critical thinking skills across various situations and environments.

References or Attributions

Adapted from Project Zero: [Word-Phrase-Sentence](#)

Grades 9–10

SIGNATURE PRACTICE

Inclusive Welcome: What's Your Weather Pattern?

Context

Ninth-grade students are studying figurative language in a narrative unit.

Learning Outcome

Students explore the power of figurative language to demonstrate awareness of their own and their peers' inner emotional landscape.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Partners
- Individual

Time

10–15 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Welcome students to class.
- Invite students to take a deep breath, close their eyes, and reflect on how their bodies, hearts, and minds feel.
- Pose the question, "What weather pattern are you bringing into the room today?" To prompt students' thinking, share images of different weather patterns or describe the weather patterns common in your region. Model the detail you want students to provide by responding to the prompt. For example, "I am bringing a foggy day with the sunshine just beginning to peak through."
- Invite students to share their weather pattern with a partner and then ask for volunteers to share with the class.
- Ask students, "How might we take care of each other today given the different weather patterns in the room?" Offer space for students to respond.
- Transition to the lesson by asking students the following reflection questions:
 - "What was it like for you to describe your feelings as weather patterns? Why?"
 - "As your classmates described their weather patterns, what did you notice happened to you as the listener? Why?"



Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' prior understandings of figurative language and regional weather patterns. Affirm the different norms that cultural communities have for emotional expressiveness and explore figurative language as an alternative strategy for sharing emotional states.



Content Connections

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 1A: Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential (both personal and cultural).

Practice 3B: Apply social skills (i.e., empathy, compassion, etc.) to develop and maintain healthy relationships that collectively achieve mutual goals while affirming identities and perspectives.

Context

In a high school English class, students are engaged in a unit on argumentative writing, which culminates in students writing an argumentative essay about a topic that is personally meaningful to them.

Learning Outcome

Students succinctly articulate a topic they are passionate about and share it with their peers.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Partners
- Individual

Time

10–15 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Welcome students to class.
- Ask students to select one of the potential topics they brainstormed for the argumentative essay assignment about a social issue that impacts their lives. Assure students that this doesn't have to be the topic they choose for the essay, just one that they are excited about today.
- Invite students to use a sticky note and write a six-word story that shares why they care about this topic. A six-word story must be exactly six words while still making sense, and the writer can use punctuation to great effect. Model a sentence. For example, if you choose lack of belonging in schools as your persuasive essay topic, you might write one of the following six-word stories: Schools can make or break students; or Wanted: Teachers who look like me.
- Invite students to share their six-word stories with a partner, then open it up to hear from volunteers in the whole class.
- Ask students to post their sticky notes to a wall in the classroom. Invite students to interact with their classmates' sticky notes or group them by similar interests if there is time.

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' desire to share their voice and build their agency by writing about personally meaningful topics.



Content Connections

Writing 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.

Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 5B: Make informed choices and identify solutions for personal and social injustices after analyzing all types of information.

References or Attributions

[Six-word stories](#)