

Examining Key Uses of Academic Language

The verbal and nonverbal interaction in which the learner engages are central to an understanding of learning . . . they do not just facilitate learning, they are learning in a fundamental way.

—Leo van Lier (2000)

Teaching is a balance of reflection in action and reflection on action. We reflect in action when we respond to our students' needs in the moment. We reflect on action when we think about our students' overall strengths and goals. We plan for instruction and assessment based on our reflection on action while we react spontaneously during instruction and its embedded assessment based on our reflection in action. The conceptualization of key uses of academic language is a result of our own reflection on action. In our experiences, both in the classroom and in working with teachers, we have realized that great teaching is no accident but a result of deep reflection on action. Key uses are meant to guide teacher planning and reflection on action.

ASK

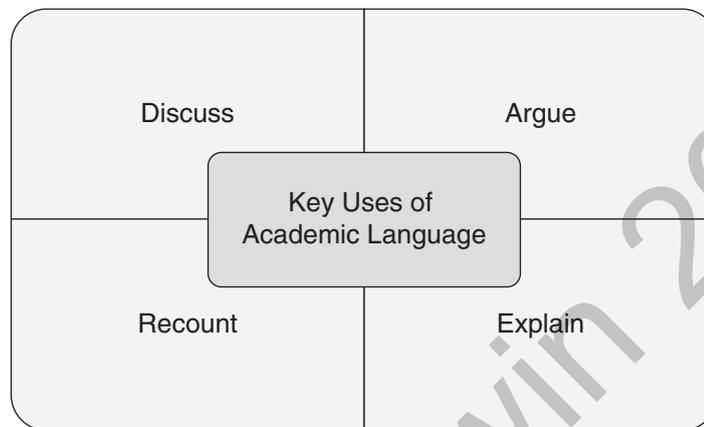
What is the nature of key uses of academic language? What is the language associated with each key use?

The overhaul of academic content standards in 2010 and beyond across the United States has increased the rigor of the curriculum, assessment, and instruction in classrooms. Consequently, students need to possess the language to think about and engage with content in classroom activities intended to mediate their learning. In reviewing the existing academic content standards, instructional materials, and linguistic theories, particular purposes for academic language use emerge: namely, *discuss*, *argue*, *recount*,

and *explain* (DARE). These are the overall purposes we equate with DARE, and in doing so, we DARE teachers and school leaders to advocate for advancing key uses of academic language as an educational tool of practice.

Figure 1.1 depicts the four uses of academic language that form DARE and frame this book.

FIGURE 1.1 Key Uses of Academic Language



Key uses of academic language are a focal point for organizing and promoting student interaction with content and with one another. In this chapter, we identify the linguistic features of each key use and point to how these defining characteristics are useful indicators of different genres across school disciplines. We use the term genre in this context to refer to the socially constructed ways in which we communicate for academic purposes. Examples of written genres in college and career readiness (CCR) standards in which key uses of academic language are strongly embedded, for example, include narrative, argumentative, and informational text. To guide our conversation, we invite teachers to take the DARE and do the following:

Discuss the concept of academic language use and its connection to academic achievement

Argue for DARE as a conceptual tool to enhance educators' focus on academic language use in planning curriculum, assessment, and instruction

Recount the individual and collective features of key uses of academic language

Explain how to highlight key uses of academic language across different contexts and activities

As we explore DARE-specific key uses of academic language, it is important to note that these are not the only purposes for language use in school. We have created these umbrella categories to ease educators into the practice of thinking about language use and its power when engaging in teaching complex academic concepts.

EXPLORE

When students go to school, they engage in many activities, from making friends, to negotiating meaning, to sharing what they know and how they know it. Language facilitates students' participation in all of these activities. The term academic language has been historically used to describe the processing and production of language used to share concepts, ideas, and information of the disciplines in school contexts (Bailey, 2007; Feldman & Kinsella, 2008; Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014; Schlepegrell, 2004). In this book, we propose extending this definition to encompass all school-related activities in which students participate. When students interact with peers or their teachers and are involved in complex thinking, they do not necessarily use discipline-specific language, even though they may be using language for academic purposes. Such language can also be used to problem-solve, to collaborate, or to promote social justice. In other words, language use in schools does not fit into a traditional dichotomy of social and academic language. Language use is multifaceted, as the interaction among the contexts, participants, and activities that take place in school is complex and varied (Gee, 2004; Holland, 2005). This complexity is what we try to encapsulate in the term *academic language*.

Academic language, defined from a broader perspective as a means for students to engage in school, includes social interaction, making meaning, and accessing academic content. Many students who enter our classrooms bring with them experiences and ways of knowing and learning about the world that may differ from those described in challenging academic standards. As educators, one of our roles is to create connections between the two so that all students have the tools needed to meaningfully participate in learning. Making these connections with each and every student is one of the ways we can work toward equity in our classrooms.

Take the DARE

Reflect on or *discuss* with colleagues the role of language use in your school.

1. What opportunities do students have to use academic language every day?
2. How is language modeled in your school?
3. What models for language use exist in your classroom?
4. How do students and teachers use language with each other?
5. Is there an expectation for academic language use in your school? How is it conveyed?
6. Are students who are knowledgeable of multiple languages able to maximize their academic language use by being invited to communicate in more than one language?

APPLY

A RATIONALE FOR KEY USES FOR ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

As we have mentioned, in school, language serves as the vehicle for communicating ideas, information, and knowledge; it is also the tool for interacting with others as we learn new skills and engage in content area practices. The ultimate goal of this multiyear project initiated at WIDA, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin–Madison, was to support teachers’ focus on oral and written language use in their content classrooms and to promote collaboration among teachers around the role of language in learning.

We shared the array of language uses we unearthed from extensive reviews of literature, examination of state academic content standards, analysis of instructional materials, and interaction occurring in classrooms with experts in the field of linguistics and language education, our colleagues, and practitioners. After arranging the many reasons for communicating (that is, identifying language functions, such as describe, compare and contrast, defend, and state) into categories, four key uses of academic language emerged as the most salient purposes. Having secured evidence from multiple data sources, we felt confident that the key uses of academic language would indeed help teachers and school leaders better grasp the important role of language in their disciplinary practices.

At first, three main academic purposes for language use were identified: *argue*, *recount*, and *explain*. A fourth key use, *discuss*, was added to highlight the increased attention to oral discourse, collaborative learning settings, and targeted interaction among students in today’s classrooms. In our book, we make an acronym from these four overarching purposes for communication—*discuss*, *argue*, *recount*, and *explain*—DARE. We think that DARE serves our intent well, as we wish to challenge educators in consciously and intentionally infusing these key uses of academic language into teaching and learning. In DARE-ing educators, we hope that key uses of academic language can serve as a conceptual tool and an entry point for deeper conversations within and across the disciplines.

To make the terms more tangible, we use the following definitions for DARE:

Discuss: To interact with others or with content as a means of negotiating meaning, cocreating new knowledge, or sharing information.

Argue: To give opinions with reasons, make claims backed by evidence, or debate topics with the intent of persuading others.

Recount: To inform others; recall experiences or events; or display knowledge, information, or ideas.

Explain: To make ideas, situations, or issues clear through *how* or *why*; to account for cause or effect; or to describe complex relationships by providing details or facts.

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS AND THEIR RELATION TO KEY USES OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Each key use is broad in nature and encompasses various language functions descriptive of how we use language. Language functions help us organize how we speak or write around a message; in that way, language functions help us organize discourse and encompass specific sentence features that are part of the way we define academic language use (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). Academic language functions refer to the purpose of language use or, put more simply, why we use language to communicate—how we might wish to identify, clarify, or paraphrase (among others) concepts and ideas.

Language functions often trigger specific discourses and types of sentences. For example, we use language to *describe* characters in a story, to *compare* two approaches to solving problems, or to *ask questions* about an event. *Describe*, *compare*, and *ask questions* are examples of language functions; each one indicates specific ways in which we communicate. When we *describe*, we may use language that includes adjectives and adverbs—language intended to create a mood or appeal to the senses. On the other hand, when we *compare*, we may use comparative and superlative forms (e.g., -er, -est, more than, or less than), noting similarities and differences. It is important to remember that the language function by itself does not shape language use. The context, intended audience, and other factors, including our own experiences and identities, also impact the specific ways in which we communicate with one another.

We can think of language functions as pieces of a puzzle that, together, show a more complete picture or landscape. Several language functions can be used together or build upon each other for a greater purpose, like DARE—*discuss*, *argue*, *recount*, or *explain*. During a *discussion*, for example, students may *ask and answer questions*, *summarize* others' ideas, or *elaborate* on particular topics. Similarly, we rarely *recount* only by *describing*, but we may also *compare and contrast*, *elaborate* on details, and even *ask questions* as part of a dialogue, to name a few. As we illustrated in the opening text on nutritional guidelines, DARE often represents multiple perspectives within a single passage.

There are many language functions, and each may be used for one or more key purposes. For example, *summarize* could be used to *recount* but could also be used to *argue*. Another example is *describe*, which could be used when trying to *explain* a process, *recount* a story, *argue* for the use of a particular technology, or *discuss* a particular topic in a small group. In attempting to decide on a language focus for instruction, the large number and variability of language functions can be overwhelming. Key uses of academic language, in representing the broadest of functions that are widely represented in learning at school, provide a more accessible approach to planning for infusion of language into instruction. Figure 1.2 is a table with some language functions that are associated with each key use of academic language in DARE.

As with other examples in this book, those in Figure 1.2 are only representative, not all inclusive. It is meant to further our understanding of each key use rather than to prescribe how to enact each one.

FIGURE 1.2 Example Language Functions Encompassed in DARE

DISCUSS	ARGUE	RECOUNT	EXPLAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and answer questions • Clarify what is written or said • Acknowledge or affirm others' ideas • Elaborate others' ideas • Summarize information • Evaluate others' ideas • Restate or paraphrase others' comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuade others • Compare and contrast viewpoints or perspectives • Agree and disagree with the status quo • Justify responses or positions • Critique issues, evidence, or claims • Confirm positions • State opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell experiences or narratives • Paraphrase oral or written text • Summarize accounts or ideas • Report information • Recall events • Describe observations • Provide details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how something works • Sequence steps in processes or procedures • Define causes and effects • Enumerate and clarify different types • Detail components • Provide reasons why

Take the DARE

Select a unit of study or content topic that you will teach in the next few weeks. What are the expectations for language use in (a) readings, (b) activities, (c) assignments, and (d) assessment? Can you identify some of the key uses in DARE? Can you identify other language functions?

In understanding how to use DARE, we must shift our assessment and instructional practices to encompass a language lens. While we continue to focus on academic content expectations for our instruction, DARE expands our view to include the language that accompanies content. So for example, as we ask students to *explain*, we are looking for the logic of their explanation and also for the language used to express that logic. To support this point, we offer Figure 1.3, which contains examples of language features associated with each key use of academic language and sample tasks.

It is important to note that key uses of academic language do not neatly occur independently from each other, as when we communicate, we seamlessly move across the various uses. While the tasks presented before typically include the key use to which they are connected in the figure, they may also include other key uses. For example, as one *explains* the cause of a natural phenomenon, such as an earthquake, one may need to inform the audience about the plates that form part of the crust of the earth, using the key use *recount*. One may also provide information (*recount*) about particular scientific theories and, in doing so, include claims and supportive evidence (*argue*) to be able to *discuss* causes for earthquakes from a particular scientific paradigm. In other words, key uses of academic language are often intertwined in text and talk.

FIGURE 1.3 Typical Language Features and Example Tasks Related to Key Uses

KEY USE	EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE FEATURES	SAMPLE TASKS
Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking clarifying questions (e.g., “What do you mean by their corresponding fractions?”) Inviting others to the conversation (e.g., “What do you think? Do you agree?”) Building on others’ ideas (e.g., “You said that the magnet would attract metals, so if you use the magnet to bring them together, you can also use it to keep the paper in place.”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on lab experiments with a partner Participating in literary circles Contributing to online discussions
Argue	<p>Introducing claims through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements, typically in present tense (e.g., “Drugs are dangerous.”) Logical connectors to link ideas (e.g., however and therefore) <p>Supporting claims with evidence through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequential language (e.g., first, second, and finally) Modals (e.g., possibly and may) <p>Strengthening arguments through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotive language to cause a reaction from the audience (e.g., critical and devastating) Conditionals (e.g., “If . . . , we will”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in debates Crafting persuasive essays Presenting conclusions in lab reports
Recount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequential language to organize stories (e.g., first, then, and finally) Use of pronouns and referents to create cohesion across the composition (e.g., this event and he said) Use of titles or subtitles when organizing expository text (e.g., “The Sun” or “Parts of a Cell”) Statements in past tense may include dependent and independent clauses to pack more information (e.g., “Mary, who was his number one fan, ran to meet him at the station.”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing reports on historical events Composing short stories Creating research briefs on particular topics
Explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronological connectors to sequence steps or sequence the explanation (e.g., to begin with, before the, and next) Passive voice to create a sense of neutrality and present factual information (e.g., “Water is produced,” and, “The two fractions are added.”) Simple present tense (e.g., “Our government has three branches.”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing how to solve mathematical problems Clarifying the causes or effects of natural phenomena Elucidating the relationship between physical variables

Take the DARE

Keep a DARE journal, such as in Resource 1.1. Record in your journal the activities you design for your students, and identify the key use(s) for you and your students. At the end of the week, review your notes, and share the following with your students:

1. What are the key uses of academic language that appear most often?
2. What are the key uses you would like to focus on more?
3. What evidence have you collected that provides you information on how students use language?
4. How might you plan with your colleagues for gathering information on language?

Making language a priority in teaching and learning requires developing the ability to shift back and forth between attending to content and attending to language use. The following tools are intended to help you become more aware of language use in your classrooms.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE IN KEY USES

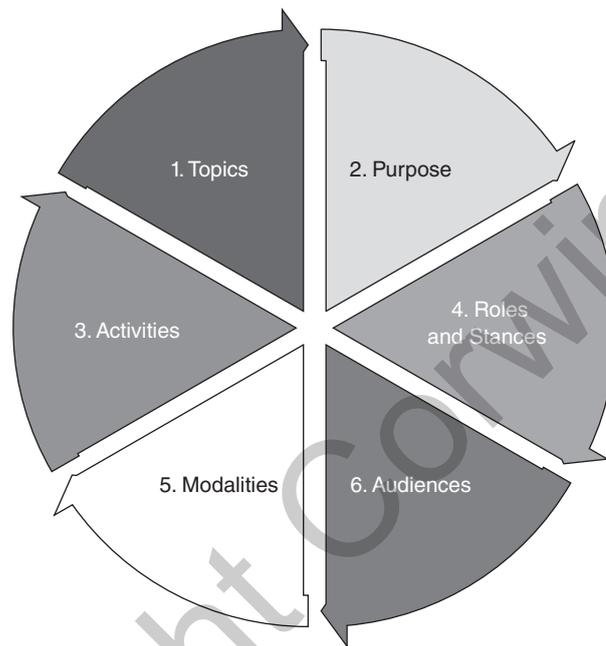
For many, academic language is synonymous with academic vocabulary. As we suggested in our opening remarks about key uses, our vision of academic language use begins with disciplinary discourse that allows us to think deeply. The power of academic language does not reside in the particular words used but in the ways language portrays knowledge, the identities it confers on those who use it, and its power in connecting current knowledge to more complex ideas, concepts, and understandings. A functional approach to language learning means that the focus is, first and foremost, on the purpose for language use and how the language is shaped by factors in context. Figure 1.4 identifies some of the factors that impact language use in academic contexts.

Be advised: These factors do not work independently but interact with each other and work together to create unique situations and conditions for language use.

1. *Topics:* The topics are content bound; meaning is drawn from one or more disciplines and their related standards.
2. *Purpose:* Guided by the academic content standards, the topic, and their associated language, the overall purpose for academic language generally corresponds to DARE, or key uses.
3. *Activities:* Activities refer to the tasks or actions in which students engage when interacting with new ideas, knowledge, or content.
4. *Roles and Stances:* Students assume many identities in schools. Sometimes students listen to information from other, more knowledgeable experts, and at times, we ask them to be the more knowledgeable experts. Sometimes, we ask them to cocreate new knowledge with others, and sometimes, we ask them to seek information from other sources.

5. *Modalities*: By approaching communication through multiple modalities— orally, visually, tactilely, and/or in writing—students have unique opportunities for language use.
6. *Audiences*: The people involved in the communication influence the way the message is conveyed. The way students use language with peers, for example, is different from the way they use language with teachers. Thus, different audiences require different registers or degrees of formality.

FIGURE 1.4 Factors That Shape the Context for Communication



Take the DARE

How might you describe the context of communication in your school? Which factors mentioned in Figure 1.4 are taken into account in teaching and learning? Are there any unique factors that must be considered for ELLs, long-term language learners, or students with disabilities? Do members of the school community engage in explicit conversations about the culture of the school? What are some spaces or structures that facilitate or have the potential of facilitating these conversations among students, teachers, and school leaders?

Use Resource 1.1 to gain insight into the potential of academic language use during instructional planning. This tool can also be considered as a springboard for conversations with grade-level teams or as a means to compare the variety of contexts in which your students learn. Don't forget that the icon of the two puzzle pieces coming together signifies that a blank template has been included at the end of the chapter for your personal use.



RESOURCE 1.1 Factors Impacting Language Use in Academic Contexts

Use this tool to reflect and *discuss* with others the various factors impacting academic language use during teaching and learning.

Unit of Study: Exploring Weather Patterns					
Grade Level: K-2					
Timeline: Two weeks					
Standards:	K-ESS2-1. Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.				
	CCSS.ELA WK.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects.				
	CCSS. Mathematics K.MD.A.1. Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight. Describe several measurable attributes of a single object.				
	WIDA English language development Standards 1-5, Integrated Strands, Grades K-5, Example Topic: Weather				
Topic(s):	Local weather				
ACTIVITY	MODALITIES	PURPOSE(S)– DARE	ROLE(S) OF STUDENTS	AUDIENCE(S)	OTHER
Daily weather conversations	Oral Digital	Discuss Recount	Information gathering	Peers	
Recording and graphing the weather	Tables and charts (Visual)	Recount Explain Discuss	Analyzing the weather Cocreating knowledge with others	Self Peers	
Reporting on the weather	Oral Written Digital	Recount Discuss	Expert	Peers Teacher Parents	
Video watching of weather segments	Digital	Recount Explain	Listener	Students	

LANGUAGE FEATURES IN KEY USES

In the previous section, we explained how the purpose for communication is one of the factors that impact academic language use. As we move through the various chapters of this book, we will continue to come back to this point through key uses of academic language. We propose specific key uses to enhance the academic language development of students in meaningful and relevant ways. In addition, we encourage you to reflect on

and consider the sociocultural context in which interaction occurs. Part of being intentional about academic language use is identifying and being aware of DARE throughout the school day. In this section, we expand on the definitions of each key use of academic language and include specific examples of its features.

DISCUSS

Discuss, the *D* in DARE, highlights the importance of oral language development and social interaction in learning, to reinforce its role in literacy development, and to acknowledge its presence in academic content standards. Research has shown that proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital tool for thought and that structured oral language supports students' thinking processes (Bruner, 1983). As shown in Figure 1.5, oral discussions in classrooms may occur among students or between students and teachers around specific tasks.

Participation in these tasks alone is not enough to develop students' oral language. It is critical that educators make explicit the norms of working with partners or small groups. For some ELLs, for example, having access to the language needed to agree or disagree with others or to elaborate on others' ideas is a precursor to their participation in English-medium classrooms.

FIGURE 1.5 Examples of Oral Discussions

STAKEHOLDERS	EXAMPLE TASKS	WHAT STUDENTS DO WITH LANGUAGE DURING ORAL DISCUSSIONS
Student pairs	Lab experiments Problem solving Reading together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for or provide information • Ask and answer questions • Negotiate strategies or roles
Teachers and students	Writing conferences Guided reading Goal-setting conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate ideas, information, or positions • Provide examples, details, or evidence
Groups of students	Presentations Large-group discussions Debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree or disagree with others • Clarify stances or views

Promoting oral language development requires designing instruction around engaging content. This can be achieved by posing big questions that do not have easy answers yet provide opportunities for meaningful discussions, reading, and writing (Lesaux, 2012). Here are some ideas on how to achieve meaningful discussions:

- Select rich, complex texts that serve as platforms for learning
- Offer topic and language choices to students

- Engage in conversations about the impact of language choices
- Create spaces and design activities that engage students in collaborative learning in authentic situations
- Be creative and provide a variety of interactive activities, such as demonstrations, displays, debates, and role-plays

Take the DARE

Evaluate the effectiveness of the activities for a unit of study. How might you make these activities more interactive? What language resources are available for students to meaningfully participate? What opportunities exist to engage students in conversations about language use? How might you group students to support each other's language use in English and for ELLs from the same language background to allow their home language use to clarify or extend their learning?

Resource 1.2 is a record of students' individual contributions to discussions. You may change the features you wish to monitor once students consistently use the listed language strategies. You might also consider having different checklists for different groups of students.



RESOURCE 1.2 Monitoring Language Use During Group Discussions

Check the specific language strategies that each student uses to contribute to the discussion. Make sure the students are aware of the strategies and have practiced them in previous discussions.

Date: _____ Small-group discussion Class discussion

Topic: Discussion on Ch. 12 of The Giver

NAME	INTRODUCES NEW TOPIC OR INFORMATION	ASKS QUESTIONS	RESPONDS TO A QUESTION OR COMMENT POSED BY OTHERS	BUILDS ON SOMEONE'S IDEA
Martin			✓	✓
Shameka	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wheaton	✓	✓		✓✓
Anna	✓✓	✓	✓	
Diego				
Ahmed			✓	

Notes:

Next time, I should pair Diego with another Spanish speaker, so he feels more comfortable.

Resource 1.3 is another tool that can be used as a source for discussion, in particular, to provide background information on particular topics and spark conversations among students.

RESOURCE 1.3 Resources for Promoting Discussions



One way to get students ready to *discuss* a topic is for them to do research, read specific resources, or watch movies together. Watching a video or movie, such as those associated with each topic of BrainPOP®, provides visual support and reinforcement for all students, including students who may have learning disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, or those who are in the process of developing English as an additional language.



Scan the QR code that leads to the BrainPOP® website. “Nutrition” is a featured movie that provides basic information related to healthful eating. After watching the movie, provide students with guiding questions, such as those below, that they can *discuss* in pairs or small groups.

Source: BrainPOP®, <https://www.brainpop.com/health/nutrition/nutrition>

Remember to be explicit about how students are to participate and contribute to the *discussion*. Later, the students might try to tackle the informational text on nutritional guidelines, such as those in the opening pages of the book.

Guiding Questions for Discussion About Nutrition

- What are some things that contribute to good nutrition? Why would you choose these?
- How do you balance what is nutritious and what is delicious?
- How might you plan a nutritious meal? What would you have to eat?
- What are some changes you can do or propose to others to make good choices related to nutrition?

As another way to encourage discussion of the guiding questions, direct students to the Make-a-Map® feature of BrainPOP’s Nutrition topic. In pairs, ask students to *discuss* how they might answer one of the guiding questions in a concept map, and have them exchange information about their maps with each other.

Yet another feature of BrainPOP’s Nutrition topic is Sortify®, a classification game. As pairs of students sort and categorize different elements of the food groups, they encounter new opportunities to engage in discussion about the topic.

An important aspect of discussion involves engaging students in monitoring their learning by setting up a series of “I can” statements with them based on individual student goals or the language expectations for a unit of learning.

ARGUE

Whether you are a student, teacher, or school leader, you probably have been asked to take a position, make a claim, and support it with specific evidence. These features are

the ones most associated with the key use argue. In the context of school, arguments may be expressed in academic articles, persuasive speeches, convincing conversations, or even e-mails. Before you even respond to each of these scenarios, if you are to offer a rebuttal, you are most likely expected to (1) place yourself in the particular situation and recognize the audience, (2) evaluate text or the ongoing conversation, and (3) develop your position in relation to the situation.

Crafting arguments begins in kindergarten, when students indicate preferences and likes or dislikes, and continues through the end of high school, when students are expected to engage in sophisticated debates and create position papers and critiques. In school, we ask students to *argue* for the purpose of doing the following:

1. Supporting positions or points of view
2. Persuading others of particular courses of action
3. Showing someone the problems or difficulties with theories, approaches, or courses of action

To argue effectively, you need sophisticated language, but it pays off! Research has shown that learning to write arguments has positive impact on student learning. Students are able to build audience awareness, deepen understanding of content, better integrate ideas from multiple texts, and pay greater attention to information (Le Bigot & Rouet, 2007; Wiley & Voss, 1999). Typically, by middle school, students can identify and incorporate the following discourse and sentence features into oral or written arguments:

- An appeal to logic
- Facts, statistics, or specific examples as support for the claims
- Evidence of a research base
- Personal experiences to introduce or reinforce claims
- Counterclaims tied to evidence
- Use of linking phrases to build up a series of ideas
- Employment of emphatic words or expressions
- Repetition of key phrases

It is important for students to be aware of how the use of specific language shapes arguments so that they can intentionally choose language based on the purpose and the features of the key use. Inviting students to be decision makers means that they have choices as writers or speakers. For example, by having students determine whether to include the thesis statement at the beginning or at the end of the first paragraph, agency is shifted to them, along with the ownership of the tone and voice in the argument. DARE provides spaces for these conversations about how language works, which is often referred

to as metalanguage. Metalanguage, or thinking and talking about language, encourages agency in students as it pushes students to think about the impact of their language choice on their message. In Figure 1.6, we provide examples of how features of language can be used for particular purposes in arguments.

FIGURE 1.6 Example Language Features of Arguments

FEATURES OF ARGUMENTS	EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE FEATURES ...	USED TO ...
Stating claims or opinions	Using modals (e.g., may, could, should, or must)	Express certainty or uncertainty of claims or opinions
Providing supporting evidence	Including evaluative language with positive (e.g., important, significant, or impressive) or negative (e.g., questionable, insignificant, or weak) meaning	Strengthen stance
Offering counterarguments	Conceding language (e.g., while or even though)	Acknowledge other views without giving them power
Strengthening arguments	Using emotive language (e.g., critical, imperative, or inexcusable)	Evoke emotion in the audience

Even ELLs can engage in arguments if language is modeled and their level of English language proficiency is taken into account. For example, ELLs at English Language Proficiency Level 3 in Grades 4 and 5 can reasonably be expected to “identify evidence from multiple places within text” and “connect reasons to opinions supported by facts and details” in writing (WIDA, 2016).

Resource 1.4 is a checklist with examples for evaluating students’ use of the language of arguments. This tool can be used by students in primary grades to identify the language of arguments in exemplary text, to provide feedback to others, or to self-assess their work. Teachers can also use the checklist to model in reviewing oral or written arguments or to assess student arguments.

Resource 1.5 is a checklist to evaluate the presence of the language of arguments. This tool can be used by students in intermediate grades to identify language useful in arguments in exemplary text, to provide feedback to others, or to self-assess their work. Teachers can also use the checklist to model in reviewing oral or written arguments or to assess student arguments.

Once students have practiced and have become familiar with how to use language to create strong arguments, it is important to provide them with opportunities to use their new skills. BrainPOP® has various resources, including movies, readings, interactive activities, and games, that provide students background knowledge on a variety of topics that could be the basis for argumentation. Resource 1.6 can be used as an activity for students to see the language used to *argue* in context.



RESOURCE 1.4 Language Use in Argument: Primary Grades

Where is the language of argument? How are you using it? Put a check in the boxes to show what you did.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Opinion: _____

- I state my opinion using
 - complete thoughts
 - opinion phrases (e.g., I think, I like, I want)

Example: I chose "I think" because it is my opinion and not a fact.

- I give reasons using
 - linking words (e.g., because, and, first, also, so)

Example: I chose "first," "second," and "last" because I had three good reasons.

- I organize my ideas like this:

1. Opinion
2. Reason
3. Reason
4. Reason
5. Conclusion

Example: I chose this order because I wanted to give three reasons for my opinion.

Take the DARE

How might multimodal resources, such as those in BrainPOP®, enhance the learning experiences for ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and other language learners? How can you maintain the students' high cognitive engagement in complex tasks, such as building claims and counterclaims for argumentation? Where would you insert these resources in the teaching and learning cycle?

RECOUNT

In DARE, recount includes a broad range of purposes, including to inform; retell experiences or events; or display knowledge, information, or ideas. Recount is the broadest of the key uses of academic language, as it includes both fiction and informational text types. In fiction, such as oral stories or written narratives, the goal, in most instances, is to entertain while in nonfiction text, whether oral or written, the goal is to share information. Figure 1.7 compares features of fiction and nonfiction *recounts*.

RESOURCE 1.5 Language Use in Argument: Intermediate Grades



Use this checklist with examples to help you find or express the language of argument.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic of Argument: Recycling

In my argument,

I state a claim using

- Helping words (e.g., must or should) must
- Evaluative language (e.g., important or critical) crucial
- Connectives (e.g., because or so that) and

Example: I chose to state my claim using this language because I wanted my audience to know this is very important.

I provide evidence using

- Connectives (e.g., first, but also, or finally)
- Markers
 - To cite evidence (e.g., “according to” or “research says”)
 - To show agreement or disagreement (e.g., consequently or however)
- Evaluative language (e.g., important, significant, questionable, weak)

Example: I chose to provide evidence using this language because I cited research and used strong language to show the importance of recycling.

I include a conclusion using

- Connectives (e.g., therefore or so)
- Helping words (e.g., must or should)
- Evaluative language (e.g., important or critical)
- Connectives (e.g., because or so that)

RESOURCE 1.6 Accessing Multiple Modalities to Express an Argument



Scan the QR code that leads to the game “Time Zone X: International Space Station” in the BrainPOP® website. In pairs, ask students to *argue* for or against the placement of events on the timeline. “International Space Station” is a featured topic whereby students can learn more about space stations. The same topic provides a movie and other interactive activities for students to deepen their knowledge about the topic. It is suggested that students look for additional resources that pose different opinions about space exploration so that they can identify counterclaims and craft strong arguments. For some of the other BrainPOP® content area topics, students can take on different positions to create meaningful claims and evidence.



Source: BrainPOP®,
[https://www.brainpop.com/
games/timezonexinternational
spacestation](https://www.brainpop.com/games/timezonexinternational/spacestation)

FIGURE 1.7 Fictional and Nonfictional Recounts

RECOUNTS	FICTION OR NARRATIVE TEXT	NONFICTION OR INFORMATIONAL TEXT
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To entertain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share ideas, concepts, or information
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Novels Letters Stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports Research papers Biographies
Language use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich, descriptive language Comparative and contrastive language Action words Past tense Language of imagery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connectives to make text clear and coherent Use of bullets and phrases, labeled graphics, and tables Present tense Factual language

Fictional *recounts* involve telling a story, often about personal events or other life experiences (e.g., novels, personal letters, and short stories). Awareness and use of fictional *recounts*, such as narratives, typically develop in early grades, often through storytelling experiences. Nonfictional *recounts*, on the other hand, involve conveying facts or describing procedures, sharing basic information, comparing processes, or stating points of view (e.g., essays or editorials). This type of writing typically is mastered later in the school years and tends to be more difficult to produce and comprehend for many students. Knowledge of how to *recount* while being developmental in nature has been related to reading comprehension and writing achievement (Olinghouse & Graham, 2009; Shanahan, 2006). Figure 1.8 presents some features and guiding questions associated with *recounts*.

FIGURE 1.8 Language Use in Recounts

PURPOSE FOR RECOUNTS	SOME FEATURES	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION
Organizing the text (either oral or written)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connectives (e.g., first, before, then, and finally) Adverbial phrases of time and place (e.g., “two days ago” or “in 1989”) 	Are you interested in a linear or nonlinear story?
Engaging your audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling verbs (e.g., love, dislike, regret, or fear) Verbs of sense (e.g., notice, feel, smell, taste, or hear) 	What feelings do you want to evoke?
Creating a mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspective (e.g., first person or third person) Time (e.g., use of various tenses) 	How do you want the reader to connect with the characters?
Providing details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich, descriptive, and specific language (e.g., languishing or grotesque) Clauses and noun phrases (e.g., the last remaining dragon) 	What pace and cadence do you want in your story?

Students need opportunities to play with language and use it in new creative ways. Using authentic literature as models for creativity in language use can be useful for students. Therefore, providing a variety of literature choices to students is important for expanding their repertoire and academic language use. Resource 1.7 can be used as an activity for students to see the language for *recounting* in context.

RESOURCE 1.7 Creating Recounts From Original Sources



Visit https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/famoushistoricalfigures/martinlutherkingjr/activity/#=primary_source for the primary source activity from BrainPOP®'s topic on Martin Luther King Jr. Use these original newspaper articles to model and engage students in shared writing on how to create *recounts* from original sources. As an extension, have students bring an article from a local newspaper and create a *recount* of the current event using the article as an original source. Additionally, students who can express time and order graphically could construct a timeline to depict the events in recounts.

In DARE, nonfictional *recounts* include retelling and sharing information, concepts, or ideas. The organization and other language features vary depending on the particular *recount*. Figure 1.9 offers some examples.

FIGURE 1.9 Recounting to Inform in Nonfictional Text

EXAMPLE PURPOSES FOR NONFICTIONAL RECOUNTS	SOME FEATURES OF RECOUNTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR LANGUAGE CHOICES
Reporting observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First or third person • Passive or active voice • Descriptive language • Absence of slang or idioms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a formal report? • What is the language that makes it formal? • Is the goal to sound objective or subjective? • Are details important?
Creating accounts of current or historical events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present or past tense • Dates and temporal adverbs • Specific language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a current or a historical event? • Is the goal accuracy of information or emotional appeal? • Who is the audience?
Sharing knowledge or information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles and subtitles • Graphs, tables, or diagrams • Multiple paragraphs organized by topics and subtopics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much information will be shared? • How will it be organized? • What are the main ideas and important details?

Take the DARE

As you engage in conversations with students about language use, consider the following instructional activities:

- Select some *recounts* to share with your class. Identify relevant language features and the purpose for the author's choice in using them. Invite your students to do the same with other *recounts* that they select.
- Have students identify language choices in their own writing and defend those choices with their peers.
- Have students engage in shared writing experiences and think-alouds pertaining to their choice of language.
- Rewrite *recounts* using alternative language choices, and let your students discover how those language choices change the message or the tone of the pieces.

Resources 1.8 through 1.11 are checklists for evaluating language use in *recounts* for narrative and informative texts. The tools can be used by students to identify language useful in narrative text, to provide feedback to others, or to self-assess. Teachers can also use the checklists to model reviewing oral or written *recounts* or to interpret student *recounts*.



RESOURCE 1.8 Language Use in Narratives: Primary Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Story: The Big Hairy Hippopotamus

Put a check or an X in the boxes that show how you wrote your story. Then, add to the sentence starters to share some things about your story.

- I have a beginning
 - I use language to begin the story. "Once upon a time"
 - I use words to describe the people and places in my story. big, hairy
 - I use language to organize my story.
- I have a middle
 - I use language to show what characters said.
 - I use language to describe what happened.
 - I use language to help the reader.
- I have an end
 - I use the past tense to show what happened in the story.
 - I use specific language to end my story.

Notes:

RESOURCE 1.9 Language Use in Narrative Recounts: Intermediate Grades



Name: _____ Date: _____

My Narrative: _____

Use the following organizer to help you think about your language use in your written narrative. Underline the language uses you see.

Put a ✓ to show the elements you have included in each story element.

✓	STORY ELEMENT	SAMPLE LANGUAGE USES
✓	Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language that indicates the beginning of a story (e.g., “Once upon a time”) • First- or third-person language to indicate point of view • Past tense
	Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive language for characters, objects, or places • Comparative language to provide details about settings and create imagery • Variety of sentence beginnings
	Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and phrases with specific or nuanced meanings • Connective language to organize the timeline of the story • Careful use of adjectives and adverbs
	Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause-and-effect language • Emotive language
✓	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions • Conclusions (e.g., “and they all lived happily after”)

Notes:

In this story, I focused on my opening and closing and used interesting language in them.

RESOURCE 1.10 Language Use in Informational Recounts: Primary Grades



Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: Report on Cats

Put a check mark or X in the boxes that show what you wrote about.

- My writing is about cats.
- It has two main ideas.
- It has details about my ideas.
- It has examples.

Notes:

I wrote about cats, and I wrote about my cat. I drew some pictures of cats and my cat.



RESOURCE 1.11 Language Use in Informational Texts: Intermediate Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: Life in the Thirteen Colonies

Use this checklist to help you think about how you used language. Put a check mark or an X in the boxes that describe your writing.

- I organized my text using
 - Titles and subtitles
 - Pictures with captions
 - Graphs and tables
- I provided information using
 - Definitions
 - Details
 - Examples
 - Connecting words
 - To compare and contrast
 - To show cause and effect
 - To order information
 - I used specific language
 - Related to the topic
 - With precise words
 - With specialized terms

Notes:

I wrote about life in the colonies. I used language about transportation and how people traveled in colonial times. I made a graph on how far colonists could travel on foot, on horse, and in wagons.

As with all the resources in this book, feel free to adapt or modify them to meet your needs. In this case, the checklists may be too long for some students, and for others, more detail may be necessary. For ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and other language learners, it might be more productive to read the checklists aloud to them. The tools are meant to inspire you and your students to reflect on language use, so make them your own.

EXPLAIN

The key use explain can be challenging because we often use the word *explain* in everyday conversations to mean to describe or to elaborate (e.g., “Explain how you got to school,” or “Explain where you went after school”). In DARE, *explain* means the following:

1. How something mechanical or natural works (e.g., *how* an engine operates or *how* an earthquake occurs)
2. Why things happen (e.g., *why* water expands when frozen)

3. What similarities and differences between objects exist (e.g., how animal cells compare with plant cells)
4. How a problem to be solved can be approached (e.g., addition of fractions)
5. What the causes or effects of actions, processes, or events are (e.g., the effects of introducing a new species into an ecosystem)
6. What the relationship between characters, numbers, or components is (e.g., the relationship between decimals and fractions)

As with the other key uses for DARE, language choices help shape explanations. Figure 1.10 gives some examples of language features that can be used to *explain* and some purposes for their use, along with examples.

FIGURE 1.10 Language Features Associated With Explanations

FEATURES OF EXPLANATIONS	CAN BE USED TO	EXAMPLES
Complex noun groups	Build detailed descriptions	The vast land area of the Americas
Pronouns for words already introduced in the text	Support cohesion throughout oral or written text	A volcano is a rupture in the crust of the Earth. It allows hot lava, volcanic ash, and gases to escape.
Action verbs	Convey a cause	Started from and evolved into
Adverbial phrases of time and place	Tell where and when actions occurred	It is found in West Africa.
Connectives and time conjunctions	Link time in cause-and-effect sequences	So, as a consequence, therefore, and when
Passive voice and nominalization	Connect events through cause and effect	The discovery of penicillin saved many lives.
Technical terms or word chains about a subject	Provide specific information	Wolves belong to the biological family Canidae.
Labeled diagrams or visuals	Support ideas or information presented	A diagram of the water cycle

You can use Resource 1.12 with your students to help support their oral or written explanations.

Resource 1.13 on page 41 can be used with older students to reflect on the reasons for using specific types of language. Remember to model their options in their language and thinking. Also, find times for students to coconstruct explanations and to have them practice thinking about language before asking them to do this independently.



RESOURCE 1.12 Language Use in Explanations

These questions can be used to guide conversations with students about explanations. Students can eventually use the questions on their own as descriptors for self- or peer assessment of written text.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Explanation: _____

Planning an Explanation

1. What is going to be explained? Circle one.
 - a. How something works
 - b. Why something happened
 - c. How to solve a problem
 - d. How things are related to each other
2. How do you want to organize your explanation? Pick one.
 - a. As a sequence
 - b. As cause and effect
 - c. Other:
3. How might you organize your ideas with a concept map or another graphic?

I will use an if-then chart.

After you have planned your explanation, practice giving it to a friend.

REFLECT

This chapter introduces key uses of academic language—*discuss*, *argue*, *recount*, and *explain* (DARE)—as a conceptual tool to guide conversations about language with your students and colleagues. As you reflect on teaching and learning, our hope is that language is made more explicit for all of your students, with special attention to your ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and other language learners who may require access to content in multimodal ways. Additionally, we hope to guide you in continually looking for ways to enhance and maximize your students' opportunities for meaningful engagement in language use in your classroom.

In this last section, we offer one more tool, Resource 1.14, to help you focus on language use in each unit of learning. We encourage you to record key uses of academic language that you address as part of curriculum, assessment, and instruction to ensure their balanced representation throughout the year.

Consider sharing this resource with your colleagues and engaging in conversation with them about how to attend to language across grade levels and units of learning.

RESOURCE 1.13 Documenting Features of Explanations



Name: _____ Date: _____

My Explanation: _____

As you plan your explanation, think about language you would like to use, and record what is the effect you are trying to achieve.

FEATURES OF MY EXPLANATION	REASONS FOR THEIR USE	EXAMPLES
Technical or specialized terms	For precision	Common denominator Proper fractions
Sequence words	To name the steps in order	First Then Finally
Example problems	To show what I mean	$\frac{3}{4} + \frac{2}{6} =$

RESOURCE 1.14 Recording and Monitoring Language Use Throughout the School Year



Make time to identify and record your focus on language use throughout the year. Use this chart to help you and your grade-level team plan for and monitor a comprehensive and balanced coverage of the various key uses of academic language.

Teacher Team: _____ School Year: _____

KEY USE OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8
Topic/Theme	Building a House							
Discuss	X							
Argue								
Recount								
Explain	X							

Invite other classroom teachers and school leaders, as well as specialists, including music, art, and physical education teachers, to engage in the dialogue about academic language use.

TAKE ACTION

As you begin your journey to build your students' academic language use and *take the DARE*, we would like to give you some advice. The road may be bumpy and may even seem overwhelming at times, but it is definitely worthwhile. Here are some ideas for taking first steps in this journey and things to remember along the way.

1. **Language is never neutral.** Whether your students are aware of it or not, the language they use contains messages about who they are, who they think their audience is, and what they want to say. Inviting students to go behind the scenes and be intentional about their language use provides them with agency over their own messages and unveils hidden messages behind those of others. Talking with your students about language is a first step to bringing awareness to their own language use. Challenge your students to bring up language use that they notice or that they find interesting. Make sure students have time to share their perceptions with others.
2. **Using language intentionally and meaningfully is hard work.** Do not take on this task alone. Find colleagues with whom to discuss academic language use in your teaching. Collaboration around language instruction within content is crucial in sustaining your work and in building capacity for your students. Make it part of your to-do list to identify a colleague with whom to collaborate around infusing academic language into instruction.
3. **Take one step at a time.** Trying to do too much too fast might be counterproductive. Choose one key use of academic language to focus on at a time, or pay attention to language use in your class before jumping right into language instruction. Take time to feel comfortable with each key use as you *take the DARE*. Then, reflect on which approaches work for you. Keep a journal of new things you try with language and how they work. Take this advice and apply it to your students; they too need time to process and produce language unique to key uses.
4. **There is no right sequence to language learning.** Language is best learned in context. For your students, the academic content being learned is the perfect context in which to also learn language. It is the content that shapes the language of instruction. In other words, DARE does not mean that students need to learn *discuss*, then *argue*, then *recount*, and, finally, *explain*. Ideally, *discuss* happens all the time, in a variety of formats, but whether you focus on *argue*, *recount*, or *explain* depends on the content being learned and the situation in which learning occurs. To reiterate, there is not one prescriptive language sequence. As you plan for each unit of instruction, identify the key use of academic language that is the most appropriate to tackle.

RESOURCE 1.1 Factors Impacting Language Use in Academic Contexts

Use this tool to reflect and *discuss* with others the various factors impacting language use during teaching and learning.

Unit of Study: Grade Level: Timeline:					
Standards:					
Topic(s):					
ACTIVITY	MODALITIES	PURPOSE(S)— DARE	ROLE(S) OF STUDENTS	AUDIENCE(S)	OTHER

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RESOURCE 1.2 Monitoring Language Use During Group Discussions

Check the specific language strategies that each student uses to contribute to the discussion. Make sure the students are aware of the strategies and have practiced them in previous discussions.

Date: _____ Small-group discussion Class discussion

Topic: _____

NAME OF STUDENT	INTRODUCES NEW TOPIC OR INFORMATION	ASKS QUESTIONS	RESPONDS TO A QUESTION OR COMMENT POSED BY OTHERS	BUILDS ON SOMEONE'S IDEA

Notes:

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RESOURCE 1.3 Resources for Promoting Discussions

One way to get students ready to *discuss* a topic is for them to do research, read specific resources, or watch movies together. Watching a video or movie, such as those associated with each topic of BrainPOP®, provides visual support and reinforcement for all students, including students who may have learning disabilities, experienced formal interrupted education, or may be in the process of developing English as an additional language.



Source: BrainPOP®, <https://www.brainpop.com/health/nutrition/nutrition>

Scan the QR code that leads to the BrainPOP® website. “Nutrition” is a featured movie that provides basic information related to healthful eating. After watching the movie, provide students with guiding questions, such as those below, that they can *discuss* in pairs or small groups.

Remember to be explicit about how students are to participate and contribute to the *discussion*. Later, the students might try to tackle the informational text on nutritional guidelines, such as those in the opening pages of the book.

Guiding Questions for Discussion About Nutrition

- What are some things that contribute to good nutrition? Why would you choose these?
- How do you balance what is nutritious and what is delicious?
- How might you plan a nutritious meal? What would you have to eat?
- What are some changes you can do or propose to others to make good choices related to your nutrition?

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RESOURCE 1.4 Language Use in Argument: Primary Grades

Where is the language of argument? How are you using it? Put a check in the boxes to show what you did.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Opinion: _____

- I state my opinion using
 - Complete thoughts
 - Opinion phrases (e.g., I think, I like, or I want)

Example: I chose _____ because _____

- I give reasons using
 - Linking words (e.g., because, and, first, also, and so)

Example: _____

- I organize my ideas like this:

1. Opinion
2. Reason
3. Reason
4. Reason
5. Conclusion

Example: _____

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RESOURCE 1.5 Language Use in Argument: Intermediate Grades

Use this checklist with examples to help you find or express the language of argument.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic of Argument: _____

In my argument,

I state a claim using

- Helping words (e.g., must or should)
- Evaluative language (e.g., important or critical)
- Connectives (e.g., because or so that)

I chose to state my claim using this language because _____

I provide evidence using

- Connectives (e.g., first, but also, or finally)
- Markers
 - To cite evidence (e.g., “according to” or “research says”)
 - To show agreement or disagreement (e.g., consequently or however)
- Evaluative language (e.g., important, significant, questionable, or weak)

I chose to provide evidence using this language because _____

I include a conclusion using

- Connectives (e.g., therefore or so)
- Helping words (e.g., must or should)
- Evaluative language (e.g., important or critical)
- Connectives (e.g., because or so that)

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RESOURCE 1.6 Accessing Multiple Modalities to Express an Argument



Source: BrainPOP®,
[https://www.brainpop.com/
 games/timezonexinternational
 spacestation](https://www.brainpop.com/games/timezonexinternational/spacestation)

Scan the QR code that leads to the game “Time Zone X: International Space Station” in the BrainPOP® website. In pairs, ask students to *argue* for or against the placement of events on the timeline. “International Space Station” is a featured topic whereby students can learn more about space stations. The same topic provides a movie and other interactive activities for students to deepen their knowledge about the topic. It is suggested that students look for additional resources that pose different opinions about space exploration so that they can identify counterclaims and craft strong arguments. For some of the other BrainPOP® content area topics, students can take on different positions to create meaningful claims and evidence.

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RESOURCE 1.7 Creating Recounts From Original Sources

Visit https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/famoushistoricalfigures/martinlutherkingjr/activity/#=primary_source for the primary source activity from BrainPOP®’s topic on Martin Luther King Jr. Use these original newspaper articles to model and engage students in shared writing on how to create *recounts* from original sources.

As an extension, have students bring an article from a local newspaper and create a *recount* of the current event using the article as an original source. Additionally, students who can express time and order graphically could construct a timeline to depict the events in *recounts*.

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RESOURCE 1.8 Language Use in Narratives: Primary Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Story: _____

Put a check or X in the boxes that show how you wrote your story. Then, add to the sentence starters to share some things about your story.

I have a beginning.

- I use language to begin the story.

- I use interesting words to describe the people and places in my story.

- I use language to organize my story.

I have a middle.

- I use language to show what characters said.

- I use language to describe what happened.

- I use language to help the reader.

I have an end.

- I use the past tense to show what happened in the story.

- I use specific language to end my story.

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RESOURCE 1.9 Language Use in Narrative Recounts: Intermediate Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Narrative: _____

Use the following organizer to help you think about your language use in your written narrative. Underline the language uses you see in your narrative.

Put a ✓ to show the elements you have included in each story element.

✓	STORY ELEMENT	SAMPLE LANGUAGE USES
	Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language that indicates the beginning of a story (e.g., “Once upon a time”) • First- or third-person language to indicate point of view • Past tense
	Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive language for characters, objects, or places • Comparative language to provide details about settings and create imagery • Variety of sentence beginnings
	Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and phrases with specific or nuanced meanings • Connective language to organize timeline of story • Careful use of adjectives and adverbs
	Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause-and-effect language • Emotive language
	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions • Conclusions (e.g., “and they all lived happily after”)

Notes:

RESOURCE 1.10 Language Use in Informational Recounts: Primary Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Put a check mark or X in the boxes that show what you wrote about.

My writing is about _____

It has a main idea.

What is it?

It has details about my ideas.

What are the details?

It has examples.

What are your examples?

Notes:

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RESOURCE 1.11 Language Use in Informational Texts: Intermediate Grades

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Use this checklist to help you think about how you used language. Put a check mark or an X in the boxes that describe your writing.

- I organized my text using
 - Titles and subtitles
 - Pictures with captions
 - Graphs and tables

- I provided information using
 - Definitions
 - Details
 - Examples
 - Connecting words
 - To compare and contrast
 - To show cause and effect
 - To order information

- I used specific language
 - Related to the topic
 - With precise words
 - With specialized terms

Notes:

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RESOURCE 1.12 Language Use in Explanations

These questions can be used to guide conversations with students about explanations. Students can eventually use the questions on their own as descriptors for self- or peer assessment of written text.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Explanation: _____

Planning an Explanation

1. What is going to be explained? Circle one.
 - a. How something works
 - b. Why something happened
 - c. How to solve a problem
 - d. How things are related to each other

2. How do you want to organize your explanation? Pick one.
 - a. As a sequence
 - b. As cause and effect
 - c. Other:

3. How might you organize your ideas with a concept map or another graphic?

After you have planned your explanation, practice giving it to a friend.

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RESOURCE 1.13 Documenting Features of Explanations

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Explanation: _____

As you plan your explanation, think about language you would like to use, and record the effect you are trying to achieve.

FEATURES OF MY EXPLANATION	REASONS FOR THEIR USE	EXAMPLES

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RESOURCE 1.14 Recording and Monitoring Language Use Throughout the School Year

Make time to identify and record your focus on language use throughout the year. Use this chart to help you and your grade-level team plan for and monitor a comprehensive and balanced coverage of the various key uses of academic language.

Teacher Team: _____ School Year: _____

KEY USE OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	UNIT 6	UNIT 7	UNIT 8
Topic/Theme								
Discuss								
Argue								
Recount								
Explain								

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