



What It Is and Why It Is Important

A constructed response, also known as an open-ended question or written response, is an assessment task that measures a student’s ability to analyze, apply, and synthesize information into their own words. Students are prompted to write out a longer answer, which can be several sentences and up to several paragraphs. Constructed response questions reflect the higher [Depth of Knowledge](#) levels that are explicit in today’s learning standards. Not only highlighting the aspects of the [ELA/Literacy Shifts](#) of the Common Core, constructed response questions also address the demands of the college- and career-ready standards in their call for close reading, appropriate complex texts, and use of evidence.

The on-demand constructed response writing tasks on state and national exams reflect these ELA/literacy standards and instructional shifts. Students need instruction and practice with constructed response writing, learning how to infer, reason, argue, and reflect, with clarity and purpose.

Multiple resources exist to guide teachers in selecting appropriate materials, designing lessons, writing prompts, creating or selecting rubrics, and assessing student growth. Several protocols have been developed to teach students how to analyze and respond to a prompt. These protocols can also guide teachers in crafting prompts and ensuring a close alignment with the scoring rubric.

This micro-credential will help you create opportunities for students to become college- and career-ready as they successfully complete the complex writing task of on-demand constructed response.

Thinking About Your Current Practice

- Consider the writing that you ask students to do in your classes.
 - How often do they write?
 - What types of writing do they do?
 - While the writing tasks may be difficult, are they primarily “simple” or are they complex? For example, completing a multi-step task may be difficult, but a complex task requires higher order processing and a level of abstraction not evident in some “simpler” multi-step tasks.
- Also think about the purpose of the writing tasks you are teaching. Are you asking students to inform, to argue, and to do so within the content and context of your classes?
- Finally, have you spent time with the materials provided by state and national testing services to study the released sample items, scoring rubrics, and test development notes? This information can give you valuable insights, tips, and instructional tools for designing and assessing constructed response learning tasks in your classroom.

Evidence of Skill and Implementation

The Task: Demonstrating Your Skill

Complete the following task as evidence of your learning, as well as for application or implementation in your classroom:

Develop and implement lesson plan(s) in which you teach students to write a constructed response to a short essay question based upon passage(s), like those on state and national assessments. See the Possible Learning Pathways, Models for Your Task, as examples. The submitted lesson plan(s) and student results must include

- a brief explanation of grade level, content, and lesson background or context
- the literacy standards to be achieved in the lesson
- the teacher’s instructional steps: content of the lesson(s) and instructional model to be employed, i.e. gradual release of responsibility – I do, we do, you do.
- the students’ learning activities, i.e., prompt analysis protocol, analysis of rubric, practice writing, self-assessment
- the passage(s) used for the writing task
- a constructed response prompt
- a rubric for scoring student responses. Note: This rubric may come from sources such as the ISASP or Achieve the Core; or you may create your own. Alignment with the task must be clear and appropriate.
- 3 samples of scored student work with an explanation or rationale for each score

Learning Targets

You will be able to...

1. Develop a constructed response teaching lesson based on ELA/Literacy standards and shifts
2. Model for students how to analyze a writing prompt in conjunction with a constructed response rubric
3. Instruct lesson(s) on the writing of a constructed response
4. Assess students’ constructed response writing with a rubric
5. Provide the rationale for a scored response

Possible Learning Pathways to Prepare for the Task

The following activities and resources will help you deepen and sharpen your understanding of the content. Choose those that will fill your learning needs and help you complete the task.

All About Constructed Response

- [Constructed Response](#) is a one-page document that provides an overview of constructed responses and links to resources for teachers and students.
- [Building Student Success with Constructed Response](#) is a PowerPoint presentation used for professional development in Georgia schools. This resource details what the teacher can do, what students will learn, and contains examples from grades 3, 7, 9-10.
- [Constructed-Response Test Questions: Why We Use Them; How to Score Them](#), a R&D Connections paper from Educational Testing Service (ETS), explains the value of constructed response assessments.
- [How to Write a Constructed Response](#) is a video that focuses on how to teach students what they need to be successful in assessments with constructed responses. This information is helpful for your own lesson planning. 23 minutes.

Models for Your Task

- [ELA/Literacy Assessments](#) from Achieve the Core.org provides mini assessments designed to illustrate the ELA/literacy shifts and expectations of the Common Core. Assessments from across the grades include passages, text-dependent questions, and a constructed response question. A scoring rubric for text-based writing prompts is included.
- [Tips for the ISASP Writing Test](#) is a handout that shows what elements could be included in lesson plans for teaching students how to respond on a constructed response assessment.
 - Another version of these tips appears in this [PowerPoint](#).
 - This is a twenty-minute [YouTube video](#) of the PowerPoint presentation.
- [ISASP Writing Review Materials](#) prepared by Iowa Testing Programs provides examples from grades 5 and 7: passages, prompt, rubric, and scored essays with the explanation for each score. This can serve as a guide for the last 4 steps in your submission.

Prompt Analysis Protocols

- [Teach short constructed-response writing to boost test success](#) from Smekens Education Solutions, Inc. provides a short video, explanations, and several protocols students can learn to write a well-constructed response.
- [Adapt Yes, Ma'am \(RACE or CER\) for longer essays](#) expands upon short constructed responses to longer, multiple paragraph essay responses. A four-minute video is included.
- [End a Constructed Response with an Explanation](#) gives more information on an area in constructed response that frequently is overlooked by student writers. This resource is also from Smekens.
- [How to Write Quality Constructed Response with Text Evidence Using the RTQT Method](#) is a six-minute video that provides another step-by-step framework for writing constructed responses.

Additional Tools to Deepen and Sharpen Your Understanding

- [Student Writing Samples](#) from Achieve the Core.org shares annotated student writing samples illustrating the integration of content understanding and writing in the three types of writing expected by college- and career-ready standards. The On-Demand Writing resource provides a progression of writing across the grades in which students have written independently to the same text-based prompt.
- [An Inside Look at Webb's Depth of Knowledge](#) explains how to evaluate the cognitive complexity of a task or assignment.
- [Constructed Response: Questions, Formats, and Examples](#) provides a shortened view of a complete course in Constructed Response from Study.com.

Writing for Learning Resources

- [The Power of Short Writing Assignments](#) explains how using frequent and varied short writing tasks can deepen learning in any content and provide the practice and routine students need to build to longer responses.
- [Simple Tips to Write Better, More Productive Math Prompts](#) shows how better prompts can improve comprehension of key math concepts. These tips can be applied to all content.

College and Career Ready Resources

- [Understand how college- and career-ready assessment is different](#) is a resource from Achieve the Core. This link provides straight-forward explanations of the Common Core ELA/literacy shifts, along with examples.
- [CCSS ELA/Literacy Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks](#) This appendix from the Common Core State Standards provides exemplars of reading text complexity, quality, and range & sample performance tasks related to the standards. It can also serve as a model for the appropriate Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level for selection of student materials.

Standardized Writing Tests

- [The Writing Test Description for the ACT](#) provides an explanation of the writing skills measured on the test, sample essays, and test tips.
- [AP English Language and Composition Exam Questions](#) shares free response questions from past exams, along with scoring guidelines and sample responses. While the rigor of the passages and the prompt may be daunting, use these examples as a model for what you are striving for at your grade level.

RACE Model Videos

- [RACE Strategy for Response to Text](#) 2.5 minutes
- [RACE Writing Strategy: Restate the Question](#) 5 minutes
- [RACE Lesson – TDA Strategy](#) 6 minutes

Submission Guidelines

Submission Guidelines

Following are items you must submit to earn this micro-credential and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. To earn this micro-credential, you must successfully complete each element of the rubrics.

Part I: Task Submission

Submit a lesson plan in which you have taught students to write a constructed response to a short essay question based upon a passage, like those on state and national assessments. The submitted lesson plan may be in a format of your choosing. It must include

- a brief explanation of grade level, content, and lesson background or context
- the literacy standards to be achieved in the lesson
- the teacher’s instructional steps
- the students’ learning activities
- the passage(s) used for the writing task
- a constructed response prompt
- a rubric for scoring the response

Evidence of the lesson having been taught must include

- 3 samples of scored student work across a range of scores
- an explanation and rationale for each score attached to the student work

See the Success Criteria for Completing the Task for more specifics.

Part II: Reflection

Answer the following questions in complete paragraphs to reflect upon your growth in teaching constructed response writing.

1. Describe three of the most important “ah-ha’s” you had in completing this micro-credential.
2. Explain what you learned about your students as you taught this writing construct.
3. Portray what the future holds for you and your students with constructed response writing.

Success Criteria for Completing the Task

Part I: Task

Your task will be evaluated on the following one-column rubric. You must earn a “yes” on all elements of the rubric in order to earn the micro-credential.

Notes on What Needs Improvement	YES	Notes on How the Work Meets or Exceeds Expectation
	Lesson plan includes the following elements in clear alignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level, content, and lesson context or background • Standards to be achieved in the lesson 	
	Lesson plan indicates a clear understanding of the instructional content and processes to teach constructed response writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s instructional steps include modeling and use of protocols • Students’ learning activities contain various means of engagement • Students’ learning activities move toward independence 	
	Passage and constructed response task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are grade level appropriate • Reflect Common Core and DOK text and task complexity 	
	Rubric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a minimum of 4 elements appropriate to a complex writing task • Is clearly aligned with the constructed response task 	
	Scored Student Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three responses reflect a range of scores • Rationale for each score is clearly justified by the rubric 	

Part II: Reflection

Your reflection will be evaluated on the following rubric. You must earn a “yes” on all elements of the rubric in order to earn the micro-credential.

Notes on What Needs Improvement	YES	Notes on How the Work Meets or Exceeds Expectation
	<p>CONTENT: All components of the reflection are present:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe three of the most important “ah-ha’s” you had in completing this micro-credential.2. Explain what you learned about your <u>students</u> as you taught this writing construct.3. Portray what the future holds for you and your students with constructed response writing.	
	<p>DETAILED: Reflection includes sufficient detail for reader to know what the teacher has learned and how knowledge is/will be used in teaching and learning.</p>	
	<p>CLARITY: Reflection is clear and coherent.</p>	

Iowa Teaching Standards

The following Iowa Teaching Standards are closely aligned with this micro-credential.

- ✓ 1. Demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.
- ✓ 2. Demonstrate competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.
- ✓ 3. Demonstrate competence in planning and preparing for instruction.
- ✓ 4. Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students
- 5. Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.
- 6. Demonstrates competence in classroom management.
- ✓ 7. Engages in professional growth.
- 8. Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.