

Teaching the Most Missed Items for the GED® RLA Test



How can we help our students better prepare for and be more successful on the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts test? Based on information from the GED® Testing Service, this interactive workshop will identify problem areas students struggle with and provide teaching suggestions to help our students achieve at an even higher level!

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Today's Objectives

At the end of today's workshop, I will be able to:

- Explain how to teach grammar in the context of student writing
- Describe teaching methods to improve students' writing skills
- Access appropriate teaching resources

What Does Research Say About Grammar and Teaching Writing?

“Research strongly suggests that the most beneficial way of helping students improve their command of grammar in writing is to use students' writing as the basis for discussing grammatical concepts. Grammar instruction is most naturally integrated during the revising, editing, and proofreading phases of the writing process. In writing conferences, for example, teachers can help students revise for effective word choices. As the teacher and student discuss the real audience(s) for the writing, the teacher can ask the student to consider how formal or informal the writing should be, and remind the student that all people adjust the level of formality in oral conversation, depending on their listeners and the speaking context” ([TEAL Just Write Guide, 2012](#)).

Supporting Struggling Writers

	Struggling Writers	Successful Writers
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are unaware of purpose or process of writing• Have little or no knowledge of the text structure of an essay• Have difficulty developing plans and staying focused on the topic• Experience greater writing anxiety and decreased motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the task• Understand and apply all the elements of an essay• Create goals for their writing• Develop plans to achieve their goals• Discuss how and why a plan will work
Organize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce fewer ideas• Fail to organize their thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop multiple ideas• Organize their ideas
Draft/write	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan what they are going to say as they write• Use imprecise and nonspecific vocabulary• Struggle to convey their thoughts, ideas, and opinions• Write fewer sentences• Focus on mechanics rather than on clarity and organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write using an organized plan, but adjust goals when obstacles arise• Use vocabulary accurately• Experience fewer difficulties with the elements of an essay• Generate sentences that support their ideas
Edit and Revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience problems with grammar, punctuation, and spelling• Place words and letters too close or too far from each other• Do not review and make correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit spelling, capitalization, and punctuation• Make more content revisions• Correct overall appearance

Quick Write

A quick write helps students think about a topic before, during, and after reading. Students are asked to respond to a question or prompt related to a text and should write down whatever comes to their mind without worrying about grammar or organization.

To create a quick write, first find a reading passage. Then create a writing prompt related to a text. Prompts could be creating summaries of learning, making connections to students' lives, creating explanations of concepts/vocabulary, or making inferences.

Quick writes are between two and ten minutes long. Tell students to begin writing and keep writing until they are told to stop. To model this, you as the instructor should write too.

Quick Write Prompt and Reading

Prompt

How does the author use Google Reviews to teach argument writing?

"Students already have a depth of experience when it comes to formulating an argument and support. It is our job as educators to remember this and to provide an environment in which student experience and knowledge can grow.

"You will hear students say, 'What's this person's proof?', or 'This person's point makes no sense to me!' Good. The student has entered the conversation. This is our first step. As we all know, having an opinion is one thing. Developing an effective argument is another, and that's what we are here to work towards. However, it's very challenging to do the latter without the former.

"I like to select Google Reviews of establishments or spaces within the communities I'm working. It suggests to students that their experience and community has a place within the classroom. It can be a public space. It can be a pizza place. I want students to have a connection and some working concept of the subject.

"I like to select reviews that provide some dichotomy or spectrum; this can be a positive review and negative review. This can be a more effective argument and a less effective argument. With all reviews, I conjure my best poker face. My thoughts, feelings, and ideas matter much less than my students. Much of the moment's magic dwindles when students know how I feel and think; they will attempt to align their thinking with mine because that's what school is so often about for all of us.

"We analyze the reviews the same way we'd review any text in class. What is the author's purpose? Who is their audience? Do you think their argument is effective? Why or why not? This is Rhetorical Situation 101 but without using any of the intimidating buzzwords that can dim the sparks of student thinking and discovery. After we've assessed the arguments to the best of our ability, we work towards a rubric.

"Though, I don't call it a rubric and neither do my students. I ask, 'What patterns did we notice in what we thought was effective and ineffective?' I try to use these terms instead of good and bad; it's important for students to know they can disagree with an argument but still understand it as effective

to the text's audience, nonetheless. Eventually, we begin to notice themes or patterns in what we see as effective (the support/evidence seems to strengthen the argument of the review, not muddle or contradict it). We will write these patterns on the board, a Google Doc, or on poster paper on the classroom walls.

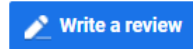
“Depending on the group, the previous activities can take an hour, a whole class, a week, or more. Any time frame is okay with me, and I often have some sense of it before we begin. Then, after encouraging students to prescriptively attach themselves to the 'rubric' patterns we've noticed, I ask students to work on a draft of a Google Review, either on the same topic/establishment/public space or a new one.

“Working on a single Google Review is far less intimidating than working on an entire essay. Once students have a working draft, we will engage in some type of peer review using our class-recreated 'rubric' as a guide for feedback. This allows student-readers to have a better 'footing' in providing feedback to their classmates. It makes them more comfortable and improves the quality of their feedback.

“At this point in the process, after a peer-review and revision, I'll ask students if they'd like to 'publish' their Google Reviews. Some like to and some don't. That's fine. However, I like to encourage students to see their text as an actual text. Seeing a student pull up their Google Review among the thousands for Brooklyn's Prospect Park or their neighborhood Chinese Restaurant on a laptop is one of the great joys of my teaching experience” (Timothy Berrigan, Brooklyn Public Library).

Outback Steakhouse

8280 Valley Blvd, Blowing Rock, NC

 Write a review

4.2  1,361 reviews ⓘ

People often mention

All manager 41 blooming onion 37 food and service 36 prime rib 16 +6

Sort by

Most relevant Newest Highest Lowest

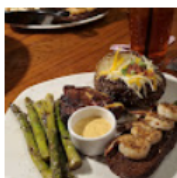


Natalie

Local Guide · 34 reviews · 15 photos

 a year ago

Dinner here was really good, my boyfriend and I ordered the same thing while my dads order is across from mine. The waitress was polite and really understanding, the asparagus was bad and tasted horrible (Not sure why but the asparagus the ... [More](#)



 1

Both Sides Now Graphic Organizer

Both Sides Now			
Evidence that Supports	Which position is best supported?	Evidence that Opposes	
Decision (Claim)			
Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)			

Graphic Organizer

Intro Summarize the two arguments. (Include passage titles and authors.) “Argument 1 says
On the other hand, Argument 2 says”

Write reasons why Argument 1 is better: “Argument 1 is better supported than Argument 2 because:

Body 1 Explain one reason why Argument 1 is better than Argument 2

Point (What is your reason?)

Evidence (Text evidence that backs your reason)

Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports your reason)

Link: (Link to the next paragraph)

Body 2 Explain another reason why Argument 1 is better than Argument 2

Point: (What is your reason?)

Evidence: (Text evidence that backs your reason)

Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports your reason)

Link: (Link to the next paragraph)

Body 3 Explain another reason why Argument 1 is better than Argument 2

Point: (What is your reason?)

Evidence: (Text evidence that backs your reason)

Explanation: (Explain how the evidence supports your reason)

Conclusion Summarize your claim and your main points

Argument 1 is the stronger argument

Argument Writing Frame

_____ makes the claim that _____

_____ makes the claim that _____

The best argument is _____

because _____

The first reason _____ is better is because _____

Evidence supporting this reason is _____

This evidence shows that _____

This goes along with evidence in the next paragraph which shows _____

Also, the second reason _____ is better is because _____

Evidence supporting this reason is _____

This evidence shows that _____

This goes along with evidence in the next paragraph which shows _____

Next, the third reason _____ is better is because _____

Evidence supporting this is _____

This evidence shows that _____

In conclusion, _____

Improving Body Paragraphs

Students can remember what to do in a body paragraph by using the acronym PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link):

P Point – Write your belief about the topic. This will be a reason why one side of an argument is stronger than the other

“Scientific research shows that banning plastic bags is better than taxing them.”

E Evidence – Support your point with evidence

“In 2012, two Stanford University researchers looked at whether it was better to ban or tax plastic bags. The researchers studied 15 different communities. They found the communities that banned plastic bags had fewer bags along city streets and in landfills.”

E Explanation – Explain how the evidence supports your point

“Research studies are among the best evidence used to back up arguments. The 2012 Stanford study, done recently at a well-known university, showed that banning plastic bags led to fewer bags in communities. The researchers looked at 15 very different places across the United States demonstrating that banning bags could work anywhere in the country.”

L Link - Link this point to the next paragraph

Link to next paragraph - “There is further evidence why banning plastic bags beats taxing them.”

This can happen either at the end of one body paragraph or the beginning of another.