

Creating Writing Assignments Worth Doing

Materials:

- Excerpt from *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*
- “An Athlete of God”
- “Identifying Questions Worth Answering: ‘An Athlete of God’”
- Writing prompts
- “CCR Anchor Standards”

Directions:

1. Get your copies of *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution* and “An Athlete of God,” as well as your copy of “Identifying Questions Worth Answering: ‘An Athlete of God’” for this activity.
2. At your table, look at the writing prompt samples for *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*.
3. Together with a partner determine which prompt is aligned to the CCR standards and which prompt is not and come to an understanding about why. Some major criteria for determining the alignment of a writing assignment to CCR standards include:
 - Requiring students to gather, organize, and present evidence from what they read.
 - Expecting students to return to the text.
 - Giving the writer an opportunity to explore what he has learned from the text.
 - Forcing an exploration of the most essential ideas from the text.
 - Being reasonable given the time and energy students can allot to the task.
4. Share with your group.
5. Now, turn to “An Athlete of God” and work with a partner to create a CCR-aligned prompt for the text. In preparing to make a good writing prompt, follow these steps:
 - a. Reread the text itself and the high-quality text-dependent questions you evaluated that accompanied the text during the last activity.
 - b. Use the essential understanding or central idea you identified to get you started. (A great prompt should get the students to their own grasp of that essential understanding.)
 - c. Discuss possible prompts with your partner.
 - d. Agree on and write out a prompt.
 - e. If time allows, examine the “CCR Anchor Standards” to see what specific standards you would want to have students work on in fulfilling this prompt.

Writing Prompts

With a partner, decide which one of these pairs of writing prompts is fully aligned to the “CCR Anchor Standards.”

Sample Prompts for *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*:

Prompt 1:

The Constitution of the United States is one of the best-known documents about the rights of humans ever written. Yet it was written by men who themselves denied others (their own wives, mothers and daughters, people of color, people who rented rather than owned their homes) the same rights they were protecting in the Constitution. Write an essay where you explore the irony of this fact. You can draw on the writing we studied, other parts of the Constitution, or other sources to write this essay.

Prompt 2:

Consider the claims made about the purpose of the Constitution and the source of its legitimacy traced in Linda R. Monk’s excerpt from *The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*. How does Thurgood Marshall’s presence on the Supreme Court illustrate the evolution of the Constitution? Use evidence from the excerpt to develop your answer.