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Common Core State Standards

Project–Based Writing, Grade 4 gives students and teachers the necessary resources and ideas needed in the process of creating project-based-writing units in the classroom. During each step of this process, students will engage in activities that meet one or more of the following Common Core State Standards. (©Copyright 2010. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All right reserved.) For more information about the Common Core State Standards, go to *http://www.corestandards.org/* or visit *http://www.teachercreated.com/standards.*

Informational Text Standards
Key Ideas and Details
ELA.RI.4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
ELA.RI.4.2. Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
ELA.RI.4.3. Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
Craft and Structure
ELA.RI.4.4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.
ELA.RI.4.5. Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/ solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
ELA.RI.4.7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
ELA.RI.4.8. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
ELA.RI.4.9. Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
ELA.RI.4.10. By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
Foundational Skills Standards
Text Types and Purposes
ELA.RF.4.3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
ELA.RF.4.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Common Core State Standards *(cont.)*

Writing Standards
Text Types and Purposes

ELA.W.4.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

ELA.W.4.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

ELA.W.4.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

ELA.W.4.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

ELA.W.4.5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

ELA.W.4.6. With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELA.W.4.7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

ELA.W.4.8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

ELA.W.4.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

ELA.W.4.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration

ELA.SL.4.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

ELA.SL.4.4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

ELA.SL.4.5. Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Injecting Action Into Verbs

Project-Based Writing Connection: By replacing dull verbs with more active ones, you can pain a clearer, fuller picture with your words.

When writing a story, it's important to make sure that each word has personality. Each word must help your reader really see the action that is unfolding in your head.

Here's an example of a sentence that does not do that:

❖ Lucy walked to the park.

Can you see *how* Lucy walked to the store? No, but if you use a more specific action verb, the sentence suddenly comes alive:

❖ Lucy ran to the park.   ❖ Lucy skipped to the park.

❖ Lucy shuffled to the park.   ❖ Lucy huffed and puffed to the park.

Directions: In the following activity, cross out each verb that seems a bit boring or ordinary. Then, rewrite the new paragraph. Inject some action-packed action verbs in the places where you have removed the ordinary ones. Make sure your new paragraph still makes sense and has a good flow to it.

Original Paragraph

Beatrice hit the ball and went toward first base. She ran fast, but the first baseman picked up the ball and stepped on the base. "You're out!" the umpire said. Beatrice slowly walked back to the bench and sat next to her teammates. Paul looked at her, angry. John touched Paul's arm and said, "Hey, it was a good try. You'll get 'em next time, Bea!"

Your New Paragraph

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Designing a Call to Action

> **Project-Based Writing Connection:** When stating your position on an issue, it is often necessary to include a solution that makes sense.

One of the most important parts of a persuasive essay is your proposed solution. You have to get your reader to want to do something as a result of learning about your issue.

A "call to action" does that. It calls a group of people together to act on solving a problem. There are many different ways to do this. Here are some methods:

❖ **Debate** — You can have each side present its case in the form of a civil argument.

❖ **Rock-Paper-Scissors** — Have two people compete in a winner-take-all format.

❖ **Compromise** — Each side can give up a little so that a middle ground is reached and everyone "wins."

❖ **Petition** — You can influence an outcome by getting a lot of people to back you up.

❖ **Vote** — You can take a vote, and the majority opinion wins.

Directions: Decide on which method you would like to ask your reader/audience to use in order to solve the problem. Tell why you chose that method.

Statement of Opinion	Call to Action
1. Kids should be able to sit with their friends in class.	Method: _____ Why?: _____ _____
2. There should be a dog park built in the neighborhood.	Method: _____ Why?: _____ _____
3. We need to save our public libraries!	Method: _____ Why?: _____ _____

Show, Don't Tell

You've probably heard the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Well, sometimes it is true that an image can do more to convince a reader than only words would do. Sometimes telling isn't enough. Showing your reader what you are saying is the best way to make it clear. Graphs provide a great way to do just that.

You can begin by creating a question to ask of classmates, neighbors, family members, etc. Once you collect the results, a graph can show your findings in a picture that is easily understood in a glance.

Now what kind of graph should you use? Well, there are many different formats for graphing, but two of the most common are the bar graph and the pie chart.

Bar Graphs

A *bar graph* uses rectangular bars to show the values of the things they represent. Bar graphs are great for showing the difference between values.

Directions: Look at the data given for a project called "The Sticking Point with Gum in School." Use the results to fill in the bars on the graph below. The first bar has been done for you.

Students Polled: 33

Question: "What do you do with gum when you're done chewing?"

Results (in number of students):

"I don't chew gum." = **6**   "I swallow it." = **9**

"I throw it in the trash." = **15**   "I spit it on the ground." = **3**

Show, Don't Tell *(cont.)*

A *pie chart* is in the shape of a circle that is divided into sections. Pie charts are great for showing big differences when your data has a wide range.

Directions: Look at the data given for a project called "The Trouble with TV."
Use the results to label the sections of the pie chart below.

Students Polled: 80

Question: "How much television do you watch each week?"

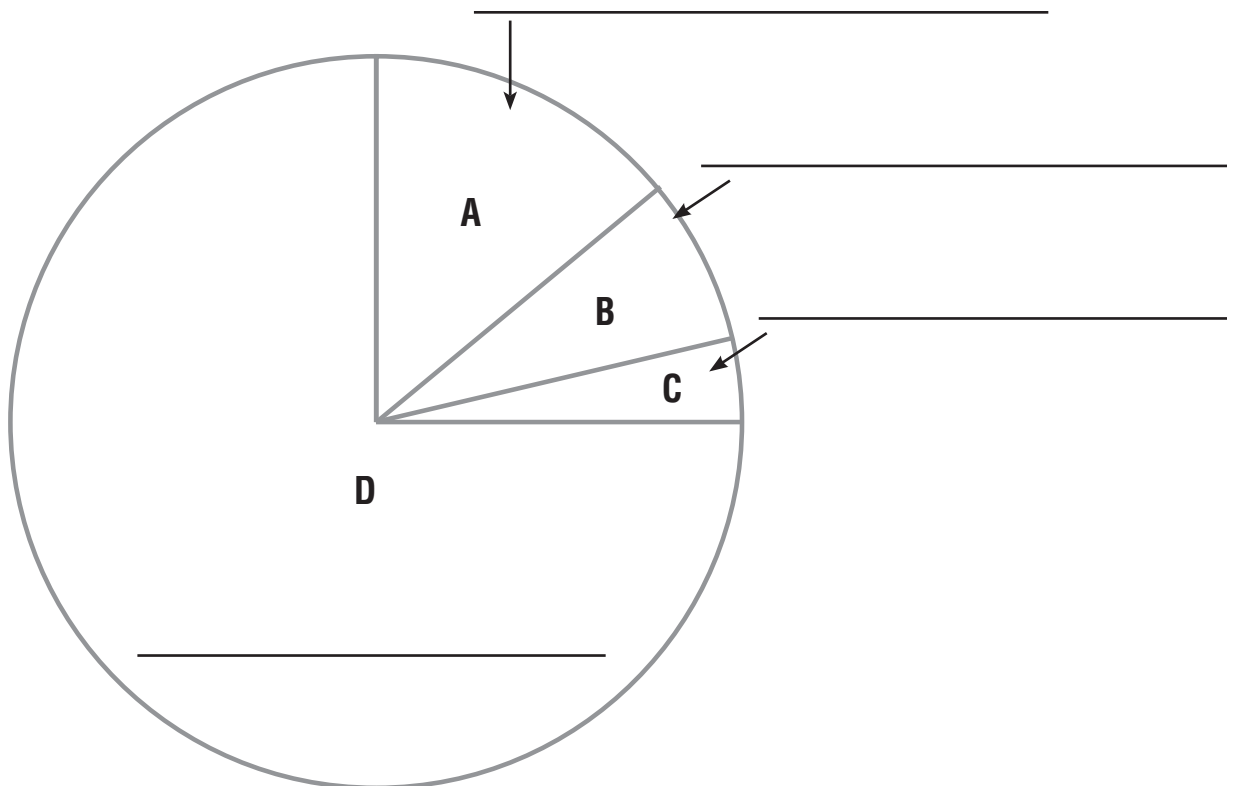**Results** (in number of students):

10 hours or more = **60**   1–4 hours = **6**

5–9 hours = **12**   I don't watch TV. = **2**

Directions: Create your own poll and convert your results into a bar graph or pie chart.
Try using a spreadsheet program (for example, Excel) to create a quick 3-D graph. Add the results into a newspaper article or some other part of your final project.

All About Maps

Maps are all around us. You can find a map of a country, a state, a town — even your school. A map is a great way to give a reader a visual glimpse of an area.

Think about your classroom. From your perspective sitting at a desk, it may be hard to get a full picture of the entire classroom. But a map, drawn from the perspective of a bird looking down, can do just that. Such a map might look something like this:
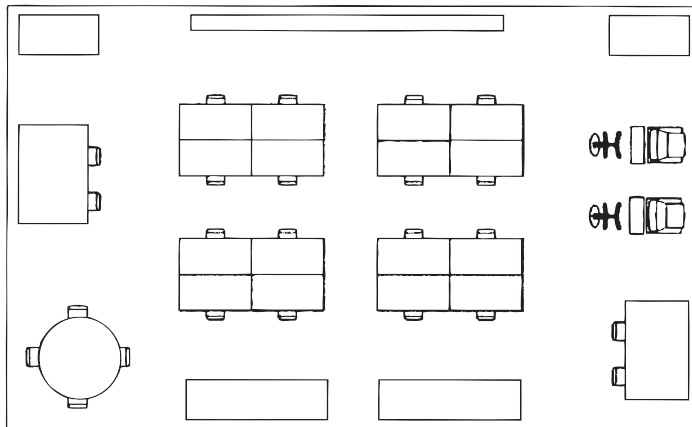
Directions: In the space below, map your classroom. Draw it from a bird's-eye view, just as in the example above.

Now that you have mapped something relatively small, it's time to take that same idea and use it to map something much larger. Continue on to the activity on page 89.