Preventing the 3rd and 4th Grade Slump!
Information Text and the Common Core

Presented By: Maryellen Rooney Moreau, M.Ed. CCC-SLP

Disclosures

Maryellen Rooney Moreau, M.Ed. CCC-SLP,
President & Founder, MindWing Concepts, Inc., Springfield, MA

Financial: Maryellen has ownership interest in MindWing Concepts, holds intellectual property rights and patents. Maryellen is employed as president of MindWing Concepts. In that capacity, she designed Story Grammar Marker® and Braidy the StoryBraid® along with many other books and materials. She consults, trains and presents on these topics.

Nonfinancial: No relevant nonfinancial relationships exist.

• The full presentation is available on my website.
• ASHA allowed for a 3 page handout – I wanted participants to have full access to the research and intervention ideas contained in this presentation.
• Go to this link for the presentation:
  – http://mindwingconcepts.com/presentations.htm
What is the meaning of “slump”?

slump (slŭmp
Verbs: slumped, slumping, slumps
1. To fall or sink heavily; collapse: She slumped, exhausted, onto the sofa.
2. To droop, as in sitting or standing; slouch.
3. a. To decline suddenly; fall off: Business slumped after the holidays.
   b. To perform poorly or inadequately: The team has been slumping for a month.
4. a. To sink or settle, as into mud or slush.
   b. To slide down or spread out thickly, as mud or fresh concrete.

What is THIS “slump”?  
In 1983, Harvard psychologist, writer, and literacy researcher Jean Chall (1921-1999) coined the term the fourth grade slump, for students who fall behind in reading due to “a shift from learning to read in grades 1-3 and reading to learn in grades 4-8.”

This shift occurred because of a “change in academic language required to read grade level content texts”.


Dale/Chall Readability Formula (1948)

Where does the “slump” happen?

Chall’s Reading Stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 0</td>
<td>Pre-Readers</td>
<td>Pre-K, K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1-2</td>
<td>Learning to Read</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3-5</td>
<td>Reading to Learn</td>
<td>4-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1987 Jean Chall’s presentation to address the staff at the Curtis Blake Center and Day School of American International College in Springfield, MA
How does the “slump” happen?
Between Chall’s stages 2 and 3 is the “slump” occurring at grade 4 and becoming progressively worse as the school experience requires:
1. Fluent decoding
2. Advanced vocabulary
3. More sophisticated World Knowledge
4. Advanced critical thinking skills, broadening across subjects.

Chall found that vocabulary was the first area to be compromised in grade 4, followed by an increasing inability to use context for comprehension purposes because of vocabulary, and complex language structures: the advancing sentence structures and the density of text to be read by grade 7 and beyond.

Sound familiar???

Who is affected by the “slump”?
Students in both general and special education settings who are:
• Living in poverty
• Language learning disabled
• Learning English as a second language
• Along the Autism Spectrum
• Low comprehenders
• Poor at expressing what they comprehend

Enter the Common Core...
There are MANY SHIFTS noted with the advent of the CCSS:
1. Expanded focus on Expository (information) text
2. Teachers of history, science and technology literacies must think about the 10 components of the Writing Strand within their academic discipline.
3. Collaboration among professionals is a necessity. Process not content only is a focus.
4. Grades 6-12 use similar terms in the CCSS but complexity from grade to grade is the difference.
5. All elements of the Writing Standards are contained within the Speaking and Listening Standards. Speaking about and discussing narrative, expository and opinion/argument is necessary.
CCSS are Broken Down into categories...

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading Literature
- Reading Foundational Skills
- Reading Information Text
- Writing
- Language

...and these categories are interrelated.

The Role of Speaking & Listening in K-5 Literacy, according to CCSS, are at the “Core of the Core”

“If literacy levels are to improve, the aims of the English language arts classroom, especially in the earliest grades, must include oral language in a purposeful, systematic way. In part because it helps students master the printed word.”

“Oral language development precedes and is the foundation for written language development. Oral language is primary and written language builds on it.”


Emphasis is on meaningful passages and questions with a focus on the “shifts” evident in the CCSS:

- **Complexity**: The emphasis will be on complex texts and the academic language they contain.
- **Evidence**: The citation of evidence from the text in reading and writing to back up answers to literary and informational questions.
- **Knowledge**: The building of knowledge through content rich non-fiction from kindergarten to grade twelve.
Sampling of Fourth Grade Standards

- RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- 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.
- W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- W.4.2(a): Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g. headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.
- W.4.2(b): Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, group, teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.4.1(a): come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- SL.4.1(b): Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- L.4.4(a): Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- RF.4.3(a): Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g. roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.

It’s All About Complexity

Students must be able to comprehend, tell and retell stories, and develop progressively complex expository text structures.

- Expository text was not well represented in the early elementary curricula: as little as 3.6 minutes a day! (Duke, 2000)
- Narrative (stories) and expository (nonfiction/information) text are 50%/50% in grades K-5.
- By middle school, expository text will be 70% of the curriculum.
Examples of Complexity of Text

Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. It changed the way we spread information.

The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized the dissemination of information.

The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, a goldsmith and businessman from the mining town of Mainz in southern Germany, revolutionized the dissemination of information.

Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press with replaceable/movable wooden or metal letters in 1436. This method of printing catapulted a revolution in the production of books, and also fostered rapid development in the sciences, arts, and religion through the transmission of texts.

About.com Inventors.

Johannes Gutenberg made a leap forward by revolutionizing the dissemination of information through completing the enormous task of inventing the printing press which increased production of books and allowed rapid development in the sciences, arts and religion through the transmission of texts.

Teachers are being asked to look at texts for vocabulary, sentence length, cohesion and text length and complexity.
"The strongest action a teacher can take is to ensure that students have academic background knowledge to understand the content they will encounter by providing them with direct instruction in these terms."

SYNTAX and MORPHOLOGY
From Simple to Complex Sentences

Quote from the Issue Editor Foreword of the current issue of Topics in Language Disorders, written by S. Melanie Schule:

Language development textbooks are only beginning to devote a substantial amount of space to complex syntax production. Yet, the ability of a child with language impairment to gain proficiency in using a variety of complex syntax structures may be critical to academic success- from engaging in higher level verbal discourse in kindergarten to writing an analysis of the Civil War in high school.”

DISCOURSE
Spoken and Written Communication

Carol Westby (1985)

The Oral-Literate Continuum
CONVERSATION  NARRATION  EXPOSITION

The “Here and Now”..............................The “There and Then”
Speaking and Listening Standards K-6
Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas #4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Knowledge and Ideas</th>
<th>Specific Expectations and Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.</td>
<td>1. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell a story or report on an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.</td>
<td>2. Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.</td>
<td>3. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details, maintaining logical coherence by connecting ideas or themes, coherently concluding or tying together developments, details, and ideas, and providing a clear closing presentation.</td>
<td>5. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details, maintaining logical coherence by connecting ideas or themes, coherently concluding or tying together developments, details, and ideas, and providing a clear closing presentation.</td>
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Please note: If a child cannot take perspective in the narrative, then he/she will have difficulty using evidence to argue a point or present an opinion.

Close Reading: A Expectation for Students

Close reading is an instructional routine in which students critically examine a text, especially through repeated readings.

Close reading invites students to examine the deep structures of a piece of text, or, as Adler and Van Doren (1940/1972) described it, to “x-ray the book…for the skeleton hidden between the covers”.

- These deep structures include:
  - the way text is organized,
  - the precision of its vocabulary to advance concepts,
  - its key details, arguments and inferential meanings.


Teachers are being asked to look at texts for vocabulary, sentence length, cohesion and text length.

**SLPs are particularly well positioned to collaborate with teachers because of their background in sentence complexity, cohesive ties, text types and complexity.**
Charlotte’s Web is a CCSS Grade 3 Read Aloud Exemplar Text

“Begin with a good definition. Then, if you need to know the basics about a topic, go to the encyclopedia or a children’s book at the library. Those two sources will give you a starting point; giving you the background you need to think about before you write.”

- Grattan H. Rooney, Correspondent, Springfield, MA Newspapers

In 2012, Charlotte’s Web topped Scholastic’s Parent and Child magazine’s list of 100 Greatest Books for Kids. It is a narrative (story) chapter book with many elements of expository (information) text within it. Charlotte’s full name is Charlotte A. Cavatica, as she introduces herself on page 37 of the book. This sparked curiosity and I wondered how much information about spiders and pigs did E.B. White know?

I found out that the scientific term for “barn spider” is araneus cavaticus. The genus is araneus and the species is cavaticus. Also, E.B. White lived on a farm in Maine. How did he think up the story for Charlotte's Web?

“I had been watching a big grey spider at her work and was impressed by how clever she was at weaving. Gradually I worked the spider into the story that you know, a story of friendship and salvation on a farm.”

- Scholastic
Facts about Charlotte’s Web

- Originally published in 1952 by Harper Collins
- Interest level: Grades 3-6
- Reading Level: Grade 4
- Lexile Level: 680L
- DRA Level: 40

Writing Standards Grade 4 – Text Types and Purposes
E.B. White does a wonderful job at demonstrating the following standards in his writing of Charlotte’s Web, preparing children for the demands of 4th grade reading and writing.

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

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3a Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3b Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3c Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3d Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
Narrative Development Correlated to the CCSS for Reading, Key Idea and Detail #3 Using Chapter 1 of Charlotte's Web

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Development</th>
<th>CCSS Kindergarten</th>
<th>CCSS Grade 1</th>
<th>CCSS Grade 2</th>
<th>CCSS Grade 3</th>
<th>CCSS Grade 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Descriptive Sequence</td>
<td>RL.K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.</td>
<td>RL.1.3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.</td>
<td>RL.2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.</td>
<td>RL.3.3. Describe characters in a story (traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.</td>
<td>RL.4.3. Describe in depth a character, setting or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (character's thoughts, words, actions).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern, her parents, the Piglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the kitchen at home and outside the hog house, Fern is arguing with her parents about killing a runty piglet</td>
<td>Exploration of the setting using questions and pictures in important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern, an eight year old, strong willed, caring girl, her parents, a thin, sickly Piglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern shrieks at her mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern struggles with her father to get the ax away from him</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS Grade 3</td>
<td>RL.3.3. Describe characters in a story (traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative Development</td>
<td>Stage 2: Action Sequence</td>
<td>CCSS Grade 3</td>
<td>CCSS Grade 4</td>
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<td>Fern, an eight year old, strong willed, caring girl, her parents, a thin, sickly Piglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the kitchen at home and outside the hog house, Fern talks to her mother about the new litter of piglets</td>
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<tr>
<td>All of a sudden, Fern notices her father has an ax and means to kill the runty piglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern is outraged and worried about the piglet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fern KNOWS that the runt of litter is not valuable on a farm, she REALIZES that her father needs to kill the runt, she REMEMBERS that her father has empathy, she THINKS it is a case of injustice to kill a runty piglet just because it is born too small</td>
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<tr>
<td>She intends to prevent her father from killing the piglet and to convince him to let it live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>So, Fern shrieks at her mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finally, she argues with her father to get the ax</td>
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<td>As a result, Charlotte shrieks at her mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finally, she argues with her father to convince him to let the runty piglet live</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fern was relieved that she had saved the piglet, thrilled to be able to care for him, and triumphant that she had overcome an injustice.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fern, an eight year old, strong willed, caring girl, her parents, a thin, sickly Piglet

In the kitchen at home and outside the hog house, Fern talks to her mother about the new litter of piglets

All of a sudden, Fern notices her father has an ax and means to kill the runty piglet!

Fern is outraged and worried about the piglet.

So, Fern shrieks at her mother and struggles with her father to get the ax and convinces him to let the runty piglet live.

As a result, Charlotte shrieks at her mother.

Then, she struggles with her father to get the ax and convinces him to let the runty piglet live.

As a result, Charlotte's father lets her feed and care for the runty piglet as if it were a baby and she names it Wilbur.

Fern was relieved that she had saved the piglet, thrilled to be able to care for him, and triumphant that she had overcome an injustice.
**Craft and Structure**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.6 Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

The following slides contain ThemeMaker® Maps for thinking about information (expository text), comprehension and writing.
How the Narrative and Expository Guided Questions* Relate To The CCSS

("These Questions were used in research study at the beginning of this presentation and this new format is taken from a "Center" activity in the new book: The "Core" of the Core)

CCSS Kindergarten - RL.K.3.
With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

Descriptive
Narrative Expository

CCSS Grade 1 - RL.1.3.
Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Sequence
Narrative Expository
CCSS Grade 2 - RL.2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

**Reaction – Cause/Effect**

**Narrative**

**Expository**

---

CCSS Grade 3 - RL.3.3. Describe characters in a story (traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

**Abbreviated – Cause/Effect**

**Narrative**

**Expository**

---

CCSS Grade 4 - RL.4.3. Describe in depth a character, setting or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (character's thoughts, words, actions).

**Complete Episode/Problem Solution**

**Narrative**

**Expository**
Text Types and Purposes Standards:

Kindergarten: Draw/Dictate/Write topic or book name and state an opinion or preference about it; My favorite book is ___________________.

Grade 1: Write introduction to topic/book and state an opinion, supply a reason and closure.  

Grade 2: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about supply reasons to support opinion using “linking words” such as (because/also) to connect opinion/reasons. Provide concluding statement/section.

Grade 3: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons:  
• Introduce topic or text, state an opinion, create an organizational structure that lists reasons. (List Expository Text Structure)  
• Provide reasons that support the opinion  
• Use linking words and phrases such as because/therefore/in order to/for example to connect opinion and reasons.  
• Provide concluding statement or section.

ELA CCSS for Writing

Grade 4: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information  
• Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. (Multiple Expository Text Structures)  
• Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.  
• Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases such as for instance/in order to/in addition.  
• Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Grade 5: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information  
• Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose. (Elements of Argument)  
• Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.  
• Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases and clauses such as consequently/specifically  
• Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Grade 6: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence  
• Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly  
• Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.  
• Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons  
• Establish and maintain a formal style  
• Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

If we are able to teach children how to take perspective, how to express a narrative, how to organize information in text structures, this builds the foundation for writing opinion.  

By doing this, we may avoid the SLUMP and make it possible for children in 6th grade to write Arguments which prepares them for increasing demands in high school, college and the workplace.
What is argument?

argument (noun) \ˈär-gə-mənt\  
- a statement or series of statements for or against something  
- a discussion in which people express different opinions about something  
- an angry disagreement

The purpose of argument:  
- To change the readers' point of view through logic  
- To bring about some action on the part of the reader  
- To convince the reader to accept the explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue or problem

"They're so much cooler that way" is Calvin's opinion. As a six-year-old, his version of a "debate" or "argument" is really an opinion.

Let's start from the beginning:  
From the Character Map to Argument - The Process!  
- In life, all humans have likes and dislikes. (See our SGM® Character Map). These give rise to opinions. Think about Vanilla/Chocolate, McDonald's/Burger King, Buying/Renting, or Democrat/Republican! Everybody has an opinion about something.  
- Opinions are thoughts we have about things, people’s behavior, ideas or situations that we like or dislike and agree or disagree with in our lives.
Opinions (as in The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown) may be stated. “The important thing about a daisy is that it is white.” Other things about daisies are listed here, as descriptive elements, but the author has chosen one to be the “important thing” (IHO).

Opinions may be backed by listing reasons: I like daisies. Daisies are yellow in the middle. Yellow makes me feel happy.

Opinions, supported by listed reasons, are written using more advanced syntax incorporating cohesive ties: I like daisies because daisies are yellow in the middle and that makes me feel joyful.

To argue or debate effectively, one must have his/her own point of view but recognize the claim of the opposition.

• One party formulates a thesis statement (Claim).
• Antithesis is the opposite point of view (Counter-claim).

History of Argument

The Art of Rhetoric by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

• Roots of Argument Genre are in rhetoric or speaking.
• Debate teams, Presidential Debates and News Pundit Opinions are all forms of rhetoric.
• The focus of the CCSS is WRITING arguments.

• However, writing has its roots in oral/spoken language. Thus rhetoric is a discourse genre to improve writers’ and speakers’ ability to inform, persuade and motivate others.
• Ethos- Pathos - Logos

Aristotle coined three words relating to Rhetoric:

• PATHOS - using emotion as a connection with an audience.
  
  Empathy is a word derived from Pathos.

• ETHOS - uses character or group of characters (Harvard/MIT/Centers for Disease Control/Jane Goodall as a reliable source).

  Ethics is a word derived from Ethos.

• LOGOS - uses logic (reasons, facts, evidence) such as statistics to logically prove something to another to convince.

  Logical is a word derived from Logos.

The emphasis of the CCSS is on Logos. After sequencing facts/reasons, one may bring in emotion and character references to bolster the argument or to persuade.
Let us not forget about the importance of Perspective-Taking for opinions and arguments!

Another person (or people) may have an opinion that is different from your opinion. This is their “point of view” or perspective. Perspective-taking is the ability to see a point of view in addition to one’s own.

Look at the photo to the right…
- What do you see?
- What is the point of view of the couple?
- What might another perspective reveal?
Children’s Literature for Perspective-Taking

Narrative Selection

Expository Selection

Children’s Books:


(Note: Knuffle Bunny Series and Elephant and Piggie books by Willems are recommended for perspective taking focusing on mental states involving emotion and thinking.)

References:

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