

Literacy Design Collaborative

Template Task Collection for Elementary Grades 4-5

The Literacy Design Collaborative follows its first template task collection for secondary grades (6-12) with one designed for elementary coursework in ELA, social studies, and science for grades 4 and 5. LDC is committed to equipping elementary school students with the literacy skills they will need to succeed in middle and high school. We believe students can and must reach significantly higher levels of reading, writing, and thinking, and we embrace the challenging expectations set by the new Common Core State Standards. The Literacy Design Collaborative is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

This collection provides a first set of template tasks for implementing the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) strategy at elementary grades 4 and 5. The larger LDC framework calls for the development of other task collections, with this set as a prototype for implementing LDC's overall approach to meeting the literacy challenge set by the Common Core State Standards. The LDC approach involves writing in response to reading, so templates are constructed to ensure teaching tasks engage students in instruction for both reading and writing.

What are LDC template tasks? LDC *template tasks* are fill-in-the-blank “shells” that allow teachers to insert the texts to be read, writing to be produced, and content to be addressed. When filled in, template tasks create high-quality student assignments that develop reading, writing, and thinking skills in the context of learning science, history, English, and other subjects. Template tasks are built off of the Common Core State Standards. They specify the subjects and levels of student work for which they can be used, and they come with rubrics that can be used to score the resulting student work. Template tasks may also include Level 2 and Level 3 additions that can be used or omitted to vary the task demands.

What are LDC teaching tasks? LDC *teaching tasks* are student assignments that teachers create by using LDC template tasks and filling in their choices of texts to be read, writing to be produced, and content to be addressed. A typical LDC teaching task is designed for students to develop their responses over two to four weeks of classroom time.

All LDC template task collections are organized around the three modes of writing identified in the CCSS anchor standards: argumentation, informational or explanatory, and narrative. This first LDC template task collection for elementary is designed to support the instruction of opinion (the elementary level form of argumentation in the CCSS) and informational/explanatory writing modes. The narrative template tasks will be added at a later date. Within these writing modes, the template tasks address the text structures and critical thinking skills specified by the CCSS anchor standards, as well as many grade-specific standards for grades 4 and 5. The summary table that follows outlines the types of template tasks provided and indicates the content areas for which they are likely to be appropriate. We expect that other elementary collections will add additional template tasks to the categories/text structures within each writing mode below.

ARGUMENTATION		INFORMATIONAL OR EXPLANATORY	NARRATIVE
Determine		ELA, science, social studies	Note: Narrative will be added to the task bank at a later date.
Define		ELA, science, social studies	
Describe		ELA, science, social studies	
Explain	ELA, science, social studies	ELA, science, social studies	
Compare	ELA, science, social studies	ELA, science, social studies	
Discuss		ELA, science, social studies	
Cause-Effect		ELA, science, social studies	
Interpret		ELA, science, social studies	
Identify-Argue	ELA, science, social studies		

A short list of requirements applies to the use of all LDC template tasks, as shown below. In order to use these LDC template tasks, partners must agree to these requirements:

WHAT IS REQUIRED?	WHAT CAN BE CHANGED OR ADDED?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List the exact Common Core State Standards for the template task. ▪ Add appropriate state content standards. ▪ Provide source information for the standards you use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You can also include appropriate grade-level Common Core State Standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fill in the template task, completing all the blanks but not altering the other template wording. ▪ List the reading texts for the prompt or describe how students will be guided to select appropriate texts. ▪ Provide a background statement that introduces the prompt to students. ▪ If an extension activity is included, provide an activity in which students share or apply what they have learned with a real-world audience or through a hands-on project. (The extension may also be omitted.) ▪ Use the exact rubric for the template task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You choose which texts students will read, the content they will study, and the writing product they will create. In choosing, consider requirements set by your state, district, or school. ▪ You decide whether to include the Level 2 and Level 3 portions of the template task and whether to include extension sections.

Common Core State Standards for Elementary Template Tasks

The LDC Elementary Template Tasks are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, with two categories of standards alignment:

- **“Built in” standards** have the specified College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards built in.
- **“When appropriate” standards** vary with the content of the teaching task.

We use the anchor standards in this document so that the document is succinct and accessible to readers. For a more detailed description of the text structures and thinking skills hardwired into the LDC templates, please refer to the 4th and 5th grade-specific standards in the CCSS documents. Many of the grade-specific standards you will see have also been hardwired into the template tasks below. Teachers are also able to include additional grade-level CCSS standards when they use LDC’s new online tool called Module Creator. As teachers select a template task they will use on Module Creator, the system will default to grade-specific standards.

The following bolded Anchor Standards for reading, writing, and language are “hard wired” into these prompts. Users should bold any additional standards as appropriate to the type of task: argumentation or informational/explanatory.

ELEMENTARY READING: ARGUMENTATION AND INFORMATIONAL/EXPLANATORY

“Built In” Reading Anchor Standards

1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

“When Appropriate” Reading Anchor Standards

3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
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.
6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse median and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

ELEMENTARY WRITING: ARGUMENTATION

“Built In” Writing Anchor Standards

1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
“When Appropriate” Writing Anchor Standards	
6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

ELEMENTARY WRITING: INFORMATIONAL OR EXPLANATORY
“Built In” Writing Anchor Standards

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.
4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE
“Built In” Language Anchor Standards

1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
“When Appropriate” Language Anchor Standards	
5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6	Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Quick Reference Elementary Task Chart

Elementary Argumentation Template Tasks	
Explain	Elementary Task 1: [Insert question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you answer the question and explain your reasons _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) examples from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. (Argumentation/Explain)
Compare	Elementary Task 2: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you compare _____ (content). Give _____ (an, some or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. (Argumentation/Compare)
Identify-Argue	Elementary Task 3: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you identify _____ (concept, term) and argue _____ (content). Give _____ (an, some or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. (Argumentation/Identify-Argue)

Elementary Informational or Explanatory Template Tasks	
Determine	Elementary Task 4: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you determine _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Determine)
Define	Elementary Task 5: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you define _____ (concept, term) and explain _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Define)
Describe	Elementary Task 6: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you describe _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Describe)
Explain	Elementary Task 7: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you explain _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) examples from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Explain)
Compare	Elementary Task 8: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you compare _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Compare)

Discuss	Elementary Task 9: [Insert optional question] After reading _____(literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____(product) in which you discuss how _____(content) contributes to an understanding of _____(content). Give _____(an, several, or #) example/s from _____(text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Discuss)
Cause-Effect	Elementary Task 10: [Insert optional question] After reading _____(literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____(product) in which you explain the causes _____(content) and the effects _____(content). Give _____(an, several, or #) example/s from _____(text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Cause-Effect)
Interpret	Elementary Task 11: [Insert optional question] After reading _____(literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____(product) in which you interpret _____(content). Give _____(an, some or #) example/s from _____(text/s) to support your discussion. (Informational or Explanatory/Interpret)

LDC Elementary Template Tasks - Argumentation

Elementary Task 1 Template: [Insert question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you answer the question and explain your reasons _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) examples from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. **(Argumentation/Explain)**

Elementary Task 1 Science Example: Is pizza a nutritious food product? After reading the two provided articles, write a report in which you answer the question and explain your reasons from a health and science point of view. Give an example from the articles to support your opinion.

Elementary Task 1 ELA Example: Would you recommend *Charlotte's Web* to a friend? After reading this book, write a book review in which you answer the question and explain your reasons with reference to the author's use of story-telling strategies. Give several examples from the book to support your opinion.

Elementary Task 2 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you compare _____ (content). Give _____ (an, some or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. **(Argumentation/Compare)**

Elementary Task 2 Social Studies Example: Which calendar would you prefer? After reading an article on the ancient Mayan calendar and another on the current calendar, write a report in which you compare the two calendars. Give two examples from each article to support your opinion.

Elementary Task 3 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you identify _____ (concept, term) and argue _____ (content). Give _____ (an, some or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your opinion. **(Argumentation/Identify-Argue)**

Elementary Task 3 Social Studies Example: After reading the two articles on Marco Polo, write an essay in which you identify his contributions and argue whether he should receive our “most valuable historical figure” award. Give four examples from the articles to support your opinion.

Elementary Teaching Task Rubric (Argumentation)

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but is off-task.		Addresses prompt, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt with an adequately detailed response; stays on task		Addresses key aspects of prompt in a detailed response; stays on task.
Controlling Idea	Lacks a clear opinion.		Establishes an opinion though may lack clarity or credibility.		Establishes a credible opinion.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible opinion.
Reading/ Research (when applicable)	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. L3 Summary retells or is not accurate.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness. L3 Summary mentions a key point but does not cover points sufficiently.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim. L3 Summary is concise and relates key points.		Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim. L3 Summary is concise and relates key and supporting points.
Development	Attempts to provide reasoning and details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt. L2 Conclusion is missing, irrelevant, or illogical.		Presents appropriate reasoning and details to support and develop the focus and opinion. L2 Briefly notes a relevant conclusion.		Presents appropriate reasoning and sufficient details to support and develop the focus and opinion. L2 Explains a relevant and plausible conclusion.		Presents sound reasoning and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus and opinion. L2 Explains in detail a relevant and plausible conclusion.
Organization	Attempts to organize reasoning, but lacks control of structure.		Attempts to organize reasoning within a structure		Organizational structure adequately supports reasoning.		Organizational structure enhances development of the reasoning.
Conventions	Lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics appropriate to grade level.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions appropriate to grade level.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions, with few errors as appropriate to grade level.		Maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content but content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows uneven understanding of content.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

LDC Elementary Template Tasks – Informational or Explanatory

Elementary Task 4 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you determine _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Determine)**

Elementary Task 4 ELA Example: After reading Sandburg’s *The Fog*, write an essay in which you determine the main idea of the poem and the meaning of the metaphor of the fog. Give three examples from the poem to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 5 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you define _____ (concept, term) and explain _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Define)**

Elementary Task 5 Science Example: After reading two articles about hurricanes, write a report in which you define “hurricane” and explain what causes these storms. Give at least four examples from the articles to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 6 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you describe _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Describe)**

Elementary Task 6 Social Studies Example: What was life like during the Civil War? After reading primary sources written by soldiers in the Civil War, write a report in which you describe what a day in the life of a soldier on either side might have been like. Give four examples from your sources to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 7 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you explain _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) examples from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Explain)**

Elementary Task 7 ELA Example: After reading “The Big Game,” write two paragraphs in which you explain what Leo learned from taking his mitt to the ballgame. Give two examples from the story to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 8 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you **compare** _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Compare)**

Elementary Task 8 ELA Example: After reading William Blake’s poem, “I was angry with my friend,” and the lyrics to Happy Ending by Avril Lavigne, write an essay in which you compare themes in each work. Give two examples from each work to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 9 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____ (literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____ (product) in which you discuss how _____ (content) contributes to an understanding of _____ (content). Give _____ (an, several, or #) example/s from _____ (text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Discuss)**

Elementary Task 9 Social Studies Example: After reading The Kid’s Guide to Money: Earning It, Saving It, Spending It, Growing It, Sharing It, write an article for your school newspaper in which you discuss how managing an allowance contributes to an understanding of economics. Give three examples from the book to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 10 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____(literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____(product) in which you explain the causes _____ (content) and the effects _____(content). Give _____(an, several, or #) example/s from _____(text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Cause-Effect)**

Elementary Task 10 Science Example: After reading articles on the Chesapeake Bay Foundation website, write a report in which you explain the causes of toxic waste in the Chesapeake Bay and the effects on the crab industry. Give an example from the data and report to support your discussion.

Elementary Task 11 Template: [Insert optional question] After reading _____(literary or informational text/s), write a/n _____(product) in which you interpret _____(content). Give _____(an, some or #) example/s from _____(text/s) to support your discussion. **(Informational or Explanatory/Interpret)**

Elementary Task 11 Social Studies Example: After reading the article on the census, write a report in which you interpret the data and explain key differences between the two census years. Give 3-5 examples from the article to support your discussion.

Elementary Teaching Task Rubric (Informational or Explanatory)

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but is off-task.		Addresses prompt, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt with an adequately detailed response; stays on task		Addresses key aspects of prompt in a detailed response; stays on task.
Controlling Idea	Lacks a clear controlling idea to inform or explain.		Establishes a controlling idea to inform or explain, though may lack clarity or credibility.		Establishes a credible controlling idea to inform or explain.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible controlling idea to inform or explain.
Reading/ Research (when applicable)	Attempts to include reading materials using examples, quotes, or other references. L3 Summary retells or is not accurate.		Presents some information from reading materials but may lack accuracy or relevance. L3 Summary mentions a key point but does not cover points sufficiently.		Accurately presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim. L3 Summary is concise and relates key points.		Accurately and effectively presents important information from reading materials to inform or explain. L3 Summary is concise and relates key and supporting points.
Development	Attempts to inform or explain but lacks details. L2 Conclusion is missing, irrelevant, or illogical.		Informs or explains by presenting some details. L2 Briefly notes a relevant conclusion		Informs or explains using appropriate details. L2 Explains a relevant and plausible conclusion.		Informs or explains by providing detailed and relevant information. L2 Explains in detail a relevant and plausible conclusion.
Organization	Lacks an opening, development, and/or closure.		Demonstrates an attempt to organize information within a structure to inform or explain.		Organizational structure adequately supports presentation of information.		Organizational structure enhances presentation of information.
Conventions	Lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics appropriate to grade level.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions appropriate to grade level.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions, with few errors as appropriate to grade level.		Maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt.
Content Understanding	Content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Shows uneven understanding of disciplinary content.		Presents generally accurate disciplinary content.		Presents accurate and relevant disciplinary content to enhance understanding of topic.

Levels L2 and L3 for Argumentation and Informational or Explanatory

To complicate the challenge in a task, add one or both of the following demands at the end of your teaching task. Note that you can choose to use L2 or L3 in isolation or you can use both.

L2. *What conclusion can you draw ____ (content)?*

Example: After reading *The Kid's Guide to Money: Earning It, Saving It, Spending It, Growing It, Sharing It*, write an article for your school newspaper in which you discuss the suggestions made in the article for managing an allowance and how those practices contribute to an understanding of personal economics. Give two examples from your sources to support your discussion. *L2 What conclusion can you draw from this article about saving money?*

L3. *Summarize ____ (text/s).*

Example: After reading two articles about hurricanes, write a report in which you define what a hurricane is and explain a cause for these storms. Give three examples from the articles to support your discussion. *L3 Summarize each article in your report.*

L2 and L3 Example: After reading two articles about hurricanes, write a report in which you define what a hurricane is and explain a cause for these storms. Give three examples from the articles to support your discussion. *L2 What conclusion can you draw about the predictability of weather reports? L3 Summarize each article in your report.*