WRITING, CONVENTIONS and LISTENING/SPEAKING/VIEWING GLOSSARY for 4-8 ELA

This glossary is intended as an aid for teachers. Terms that may be new or that may have more than one possible meaning are defined to ensure that all middle grades English Language Arts teachers throughout the state of Georgia are using a common vocabulary.

Please be mindful that knowledge of concepts or terms in isolation is neither the goal of instruction nor the type of item to expect on the CRCT. Instead, this information and/or these devices should be applied as students compose or analyze both oral and written texts or as they identify and support comprehension of oral and written texts.

Writing Terms & Concepts

**analytic judgment**

An analytic judgment refers to a judgment arrived at by breaking down a text or a portion of a text into parts and evaluating the parts in terms of the whole. For example, a reader could make an analytic judgment about an author's style by breaking a passage down into word choice, syntax, figurative language, etc.

**anecdote**

An anecdote is a brief story. Writers of persuasive or expository texts often employ anecdotes directly related to the main idea, topic or thesis in order to provide further description and/or explanation. Anecdotes help readers make a personal or visual connection to the information that is being presented.

**argument**

In persuasive or expository writing, an argument is the main idea or point of view the author wants to convey to the reader. It may be a particular statement, fact or example and is developed through logic and reasoning.

**cause and effect**

Cause and effect is an organizational structure that writers employ within informational or expository text. The writer introduces a cause and then develops the composition by detailing the effects created or encountered from that cause.

**citations**

Within a text, writers often use information or quoted passages from other sources or writers. When this occurs, authors are expected to acknowledge this information or these quotes from outside sources by citing them through footnotes, endnotes, or a bibliography. These citations often follow a format found in style manuals like the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA), etc. Please note that there is no particular style manual prescribed for use with the Georgia Performance Standards.
Closure occurs when a writer provides a sense of finality or completeness to a composition. Through closure, a reader is able to come to terms with the central idea or theme of the piece, and most significant questions about a piece should have been answered. Writers provide closure through a variety of techniques, like restatement of a thesis/main idea, conveying the significance of the text or text ideas, coming full circle with an event or idea, communicating a lesson learned, etc.

Coherence or a coherent focus refers to showing a logical, orderly, and consistent relation between the main/controlling idea and the subsequent text. The reader should be able to see a clear connection between the main/controlling idea of a piece and the supporting details/ideas or plot development. In narratives, the focus is on maintaining or shifting relationships between people, places, things, and events.

Authors employ a variety of cohesive devices to create a coherent focus within a text. Cohesive devices allow writers to smoothly tie together ideas or events. Good writers use a combination of these methods and do not overuse any one of these methods alone. Some examples of cohesive devices include, but are not exclusive to, repetition of a key word or phrase, synonyms, pronouns, transitional words or phrases, naming techniques, parallel structure, etc.

Comparison and contrast refers to an organizational structure (also known as similarity and difference) employed by writers in expository text. The writer develops a discussion of how two or more things, events, ideas, or positions are alike and how they are different.

Concrete language is specific, descriptive language used by writers to develop plot events, setting, and characters. Concrete language helps readers visualize and connect to the text they are encountering.

Context would be the setting, circumstances, or communication that surrounds an idea or information and helps determine its interpretation. Context also refers to a part surrounded by the whole (as with contextual vocabulary).

A controlling idea is the main idea or subject being discussed within a text. The controlling idea is developed through supporting details and ideas.
counter argument

In persuasive texts, writers present a clear perspective, position or proposal. They must also consider and address possible concerns or counter arguments that a reader might have in response to that perspective, position, or proposal. Counter arguments are any line of reasoning that might undermine or dissuade a reader from agreeing with the writer’s perspective, position, or proposal.

declines pronouns

To decline a pronoun means to alter it to indicate gender and/or case or function. For example, the nominative case declines this way: 1st person singular – I, 2nd person singular – you (thou), 3rd person singular – she/he/it, 1st person plural – we, 2nd person plural – you (or ye), 3rd person plural – they, 3rd person nonspecified – who.

description

Description is an organizational structure writers employ in expository text. A topic is introduced and then developed through a description of features, traits, and/or examples.

engage

Writers actively employ a variety of techniques and devices in order to engage, or catch and hold, a reader’s attention. These devices include, but are not exclusive to, imagery, figurative words or phrases, humor, suspense, tension, direct quotes, unusual facts or statistics, and tone.

evaluative judgment

Evaluative judgments express an attitude about the value or worth of a text, object or an idea within that text.

evidence

Evidence is that which a writer uses to develop, support, clarify or prove an argument. Evidence may include facts, statistics, quotes, as well as anecdotes, analogies, etc.

explanation

Explanation is an organizational structure writers employ in expository texts. After the topic is introduced, the writer goes on to explain his/her impressions, observations, or beliefs about that topic.

expository text

This type of writing (sometimes referred to as informational text) is composed to explain, describe, inform, or give information about a particular topic. When writing expository text, an
author often finds it best to assume that the reader has no prior knowledge of the topic being discussed. This ensures that all information crucial to a complete understanding of the topic has been included within the piece.

**flashback**

Flashbacks are descriptions of an event from the past. They allow a writer to engage a reader’s attention or provide necessary details or important background information.

**focus**

To maintain focus in writing means to sustain attention on the purpose and/or controlling idea of the piece by consistently connecting the various parts of an essay or narrative to that purpose and/or controlling idea.

**interpretive judgment**

An interpretive judgment contains an interpretation or explanation of a text or an object or an idea within that text.

**modes of discourse**

Modes of discourse are the particular forms, genres, or manners in which a written or spoken discussion of a subject takes place.

**organizational structures**

Organizational structures are methods writers use to frame and develop their ideas within a composition. The use of these structures enables a reader to clearly follow the connections between the main or controlling idea and the supporting ideas or details.

**parallel structure**

Parallel structure refers to the grammatical organization of a sentence and/or the structural formation of paragraphs. A writer creates parallel structure within a sentence by using the same grammatical form (noun paired with nouns, verbs paired with verbs, etc.) to express equal or parallel ideas. For example, “I love water skiing and to go horseback riding.” is not written using parallel structure because there is a noun paired with an infinitive. To write the sentence using parallel structure it would be modified to read, “I love water skiing and horseback riding.” This is done primarily for style: it makes the writing easier to read and, in turn, easier for the reader to understand. Parallel structure sometimes occurs within paragraph formation when there is a unifying format from paragraph to paragraph.

**perspective**

Perspective refers to the point from which a reader or writer views a particular subject or idea. It is a reader’s or writer’s own personal evaluation of a situation, fact(s), or idea(s).

**plot**

Plot events are those events or actions that move a narrative from its introduction to its conclusion. Plot events can be structured in a number of different patterns. The specific structuring of
these events often contributes to the meaning or interpretation of a text.

posing a question and answer

This is referring to an organizational structure employed by writers in expository texts. This structure presents/poses a question or problem. The text then describes or details an answer or provides one or more solutions to that initial question.

position

A position is much like a perspective or sometimes an argument. It is a writer’s particular point of view or opinion.

primary source

Primary sources are original records created at the time historical events occurred or after events in the form of memoirs and oral histories. Primary sources may include letters, manuscripts, diaries, journals, newspapers, speeches, interviews, memoirs, documents produced by government agencies such as Congress or the Office of the President, photographs, audio or video recordings, and research data. Primary sources may also include data or information acquired personally by the researcher through surveys or interviews. In addition, if a writer is preparing an analysis of a literary text such as a novel or poem, that literary text is a primary source. Primary sources are the firsthand materials upon which any subsequent interpretations are based.

problem/solution

Problem/solution is an organizational structure writers employ in expository text. After a problem is stated, the text describes or details one or more solutions for that problem.

proposal/proposition

Proposal or proposition refers to a writer putting forth an idea or plan for consideration or discussion.

reflective judgment

A reflective judgment expresses a thoughtful, contemplative connection to a text or an object/idea within that text. For example, a reflective judgment might express a text to text, text to self, or text to world connection between the reader and a text or an object/idea within that text.

secondary source

Secondary sources analyze, describe, explain, or restate information from primary sources. Common reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, textbooks, books in general, and articles in periodicals are examples of
secondary sources. If, for example, a writer is preparing a response to a literary text, such as a novel or poem, the literary text is a primary source while any book reviews, critical articles about that text, or biographies of the author of that text are secondary sources.

**sensory details**

Sensory details are descriptions of things that relate to the five senses (what we can see, hear, smell, taste, or feel.) Writers use sensory details to help a reader visualize and connect to texts.

**similarity and difference**

This refers to an organizational structure (also known as comparison and contrast) employed by writers in expository texts. The writer develops a discussion of how two or more things, events, ideas, or positions are alike and how they are different.

**technical documents**

Technical documents include all forms of business, professional, and technical communication, as well as those documents and aids used in oral and written presentations of business, professional, and technical information. In 9th grade these documents are specifically surveys or questionnaires, technical reports, research studies, and proposals. In grades 6-8, they include friendly letters, thank-you notes, formula poems, instructions, memoranda, emails, letters of inquiry, letters of complaint, procedures, lab reports; slide presentations, letters of application, letters of recommendation, résumés, abstracts, user guides or manuals, and web pages.

**textual evidence**

Textual evidence is any portion of a text that a writer uses to explain or prove a judgment he/she has made about that text.

**thesis**

A thesis is a declarative statement that includes a topic plus a judgment or opinion about that topic. A thesis sets up an assertion or claim that the writer then supports or proves with supporting details, evidence, and reasoning. The thesis provides the controlling idea for the entire paper. By its very nature, a thesis is arguable since a writer only has reason to support or prove a statement if more than one view or interpretation is possible.

**topic sentence**

A topic sentence is a declarative statement that provides the controlling idea for a paragraph and, consequently, provides a supporting statement for the thesis of an essay. A topic sentence is arguable when it sets up an assertion or claim.
that the writer then supports or proves with supporting details, evidence, and reasoning throughout the paragraph.

voice

Writer’s voice refers to a writer’s distinctive style or manner of expression. Writers demonstrate voice through use of language, word choice, tone or mood, etc.

Listening/Speaking/Viewing Terms & Concepts

language cues

When interacting with individuals or groups, people use language cues such as, “That makes sense because…”, “What if…”, or Should we consider…” to indicate to others a level of understanding, certainty, or to pose a question or a hypothesis.

language for dramatic effect

In spoken or visual presentations, language can be used to create a mood, convey an attitude, set a tone, or communicate an emotion.

persuasion and propaganda techniques

These are techniques used to sway or convince listeners or an audience to choose or agree with a proposed product or idea. They include direct quotes, connections to particular people, places, events, facts or statistics, etc. Examples of these techniques include bandwagon, hero appeal, or sensationalism.

problem solving sequence

Members of a group often must work together to solve a problem or create a product. Group members need to be familiar and competent with employing techniques to handle these situations. One such technique would be the problem solving sequence which involves: identifying a problem, defining a problem, identifying possible solutions, selecting the best solution, implementing the solution, and evaluating the solution.

visual image makers

Visual image makers include any people who contribute to the images we see in films, TV shows, commercials, advertisements, etc. Graphic artists, documentary film makers, illustrators, and news photographers are all visual image makers.

visual techniques and effects

Visual techniques differ according to the medium conveying the image; these techniques include layout, lighting, camera angle, framing, background, shot selection, use of color, placement of text, etc. Visual image makers
employ specific visual techniques to achieve desired effects.