



Text Dependent Analysis – Instructional Prompt Guide

Grade 6 Annotated Student Responses Based on the Text Dependent Analysis Learning Progressions

The Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) grade-span Learning Progressions (LPs) are designed to be used as an instructional tool. The TDA LPs are structured in grade spans (3-5 and 6-8) with four levels, *Beginning*, *Emerging*, *Developing*, and *Meeting*. The levels describe the typical path we see in student responses as the student moves toward demonstrating more sophisticated understanding of analysis. The LPs include descriptions of student work which characterize each level from a beginning TDA writer to one who is meeting the expectations of text dependent analysis essay writing. The TDA LPs can be used by teachers to identify student strengths and needs based on what a student **can** do at a specific point in time. This informs the teacher’s instructional decision-making about moving student comprehension, analysis and writing to the next level.

How to Use this Guide

The Text Dependent Analysis Instructional Prompt Guide contains the following sections: text complexity, instructional text-dependent analysis prompt, example proficient student response as written by the teacher, grade-level text, annotated student work, and possible instructional next steps.

- Text complexity includes the quantitative and qualitative measures of the text and the identified reading elements/structure for analysis. This information guides the teacher when choosing appropriate texts for instruction.
- The instructional prompt uses the reading elements as identified in the previous section.



- The example proficient student response, as written by the teacher, reflects the teacher’s expectation for a sixth grade student’s proficient response to the instructional prompt. This critical step allows the teacher to uncover if the text offers enough evidence and complexity for students to use when responding to the prompt, the appropriateness of the prompt in relation to the text, and to verify the use of the identified reading elements (grade-level curriculum).
- The annotated student responses use the learning progression levels (*beginning, emerging, developing, and meeting*) to identify the student’s strengths and areas of need regarding the underlying components of text dependent analysis (reading comprehension, analysis, and essay writing).
- The last section following each response provides the teacher with possible instructional next steps to meet the student’s areas of need.

Text Complexity	
Text	<i>The Cormorant in My Bathtub</i> by Brooke Rodgers
Complexity (Lexile and Qualitative analysis)	Lexile level: 840 (Grade 6; 955-1155) Qualitative level: Moderately complex Note: Although the Lexile score is below grade 6, the subject matter (taking care of birds covered with oil from an oil spill), including the references in the passage related to the death of the birds and the Garden of Eden adds to the complexity.
Reading Elements/Structure for analysis	Characterization and Plot ¹
Instructional Text Dependent Analysis Prompt	
Authors often present events and situations as a way to shape characters. Write an essay analyzing how the main character of <i>The Cormorant in My Bathtub</i> changes in response to the events in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.	
Example Pro ficient Student Response as Written by the Teacher	
<p>The main character of “The Cormorant in My Bathtub” experiences a major change from the beginning of the story to the end. The main character came to live with his grandparents at their beach house. He finds comfort in the beach and the ocean and spends most of his time alone on the beach. A storm occurs that causes an oil tanker to wreck and spill its oil, killing many birds. The main character tries to save as many birds as he can, but only saves the cormorant. The main character saving the cormorant is what allows him to experience this change.</p> <p>At the beginning of the story, the main character’s move to his grandparent’s beach house leaves him lonely and alone. Although he loves the ocean, he spends most of his time on the beach watching the birds. The main character seems jealous of the birds. He states, “How I envied those birds...They did not know fear or sadness...” The main character’s feeling of sadness and loneliness are also revealed later in the passage when the main character states, “I was always dreaming that I would become a cormorant and fly away over the ocean.” He wants to become a bird to escape his life.</p>	



He is alone and doesn't want friendships; he finds his comfort in the beach and the birds. The reader can infer that since the main character is in a new setting, the beach, he is uncomfortable and does not know what to expect. When someone is feeling this way, he/she tends to keep to himself until he can find comfort in his surroundings. This explains why this event of moving has caused the character to keep to himself rather than seeking friendships.

When the oil spill event occurs the main character is heartbroken at all of the destruction and death. The birds that he loves are dying and he is helpless. The main character states, "I watched helplessly as the birds surrendered to the clinging grease that clogged their nostrils and held fast their beaks." He later states, "My whole body shook with grief." He tries to save as many birds as he can but the only one that survives is the cormorant, which he keeps in his bathtub. He spends hours washing the bird clean of all the oil and feeds it sardines and tuna fish daily. This is allowing the reader to understand that the main character is trying to move beyond his own loneliness and to make a connection to another creature by attempting to save the cormorant. Often times when people build up the courage to make the first attempt at a friendship serves as a way to make more connections. This tragic event has caused the main character to attempt to save the cormorant as his first step towards building connections, which in this case is with the bird.

The cormorant in the main character's tub leads curious neighborhood kids to visit the house to see the bird. The main character's grandmother encourages the kids to stay for tea, which leads to new friendships. The main character is "surprised at how much fun we had" and now "looked forward to the opening of school." He is excited about his new friends and his new classes. Through the event of his grandmother inviting others to visit, the reader realizes the main character no longer wants to be alone and has become optimistic about his new home and friends. Once one or two friendships are made the possibility of future friendships becomes much easier.

Finally, the main character states, "I felt needed and wanted, the black bird in my bathtub needed me, and my friends wanted me to play third base and share adventures with them." The main character is feeling torn between staying with the cormorant who needed him and wanting to be with his new friends. One day after school he returns home to find the cormorant gone with only a black feather left. The main character is grateful to the cormorant for "all the bird had given" him. The reader can see that the event of having the cormorant in the bathtub served as a link, allowing the main character to feel "at home." Usually when children feel comfortable at their home they become more excited about life and they are able to connect with others.

The change in the main character is evident from beginning to end. At the beginning of the story, he wants to be alone and only finds comfort in the beach and birds. After his experience with the oil spill and saving the cormorant, the main character has now gained friends and is hopeful about his new home and life. He now feels he has a purpose in life. Brooke Rogers demonstrates to the reader that this major event with the cormorant was the turning point for the main character allowing him to finally feel at home.



Text: *The Cormorant in My Bathtub* by Brooke Rodgers (modified for sensitivity)

When I was about eight, I went to live with my grandparents at the beach. I had never seen the ocean before, and to this day the memory is vivid. We pulled into the driveway at dusk, and I could see behind the house an exciting expanse of untouched water. I shivered. I could feel the blood beginning to pump through my veins. I felt warm and tingly. The colors of the horizon and the dying sun were a shimmer of pinks and purples. The sun, arrayed in its most beautiful gown, was ready to die valiantly. I was sure even the Garden of Eden could not have been more beautiful.

From that moment on I was madly in love with the ocean. I lay in the sand for hours watching the cormorants circling over the lapping waves. How I envied those birds, their graceful black bodies circling and diving into the brilliant waters. They did not know fear or sadness; they knew only life, sun, and the ocean. They would plummet into the sea at tremendous speeds, and not once did they miss their prey. There were no failures. Each one always emerged with a silver minnow speared on its beak.

Every day from sunup to sundown I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends; I was always alone. I dreaded the first day of school. I was always dreaming that I would become a cormorant and fly away over the ocean, never to be seen again.

It was a Wednesday night when the tanker sank. The rain was falling in solid sheets, the wind blowing at nearly fifty knots! All the power lines were out; even the glow of the lighthouse was not strong enough to pierce the storm. The captain of the tanker lost his course and ran aground on Lookout Point. The side of the tanker split on the rocks, spilling hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil into the raging sea.

The next day the ocean was calm, but the waves that lapped against the beach were tainted. Riding on the waves were the black remains of the oil tanker's cargo. I watched in horror as helpless sea birds struggled to stay afloat, flapping their wings in frenzied splashes as they tried desperately to free themselves from the clinging oil. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I dashed into the ocean and gathered up as many birds as I could capture. I returned to the house and filled the bathtub with clean, fresh water. Then I pried open as many beaks as I could. I watched helplessly as the birds surrendered to the clinging grease that clogged their nostrils and held fast their beaks. My whole body shook with grief. I lifted their limp bodies and tenderly set them on a towel.

One bird remained in the tub, a black bird who would not give up. He lay quietly in the tub, but his eyes were alert, and he was wide awake. He was a cormorant. To take my mind off the others, I picked him up and began to rub his back with tissue and detergent. It took hours, but the bird seemed to sense that I was trying to help. He lay still and allowed me to wipe every last drop of oil off his glossy back. When I placed him back in the tub he drank deeply, enjoying the strange, sweet taste of fresh water for the first time.



When my grandma found me she did not scold me for making a mess of her guest bathroom. She simply asked if I would like some help burying the dead birds. Without asking, I knew she would let the cormorant stay in her bathtub. The bird was clearly exhausted. He lay motionless with his head tucked under his wing. As we buried the six birds, I wondered what would happen to the seventh.

For a week my grandparents forbade me to visit the beach. I knew that the oil was still thick and that the white sand would never be quite as pure. We had numerous wildlife representatives visit our beach and collect water samples and gather up dead fish and birds. They would often stop and look in on my bird, but they never tried to take him away. I fed him sardines and tuna fish. He ate greedily and slowly became stronger. Sadly, I realized that my new friend would need to leave me.

A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird. Grandma encouraged them to stay for tea, and I was surprised at how much fun we had. The more time I spent with the neighborhood kids, the more I looked forward to the opening of school. The water was regaining its purity and soon it would be safe to let my bird go. He would once again be searching the sea for a school of minnows instead of splashing about in our bathtub. Still, I did not like to think about losing him.

Two weeks after the storm, school started. I was excited by new classes and new friends. I was spending very little time on the beach. Instead, I had been playing baseball in the lot behind our house. I felt needed and wanted; the black bird in my bathtub needed me, and my friends wanted me to play third base and share adventures with them.

On the third day of school I returned home to find the bird gone. The door was shut tight, but the window was open and the curtain was blowing in the breeze. On the floor below the window a long black feather rested. I picked it up and stroked the smooth edge as I thought of all the bird had given me.

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Student responses are analyzed and annotated for possible instructional next steps based on the Text Dependent Analysis Learning Progressions.

Example A	TDA Learning Progression Annotations
<p style="text-align: center;">Student Response</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Comprehension: Meeting</p>
<p>In "The Formosa in My Backyard" by Brooke Rogers, the narrator must help the ocean birds after an oil spill changes all their lives. The main character changes in response to the events in the passage. The events are moving to the beach, the oil spill, and taking care of the birds.</p> <p>One event that the narrator changes to in response to the event is moving to the beach. In the text it states, "I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends." The event of moving to the beach has an effect on the character. He loves the beach. He responds by going to the beach at all times. This changes him because before he moved he could have been very social now he stays at the beach and does not try to make friends.</p> <p>A second event is the oil spill. In the text it states "spilling hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil into the raging sea." and "helpless sea birds struggled to stay afloat, and I dashed into the sea and gathered up as many birds as I could capture." In the event of the oil spill the narrator reacts by getting birds and helping them. He changes</p>	<p>An understanding of the prompt is demonstrated throughout the response by identifying specific events that the character encountered and how the events impacted this character.</p> <p>Relevant key details as evidence about the events are included in the thesis statement and are developed throughout the essay (<i>I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends.</i>). The key details support the inferences made about the character's situation and demonstrate an understanding of the text.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Analysis: Developing</p> <p>The use of direct quotes as text evidence is included and generally supports the inferences about the character's state of mind and how the events changed him (Evidence... <i>I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends.</i> Inference... <i>The event of moving to the beach has an effect on the character. He loves the beach. He responds by going to the beach at all times.</i>).</p>



<p>From a timid kid to dashing out to sea to rescue the birds, because of the oil spill.</p> <p>The last event is taking care of the bird.</p> <p>In the text the author states, "One bird remained in the tub, a black bird that would not give up," and "A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird ... I was surprised at how much fun we had."</p> <p>This shows that the main character responded by taking good care of the bird. This event helped him change from timid and shy to making new friends.</p> <p>"In conclusion the main character takes care of the bird and the bird eventually flies away. The main character of "The Cormorant in My Backyard" by Bronte Rogers changes in response to the events of, moving to the beach, the oil spill, and taking care of the bird.</p>	<p>Inferences about the events and the impact on the character's state of mind are included for each event.</p> <p>An explanation to connect the evidence and inferences of the reading elements, events and character change, is included. An elaboration is provided in the first body paragraph (Explanation and Elaboration... <i>This changes him because before he moved he could have been very social now he stays at the beach and does not try to make friends.</i>). However, the second body paragraph provides a weak explanation after the inference (<i>In the event of the oil spill the narrator reacts by getting birds and helping them. He changes from a timid kid to dashing out to sea to rescue the birds because of the oil spill.</i>). The character's action is described, but it is unclear how the character changed as a result of the event. This weak attempt at explaining the interrelationship between the events and character occurs in the final body paragraph.</p> <p>Essay Writing: Developing</p>
	<p>The organization is coherent and contains multiple paragraphs which focus on the specific events and how they are connected to the character's state of mind.</p>



Basic transitions are used from paragraph to paragraph (*One event, A second event, The last event*).

Simple and compound sentences are used and often have similar beginnings (*In the text it states*).

The grammar and spelling are appropriate.

Possible Instructional Next Steps:

The focus for instruction should help students move along the Learning Progression continuum. This student demonstrates that s/he is meeting the underlying expectation for reading comprehension. The instructional focus for this student should be to strengthen the ability to analyze text, and more specifically, to provide a clear explanation and elaboration². Additionally, the student demonstrates a basic writing structure and style for grade six. The following suggestions will help the student move along the continuum.

1. **Selecting strong evidence** will allow for a clear connection between the two elements/ structure identified in the prompt. Students know that they need text evidence; however, they often select superficial or unrelated evidence. Explain to students that text evidence is proof that their claim is accurate. Provide students with a quote from the text (e.g., *I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends.*) and ask them the following questions:
 - a. What does the evidence tell you about the event (reading element – plot)?
 - b. What does it tell you about the character’s state of mind (reading element – character)?
 - c. Is this the best evidence for what you want to explain?

It is also helpful to teach students to paraphrase when the specific quotes are scattered in the passage and when used independently they do not fully explain a situation. Explain to students that paraphrasing is translating information into your own words. For example, in this passage it would have been more accurate for the student to paraphrase the situation of the oil spill and provide a quote as evidence about its impact on the character’s state of mind.

2. **Instructing for explanation and elaboration** requires moving students beyond the “this shows that” or in this case, the “This changed him because” statement. Often students provide a statement that helps connect the evidence and the reading elements. They may lack one or two additional statements that explain the meaning of their evidence. The use of a thinking organizer that specifically asks, *So what?*, will help students draw a conclusion that leads to a generalization. For example:



Explicit Evidence about the Event	Inference	Explain the Inference by Drawing a Conclusion (What does it mean about the character changing?)	SO WHAT? (Elaboration and generalization)
<p><i>“I watched helplessly as the birds surrendered to the clinging grease that clogged their nostrils and held fast their beaks.”</i> <i>“My whole body shook with grief.”</i></p>	<p><i>The character felt helpless and sad.</i></p>	<p><i>The character is changing from wanting to be alone to helping someone – in this case a bird.</i></p>	<p>The main character attempts to save the cormorant as his first step towards building relationships with others.</p> <p>Sometimes in life helping others serves as the first step towards building friendships.</p>

3. Teaching varied sentence structures and sophisticated transitions will create an essay that has greater fluency and engage the reader. There are several strategies that can be taught and practiced such as adding appositives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and transitions within a paragraph. “Teachers should model how to use sentence construction skills during drafting and revising. During the revision process, students should be encouraged to revise their original sentences for clarity and meaning. Revising helps students apply their skills in authentic settings, as opposed to editing language on a generic worksheet. As students revise their drafts, they can use their newly learned sentence construction skills to improve their compositions. Older students can also review or edit one another’s work” ([Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers](#), 2012, p. 32).



Example B	TDA Learning Progression Annotations
<p style="text-align: center;">Student Response</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Comprehension: Meeting</p>
<p>In "The Cormorant in My Bath tub" an 8 year old girl is changing from being closed off and alone to being happy and has friends. An event takes place that changes how she is.</p> <p>As the story begins the narrator takes us back to a time of transition. She tells us how she was antisocial and isolated. The narrator says "She felt alone and emotionless. "I never tried to make friends; I was always alone." The narrator had closed herself off to the world because of her loss.</p> <p>Then an event took place that changes her to being happy and social. The birds she cared so dearly about were dying because of a storm that caused oil to spill in the ocean. "Tears streamed down my cheeks as I dashed into the ocean and gathered up as many birds as I could capture. "Those birds had made her</p>	<p>An understanding of the prompt is demonstrated throughout the response by identifying the character's state of mind and how the events impacted the character.</p> <p>Relevant key details as evidence about the character's state of mind are included and developed throughout the essay. The key details support the inferences made about the character's situation and demonstrate an understanding of the text.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Analysis: Developing</p> <p>The paraphrasing and direct quotes as text evidence are included and support the inferences about the character's state of mind and how the events changed the character (Evidence... <i>Tears streamed down my cheeks as I dashed into the ocean and gathered up as many birds as I could capture.</i> Inference... <i>Those birds had made her feel something. That incident with the birds somehow changed how the narrator was as a person).</i></p>



<p>Feel something. "Sadly, I realized that my new friends would need to leave me. . . . A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird. . . . The more time I spent with the neighborhood kids, the more I looked forward to the opening of school. "That incident with the birds somehow change how the narrator was as a person."</p> <p>As the story comes to an end the happiness of the narrator is only a beginning. "I felt needed and wanted for the first time since she moved to the beach." She was happy again and she made new friends. This shows how she changed and is now on the bright side of things.</p> <p>Seeing that the narrator has taken that event as a good thing that's happened, she is happy. Although she may never see the cormorant again, she has a peice of it in her heart and history that changed her completely.</p>	<p>Strong inferences about the impact of events on the character's change in her state of mind are included for each event (<i>The narrator has closed herself off to the world because of her loss</i>).</p> <p>An explanation and elaboration to connect the evidence and inferences of the reading elements, events and character change, are lacking beyond the first body paragraph. Specifically, the first paragraph includes evidence about the character's state of mind due to her loss, an inference of how the character is behaving in an antisocial and isolated manner, and an explanation of how she had closed herself off to the world. The remaining body paragraphs include evidence, strong inferences, and weak explanations about the character (<i>Those birds made her feel something. That incident with the birds somehow change how the narrator was as a person.</i>)</p>
	<p>Essay Writing: Meeting</p> <p>The organization is coherent and contains multiple paragraphs which focus on the character's state of mind and how the events impacted the character.</p> <p>Uses sophisticated word choice throughout the paper along with a variety of sentence structures and transitions.</p> <p>The grammar and spelling are appropriate.</p>



Possible Instructional Next Steps:

The focus for instruction should help students move along the Learning Progression continuum. This student demonstrates that s/he is meeting in the underlying expectations of reading comprehension and essay writing. Therefore, the instructional focus for this student should be moving the student from developing to meeting in the ability to analyze text². The following suggestions will help the student move along the continuum.

1. **Instructing for explanation and elaboration** requires moving students beyond the “this shows that” or in this case, the “This changed him because” statement. Often students provide a statement that helps connect the evidence and the reading elements. They may lack one or two additional statements that explain the meaning of their evidence. The use of a graphic organizer that specifically asks, *So what?*, will help students draw a conclusion that leads to a generalization. For example:

Explicit Evidence about the Event	Inference	Explain the Inference by Drawing a Conclusion (What does it mean about the character changing?)	SO WHAT? (Elaboration and generalization)
<p><i>“I felt needed and wanted for the first time.”</i></p>	<p><i>Those birds made her feel something. That incident with the birds somehow change how the narrator was as a person.</i></p>	<p><i>She was happy again and she was ready to make new friends.</i></p>	<p><i>This shows she changed and is now on the bright side of things.</i></p> <p>Often times in life helping others leads to helping yourself.</p>

Instructing students how to make a generalization helps them to extend a conclusion about the text and the reading elements. Generalizations help students to elaborate on what the author is trying to say to all people or to determine a universal statement about the world. Generalizations are statements that are based on specific instances in the text, but apply broadly (to most everyone in the world). Generalizations should not be stereotypes or clichés, such as, *When life gives you lemons, make lemonade*. Teaching generalizations about texts begins with drawing a conclusion and determining what does this mean more broadly. Including a generalization deepens the analysis.



Example C	TDA Learning Progression Annotations
Student Response	Reading Comprehension: Emerging
<p>In the story "Cormorant in My Bathtub" is about a child who loves the beach nothing more nothing less. This child changes throughout the course by the following pieces of evidence.</p> <p>In paragraph 3 it says, "Every day from sun up to sun down I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends; I was always alone. I was always dreaming that I would become a cormorant and fly away over the ocean, never to be seen again." This means this child wants very little in life, just to fly away and be free.</p> <p>In paragraph 9 it says, "A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird. Grandma encouraged them to stay for tea, and I was surprised at how much fun we had. The more time I spent with the neighborhood kids, the more I looked forward to the opening of school. This means our character has become a friend to some not none."</p> <p>In the last paragraph it says, "On the third day of school I returned home to find the bird gone. The door was shut tight, but the window was open and the curtain was blowing in the breeze."</p>	<p>The student acknowledges that the character changes throughout the passage.</p> <p>This student moves beyond a summary; however, the details and inferences include misconceptions about the character's state of mind. (<i>This means this child wants very little in life, just to fly away and be free.</i>) Additionally the student misses the pertinent events that would allow for analyzing how the events change the character.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Analysis: Emerging</p> <p>The quotes included as text evidence are relevant in demonstrating the character's state of mind. The student makes inferences about the quote provided; however, they are not fully accurate as stated above. The event from the passage (oil spill) is not identified and, therefore, its connection to the character and how the character changes is not analyzed.</p>
	Essay Writing: Developing
	<p>A basic organizational structure is used in which the introduction identifies the text and acknowledges the prompt. Each paragraph focuses on specific text evidence that supports the</p>



On the floor below the window a long black feather rested. I picked it up and stroked the smooth edge as I thought of all the bird had given me. "What the bird gave the child was friendship with other children that they weren't friends with because the child had no friends at all.

In conclusion our character has grown. They have grown from wanting no friends to having great friends over the course of the story.

expectations of the prompt. The majority of the writing consists of quotes from the text; however, the remaining sentences are somewhat varied.

The grammar and spelling are appropriate.

Possible Instructional Next Steps:

The focus for instruction should help students move along the Learning Progression continuum. This student demonstrates that s/he is developing in the underlying expectation for essay writing. However, the student demonstrates that s/he is emerging in the underlying expectations for reading comprehension and analysis. Therefore, the instructional focus for this student should be moving the student from emerging to developing in their ability to demonstrate reading comprehension and to analyzing text¹. The following suggestions will help the student move along the continuum.

- 1. Comprehending the entire text** requires teaching students specific strategies to help them make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful readers who actively engage with the text while noting their understandings and misunderstandings. One way that students can engage with the text is by purposefully annotating the text. David Stuart, Jr. (2019) stated that the big idea of purposeful annotation means alignment with “*why* we’re doing the reading in the first place and *what* we’re going to do with the reading *after* we’re done” (<https://davestuartjr.com/purposeful-annotation-close-reading/>). The teacher should model annotating a text and explain that skillful readers identify what they don’t understand and point out major facts or ideas they want to remember. These annotations should move beyond a coding system (e.g., exclamation mark, question mark) but rather include specific thoughts or questions about the text. This process of annotating will help students keep track of ideas/questions and support deeper understanding. Annotating allows readers to refer to the text during class discussion or collaborative group discussions without rereading the entire text.
- 2. Teaching students to briefly summarize the text in the introductory paragraph** of a TDA essay can be a useful strategy to help students focus on analysis. Although a summary is not required for a TDA response, this strategy may help students to move beyond a summary of the entire text to the actual analysis of the text required by the prompt. The table below provides a brief examination of the difference between a summary and an analysis.



	Summary	Analysis
Definition	A brief paragraph that captures all the most important characteristics of the original text but expresses them in a shorter space and as much as possible in the reader's own words.	A close reading of text to examine the characteristics to look for their meaning and relationship to one another supported with explicit evidence and inferences.
Characteristics	Who What When Where Why How	Relationships or patterns Roles of people, places, objects, situations Consequences or results of events or decisions Causes and their effects Significance of people, events, or places Impact of people, events, or places

3. Making inferences about the evidence and ensuring an understanding of how the event impacts the character requires teaching the student to select specific evidence rather than rewriting several sentences from the text. Although the student has provided evidence which are relevant in demonstrating an event that impacts the character's state of mind, the inferences made are superficial (e.g., *This means our character has become a friend to some not none*). Provide students with a thinking organizer to select specific evidence, explain the event, and make an inference of how the event impacted the character's state of mind. The teacher then models for students how to take the organizer information to construct a clear explanation of what the text means relative to the reading elements.

Explicit Evidence	Explain the Event	Inference
<i>A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird.</i> <i>The more time I spent with the neighborhood kids, the more I looked forward to the opening of school.</i>	Curious neighborhood kids visit the house to see the bird and the grandmother invites them to stay for tea.	The main character no longer wants to be alone and has become optimistic about his new home and friends.

4. Instructing for explanation and elaboration requires moving students beyond an inference. The use of a thinking organizer that specifically asks, *So what?*, will help students draw a conclusion that leads to a generalization. Teaching students that sentence starters for analyzing text (*This means...*, *This shows...*) helps students to show the interrelationship between the two elements and may deepen the explanation and elaboration. For example:



Explicit Evidence about the Event	Inference	Explain the Inference by Drawing a Conclusion (What does it mean about the character changing?)	SO WHAT? (Elaboration and generalization)
<p><i>“A few kids in my neighborhood stopped by to see the bird. Grandma encouraged them to stay for tea, and I was surprised by how much fun we had.”</i></p>	<p><i>This means our character has become a friend to some not none.</i></p>	<p>This means that the event of the oil spill and its effect on the birds shows that the main character’s attempts to save the cormorant is his first step towards building connections with others.</p>	<p>The character had cared for the cormorant and was now ready to care about new friends.</p> <p>Sometimes in life helping others forms friendships and helps take away sadness and loneliness.</p>



Example D	TDA Learning Progression Annotations
Student Response	Reading Comprehension: Meeting
<p>In the story, "The Cormorant in My Bathhtub" by Brooke Rogers, the main character loved the beach and didn't seek friends. After saving a cormorant from a terrible oil spill, she found friends and played baseball instead of visiting the beach. The character also changed according to the events in the passage, and evidence shows how.</p> <p>At the beginning of the story, the main character loved the beach and everything about it- the birds, the ocean, all of it. She didn't want company, however. We know this information because in the third paragraph, the author says, "Every day from sunup to sundown I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends; I was always alone." This means the main character liked being alone at the beach, just watching the birds fly and hunt. This</p>	<p>An understanding of the prompt is demonstrated throughout the response by identifying the event (oil spill) and its impact on the character's state of mind.</p> <p>A brief summary is provided in the introduction. Relevant key details as evidence are included and explained throughout the essay. The key details support the inferences made about the character's situation and demonstrate an understanding of the text.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Analysis: Developing</p> <p>The use of direct quotes as text evidence is included and supports the inferences about the character's state of mind (Evidence... <i>Every day from sunup to sundown I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends; I was always alone.</i> Inference... <i>The main character liked being alone at the beach just watching the birds fly and hunt. This shows that the main character enjoys solitude and doesn't want friends at the beginning of the passage.</i>).</p> <p>An explanation and elaboration is lacking. There is little or no connection and some inaccuracies between the</p>



shows that the main character enjoys solitude and doesn't want friends at the beginning of the passage.

In the middle of the passage, the character is torn apart by the oil spill. It hurts her to see her precious birds dying.

She says, "Tears streamed down my cheeks as I dashed into the ocean and gathered up as many birds as I could capture." This event specifically highlights the girl's special love for the birds, and shows how much she wants to help them. This adds to the idea that the main character doesn't want friends. She has her birds, and she's happy.

However, towards the end, the girl begins to make friends. This is because "For a week my grandparents forbade me to visit the beach." Because she couldn't go to the beach, "a few kids stopped by to see the bird. Grandma encouraged them to stay for tea, and I was surprised at how much fun we had." This shows the event that induced the character's making of friends. This is her turning point. This proves that at the end of the

evidence and inferences of the character's state of mind. For example, the first paragraph includes evidence and an inference about how the character is feeling at the beginning of the passage while at the beach but misses the event of **why** the character is feeling this way (having to move to the beach with the grandparents). Without this interrelationship between the two reading elements (events and character's state of mind), the explanation and elaboration is unclear.

story, the character strays from the beach to make friends.

In conclusion, the main character changes in response to the events in the passage. As shown, the character transitions from birds to buddies.

Essay Writing: Meeting

The organization is coherent and contains multiple paragraphs which focus on specific text evidence that supports the expectations of the prompt.

Word choice is appropriate throughout the paper along with a variety of sentence structures. Transitions are simplistic both at



the beginning of paragraphs (*At the beginning..., In the middle...*) and within paragraphs (*This means... This shows...*).

The grammar and spelling are appropriate.

Possible Instructional Next Steps:

The focus for instruction should help students move along the Learning Progression continuum. This student demonstrates that s/he is meeting in the underlying expectations for reading comprehension and essay writing, and developing for analysis. Therefore, the instructional focus for this student should be moving the student from developing to meeting in analysis¹. The following suggestions will help the student move along the continuum.

- 1. Instructing for explanation and elaboration** requires moving students beyond an inference. Often students provide a statement that helps connect the evidence and the reading elements being analyzed but lack one or two additional statements that explain the meaning of what they stated. The use of a thinking organizer that specifically asks, *So what?*, will help students draw a conclusion that leads to a generalization. For example:

Explicit Evidence about the Event	Inference	Explain the Inference by Drawing a Conclusion (What does it mean about the character changing?)	SO WHAT? (Elaboration and generalization)
<p><i>“Every day from sunup to sundown I haunted the beach. I never tried to make new friends; I was always alone.”</i></p>	<p><i>The main character liked being alone at the beach just watching the birds fly and hunt.</i></p>	<p><i>This shows that the main character enjoys solitude and doesn’t want friends at the beginning of the passage.</i></p>	<p>The character was sad and wanted to be alone because she had to move to the beach with her grandparents.</p> <p>Sometimes events in life cause us to need solitude in order to reflect on our personal situation.</p>

Instructing students how to make a generalization helps them to extend a conclusion about the text and the reading elements. Generalizations help students to elaborate on what the author is trying to say to all people or to determine a universal statement about the world.



Generalizations are statements that are based on specific instances in the text but apply broadly (to most everyone in the world). Generalizations should not be stereotypes or a cliché, such as, When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Teaching generalizations about texts begins with drawing a conclusion and determining what does this mean more broadly. Including a generalization deepens the analysis.

2. Instructing students on the use of skillful transitions, both at the beginning and within the paragraph, will create writing that is smooth and fluent. This writing instruction can begin with generating a list of transitions, clarifying their use (transition words to help move the reader from one thought to another, from one idea to another), and explaining the purpose of different types of transitions. Examples of transition words can include:

Examples of Possible Transition Words/Phrases (not grade level specific)					
Adding information	Giving examples/clarifying	Showing a contrast	Showing a comparison/similarity	Showing a time sequence	Showing a cause/effect
Giving more information	Stating an example	How something is different	How something is the same	Time order that something occurs	Results of some action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and • not only... • but • also • moreover • furthermore • in addition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for example • for instance • specifically • in particular • the first example is • the second example is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • but • however • on the other hand • otherwise • instead • in contrast • although 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likewise • similarly • in the same way • just as • as • too • again • thus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first • second • finally • in conclusion • in summary • meanwhile • to sum up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • so • as a result • therefore • thus • as a consequence • consequently

The teacher can provide students with a paragraph that has underlined basic transitions. Students work together to replace these transitions with more sophisticated words. Students share their selections and explain why the new sophisticated transitions improve the flow of the paragraph.

¹ See TDA Series: Close Reading lesson for instructing students in comprehending and analyzing the text, *The Cormorant in My Bathtub*.

² See TDA Series: Replacement Unit for instructing grade 6 students on understanding the reading elements of events and character change.