

Understanding Language

Task

The Understanding Language ELA working group is looking for districts willing to review and provide feedback on selected lessons from a middle school unit on persuasion.

Who

- Districts familiar with Common Core standards and the needs of English Learners.
- Each District will select up to five middle school ELA teachers and/or curriculum specialists to read introductory materials, skim the unit, and focus in depth on a single lesson. They will complete a questionnaire about the overall structure and purposes of the unit and write specific comments on the assigned lesson from the unit.

Materials to Review

Teachers will be provided:

- Unit overview
- Five lessons
- Annotations for teachers including information on tasks for one lesson in the unit. Individual teachers will be assigned a different lesson to focus on.

Time required

It is expected that the time needed to review the unit and write comments about the assigned lesson will be approximately 8 hours.

What reviewers will do

- Participate in a Webinar on June 15 that will introduce the unit and review requirements to reviewers.
- Read introductory materials, skim the unit, and review one lesson carefully.
- Complete a questionnaire about the overall structure and purposes of the unit.

- ✦ Write specific comments on one assigned lesson from the unit.

Questions are yet to be finalized but will likely include the following.

- Does the overview provide a clear rationale for why the unit was developed and the sequence of the lessons?
- Do the materials clearly identify what makes this unit aligned with the CCSS and appropriate for English Learners?
- Do the materials clearly describe the activities in which students will engage and show how they develop language?
- Do the materials cohere with the ELA working group guidelines for materials development? (These guidelines have been developed by the ELA work group)
- Do the instructional activities appropriately challenge and support different populations of ELLs? (i.e., to what extent can you see different types of students engaging in these units with support?)

Approximate Timeline

- ✦ May 19 – Introduction to the Understanding Language ELA unit for English Learners
- ✦ June 11 – Unit will be mailed to each interested district for distribution to reviewers
- ✦ June 15 – Understanding Language Webinar to introduce the unit 9:00 PST (12:00 EST)
- ✦ June 30 – Districts return completed questionnaires and lesson reviews.

Stipend

The Understanding Language Project will pay each reviewer (up to 5 per district) \$350 for their time and professional reviews.

Understanding Language

Language, Literacy, and Learning
in the Content Areas

Understanding Language aims to enrich academic content and language development for English Learners (ELs) by making explicit the language and literacy required to meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards <http://ell.stanford.edu> .

