



Write to the Source Assessments

Write to the Source tasks and rubrics require students to use *The New Jim Crow* as a source for authentic writing about racial caste and mass incarceration in the United States. The tasks provide prompts for the three types of writing addressed by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: argumentative, explanatory and narrative. Each prompt challenges students to relate their writing to the essential questions and to reading they have done in previous lessons.

- How does the U.S. criminal justice system create and maintain racial hierarchy through mass incarceration?
- How does the current system of mass incarceration in the United States mirror earlier systems of racialized social control?
- What is needed to end mass incarceration and permanently eliminate the racial caste system in the United States?

Argument Writing Prompt #1: Are You Convinced?

Argument Writing Prompt #2: Problem Solver

Explanatory Writing Prompt #1: So What?

Explanatory Writing Prompt #2: What's the Impact?

Narrative Prompt #1: In Their Shoes

Narrative Prompt #2: The Pages of My Life



Write to the Source Prompts

ARGUMENT WRITING PROMPT #1

Are You Convinced?

CCSS: W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.1, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.9

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, write a(n) _____ [INSERT WRITING PRODUCT] _____ that discusses how Michelle Alexander addresses the question and evaluates the strength or usefulness of her claims. Defend your position with evidence from the text. Develop your argument by including relevant personal experience, anticipating counterclaims or competing views, and giving examples from history or current events.

Writing products

article	position paper
essay	letter to the editor
literary review	expert testimony
report	

ARGUMENT WRITING PROMPT #2

Problem Solver

CCSS: W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.1, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.9

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, write a(n) _____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____ that responds to the question by identifying the problem raised by Michelle Alexander and proposes a solution. Defend your solution with evidence from the text. Develop your argument by including relevant personal experience, anticipating counterclaims or competing views, and giving examples from history or current events.

Writing products

proposal	report
essay	constituent letter
speech	expert testimony

EXPLANATORY WRITING PROMPT #1

So What?

CCSS: W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.2, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.9

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, write a(n) _____ [INSERT WRITING PRODUCT] _____ that describes the problem of mass incarceration and explains its significance within the historical context of race in America. Clarify your explanation with evidence from the text and discuss implications for contemporary society.

Writing products

essay
report
memo
lecture

EXPLANATORY WRITING PROMPT #2

What's the Impact?

CCSS: W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.2, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.9

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, explore this question in a(n) _____ [INSERT WRITING PRODUCT] _____. Look at the causes of mass incarceration and explain its impact on African American communities and other communities of color in the United States. Support your explanation with evidence from the text and discuss any relevant examples from your own personal experience or community.

Writing products

article
report
essay

NARRATIVE PROMPT #1

In Their Shoes

CCSS: W.9-10.3, W.9-10.4, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.4

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, address the question by writing a _____ [INSERT WRITING PRODUCT] _____ that tells about a relevant experience from the point of view of _____ [INSERT STUDENT CHOICE B] _____. Write your narrative in first person, and use appropriate details and literary devices to develop the plot, setting and characters. Experiment with techniques such as dialogue, plot twist, allusion, motif, flashback or foreshadowing.

Writing products

short play
short story
short memoir
dramatic monologue

Student choice B

- a person who has been convicted of felony possession and is awaiting sentencing
- a person who was released from prison one year ago after serving a 10-year sentence on drug charges
- a 13-year-old whose father is currently incarcerated with 10 more years left in his sentence
- a judge
- an enslaved person who travels from 1814 to 2014
- a sharecropper living in Alabama during Jim Crow who travels from 1914 to 2014
- a prison reform activist in 2014

NARRATIVE PROMPT #2

The Pages of My Life

CCSS: W.9-10.3, W.9-10.4, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.4

_____ [INSERT ESSENTIAL QUESTION] _____? After reading excerpts from *The New Jim Crow*, address the question by writing a(n) _____ [INSERT WRITING PRODUCT] _____ about an experience or event in your own life or community that relates to themes in the book. Write in first person, using narrative techniques to develop experiences, events or characters and to sequence events and establish a specific tone.

Writing products

autobiographical sketch
one-act play
short memoir
dramatic monologue
diary entry

Argument Writing Rubric

CRITERIA	ATTEMPTING 1	PROGRESSING 2	ACCOMPLISHING 3	EXCEEDING 4
Focus	Writing is not focused on addressing the essential question or meeting the task demands.	Writing is somewhat focused on addressing the essential question and meeting some of the task demands.	Writing is focused on addressing the essential question and meeting the task demands.	Writing is strongly and consistently focused on addressing the essential question and meeting all task demands.
Controlling Idea	Writing puts forth no claim in response to the essential question or puts forth a claim that is unclear.	Writing puts forth a weak claim in response to the essential question.	Writing puts forth a credible claim that responds to the essential question.	Writing puts forth a substantive and credible claim that thoroughly responds to the essential question.
Textual Evidence	Writing does not attempt to use evidence from the central text to support the claim or references evidence that is inaccurate or irrelevant.	Writing supports the claim with evidence from the central text that is inconsistently accurate or relevant to the essential question.	Writing supports the claim with evidence from the central text that is accurate and relevant to the essential question.	Writing supports the claim with evidence from the central text that is well chosen, accurate and relevant to the essential question.
Development	Writing does not attempt to develop the claim or develops claims with arguments that are weak or irrelevant to the task demands.	Writing develops the claim with arguments that may be somewhat weak or unclear and meet only some of the task demands.	Writing develops the claim with persuasive and reasonable arguments that meet the task demands.	Writing skillfully develops the claim with compelling arguments that meet all the task demands.
Organization	Writing is not organized and neither structures the reasoning behind the claim nor meets the task demands.	Writing is organized but does not clearly structure the reasoning behind the claim or only partially meets the task demands.	Writing is organized and structures the reasoning behind the claim and meets the task demands.	Writing is organized, structures robust and elegant reasoning behind the claim and meets the task demands.
Word Choice	Writing may include some academic language and words from the text, but usage is either incorrect or inappropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.	Writing includes academic language or words from the text, but usage is inconsistently correct or appropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.	Writing correctly includes academic language and words from the text in a manner that is appropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.	Writing correctly includes academic language and words from the text in a manner that is precise, interesting and appropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.
Conventions	Writing reflects an attempt to use standard English conventions but includes consistent errors and language that is inappropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing reflects a progressing command of standard English conventions but includes some errors and language that is inconsistently appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing reflects standard English conventions with few errors and language that is appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing reflects a strong command of standard English conventions with no errors and language that is consistently appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.



Argument Writer's Checklist

CRITERIA	✓	STUDENT CHECKLIST
Focus		Does my writing focus on answering the essential question and meeting the task demands?
Controlling Idea		Did I respond to the prompt with a claim that I defended throughout my response?
Textual Evidence		Did I support my position with accurate evidence from the text?
Development		Did I support my position with convincing arguments and appropriate examples?
Organization		Did I organize my writing to demonstrate the logic behind my arguments?
Word Choice		Did I use words correctly—including the vocabulary I learned in the text—to argue my position?
Conventions		Did I check my writing for grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors?

Explanatory Writing Rubric

CRITERIA	ATTEMPTING 1	PROGRESSING 2	ACCOMPLISHING 3	EXCEEDING 4
Focus	Writing is not sufficiently focused on addressing the essential question and fails to meet most of the task demands.	Writing is somewhat focused on addressing the essential question and meets some of the task demands.	Writing is focused on addressing the essential question and meets the task demands.	Writing is strongly and consistently focused on addressing the essential question and meets all task demands.
Controlling Idea	Writing attempts to explain a controlling idea but it does not address or clarify the essential question.	Writing explains a controlling idea that generally addresses but does not clarify the essential question.	Writing explains a controlling idea that addresses and clarifies the essential question.	Writing explains a strong controlling idea that thoroughly addresses and clarifies the essential question.
Textual Evidence	Writing attempts to support the controlling idea with inaccurate or irrelevant references to the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with inconsistently accurate or relevant evidence from the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with accurate and relevant evidence from the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with well-chosen, accurate and relevant evidence from the central text.
Development	Writing attempts to explain the controlling idea but details are insufficient or not relevant in meeting the task demands.	Writing explains the controlling idea using inconsistently sufficient or relevant details to meeting the task demands.	Writing explains the controlling idea using relevant and sufficient details that meet the task demands.	Writing skillfully explains the controlling idea by using meaningful details throughout the response that meet all task demands.
Organization	Writing is organized in a way that does not explain the controlling idea or meet the task demands.	Writing is organized but may not clearly explain the controlling idea or meet all of the task demands.	Writing is organized with a structure that clarifies and explains the controlling idea and meets the task demands.	Writing is organized with a purposeful structure that clarifies and thoroughly explains the controlling idea and meets the task demands.
Word Choice	Writing uses no academic language (including words from the text) or uses it incorrectly or in a way that does not communicate appropriate tone and purpose.	Writing uses academic language (including words from the text) but sometimes uses it incorrectly or in a way that is not appropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.	Writing uses academic language (including words from the text) correctly and communicates appropriate tone and purpose for the task.	Writing incorporates academic language (including words from the text) in a precise and interesting way to communicate appropriate tone and purpose for the task.
Conventions	Writing has consistent errors and uses language that is inappropriate for the audience and purpose.	Writing has some errors and uses language that is not consistently appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few errors and uses appropriate language for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few to no errors and consistently uses language appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.



Explanatory Writer's Checklist

CRITERIA	✓	STUDENT CHECKLIST
Focus		Did I focus my writing on exploring the essential question and meeting the task demands?
Controlling Idea		Did I respond to the prompt with a central idea that I clearly explain?
Textual Evidence		Did I use evidence from the text to help explain my ideas?
Development		Did I support my ideas with interesting and relevant details?
Organization		Did I organize my writing to clearly communicate and explain my ideas to the reader?
Word Choice		Did I use words correctly—including the vocabulary I learned in the text—to engage my reader and explain my ideas?
Conventions		Did I check my writing for grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors?

Narrative Writing Rubric

CRITERIA	ATTEMPTING 1	PROGRESSING 2	ACCOMPLISHING 3	EXCEEDING 4
Focus	Writing is not sufficiently focused on addressing the essential question and fails to meet most of the task demands.	Writing is somewhat focused on addressing the essential question and meets some of the task demands.	Writing is focused on addressing the essential question and meets the task demands.	Writing is strongly and consistently focused on addressing the essential question and meets all task demands.
Controlling Idea	Writing attempts to convey a real or imaginary experience but does not coherently address the essential question in the narrative.	Writing conveys a real or imaginary experience that somewhat addresses the essential question in parts of the narrative.	Writing conveys a real or imaginary experience that addresses the essential question throughout a narrative.	Writing conveys a compelling experience, real or imaginary, that creatively addresses the essential question throughout an engaging narrative.
Textual Evidence	Writing attempts to use aspects of the central text but does so incoherently or in ways that do not relate to the task requirements.	Writing uses some aspects of the central text in the narrative but does so in ways that are inconsistent with the task requirements.	Writing strengthens the narrative by incorporating aspects of the central text as required by the task.	Writing strengthens the narrative by skillfully incorporating rich aspects of the central text as required by the task.
Development	Writing attempts to use details, literary device or technique but does not develop the narrative or meet the task demands.	Writing develops the narrative with some details and use of literary device or technique but only partially meets task demands.	Writing develops the narrative with sufficient details and use of literary device and technique that meet the task demands.	Writing develops the narrative with rich details and skillful use of literary device and technique that meet all the task demands.
Organization	Writing is not structured as a narrative and/or does not convey a story or theme as required by the task.	Writing follows a narrative structure but may not convey a coherent story or theme as required by the task.	Writing has a narrative structure that conveys a story or theme as required by the task.	Writing has an engaging narrative structure that skillfully conveys a story or theme as required by the task.
Word Choice	Writing uses no academic language (including words from the text) or uses it incorrectly or in a way that does not communicate appropriate tone and purpose.	Writing uses academic language (including words from the text) but sometimes uses it incorrectly or in a way that is not appropriate for the tone and purpose of the task.	Writing uses academic language (including words from the text) correctly and communicates appropriate tone and purpose for the task.	Writing incorporates academic language (including words from the text) in a precise and interesting way to communicate appropriate tone and purpose for the task.
Conventions	Writing has consistent errors and uses language that is inappropriate for the audience and purpose.	Writing has some errors and uses language that is not consistently appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few errors and uses appropriate language for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few to no errors and consistently uses language appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.



Narrative Writer's Checklist

CRITERIA	✓	STUDENT CHECKLIST
Focus		Did I produce a narrative that focuses on the essential question and meets the task demands?
Controlling Idea		Did I respond to the prompt by telling the story of a real or imaginary experience?
Textual Evidence		Did I make my story stronger by connecting it to the text?
Development		Did I make my story more interesting with details, literary devices and techniques?
Organization		Did I organize my writing to convey a storyline or describe an experience to the reader?
Word Choice		Did I use words correctly—including the vocabulary I learned in the text—to engage my reader and tell my story?
Conventions		Did I check my writing for grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling errors?