Grade Level	Content Area	Course Title *(9-12 Samples Only)*	Unit Title
11th	Writing	11th Grade English	Youth on the Border

Length of Unit	Quarter Taught	Expected Prior Knowledge
Five 1.5 hour class sessions	2nd Quarter	HSR-S2C1-02 - Students will have explored challenges & opportunities faced by young people living along the U.S./Mexico Border from reading the novel *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea. CWR-S2C1-04 - They will have conducted action research through the math class that focused on data collection and analysis related to contemporary challenges and opportunities faced by students. HSR-S3C1-01-04, HSR-S3C2-01, HSR-S3C3-01-03 - Prior learning includes writing an expository multi-paragraph essay reading informational texts about the U.S./Mexico border from articles prior to reading the novel, *The Devil's Highway.* Prior learning also includes students' continuous practice with the Writing Process and the 6-Traits of Writing. The writing standard PO's that address both the writing process and the 6-traits are reinforced throughout previous instruction, the Editing Team Process, Peer Response Sheets, and the scoring rubric for every writing assignment. Prior learning includes instruction and considerable practice on the Editing Team Guidelines and process.

Unit Description

Students will use their prior knowledge about the challenges and opportunities of living on the U.S./Mexico Border. They will research relevant sources via charts, graphs, former editorial letters, and documents, and synthesize information to create an editorial letter expressing the facts and feelings associated with experiencing border life as a youth.

Strand(s), Concept(s), and PO(s) *List and define the required Strand(s), Concept(s), and PO(s) for each lesson included in this sample.*	**HSW3-C2-PO1** **PO 1**. *Write an explanatory, multi-paragraph essay that*: a. *includes background information to establish the* ***thesis (hypothesis****, essential question), as appropriate* b. *states a* ***thesis (hypothesis****, essential question) with a narrow focus* c. *includes* ***evidence*** *in support of a* ***thesis (hypothesis****, essential question) in the form of details, facts, examples, or reasons* d. *communicates information and ideas from* ***primary and/or secondary sources*** *accurately and coherently, as appropriate* e. *attributes sources of information, as appropriate* f. *includes a topic sentence for each body paragraph* g. *includes relevant factors and variables that need to be considered* h. *includes visual aids to organize and record information on charts, data tables, maps and graphs, as appropriate* i. *includes an effective conclusion*
Summative Assessment	The student will demonstrate synthesis of challenges and opportunities related to living on the U.S./Mexico border by writing a multi-paragraph editorial letter.
Assessment Scoring	The editorial letter will be assessed using a 6 Trait 6-Point Scoring Guide and Rubric based on the ADE writing rubric.
Materials/Resources Needed	Editorial Letter Format handout, Sample Newspaper Editorials, RAFT Assignment Sheet, RAFT Self Check Sheet, 6-Traits –based Peer Response Sheet, Sample Editorial Letter Outline, & 6 Traits Rubric and Scoring Guide.

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
PO Focus	HSW3-C2-PO1	HSW3-C2-PO1	HSW3-C2-PO1	HSW3-C2-PO1	HSW3-C2-PO1
Lesson/ Instruction	**Objective:** Identify the characteristics of a newspaper editorial and question its content. **Discussion:** Explain the format and structure of an editorial while pointing out the need to identify the facts and feelings in the editorial and question its validity. **Modeling:** Distribute a common newspaper editorial and model the analysis of the sample. Tell students they will analyze the editorial examples for the following characteristics: 1) Background information provided 2) Supportive evidence for the point the author is making (details, facts, examples, reasons, or personal examples) 3) Look for details that reference a previous letter, event, situation, etc. **Independent Practice:** Distribute a second common newspaper editorial and have students practice analysis. **Whole Class:** Randomly select several students to share out their analysis to whole class.	**Objective:** Understand the RAFT writing format and the use of the grading rubric. **Linking:** Refer back to the editorials, the reading of *The Devil's Highway,* and the articles read during prior research of the U.S./Mexican border issues. Guide student discussion that recalls important information from the figurative language of the reading and the authentic evidence collected. **Discussion:** Lead a brainstorming discussion about how students think that information from the reading can be integrated into the current writing assignment **Discussion:** Hand out the "How to Write a Letter to the Editor" explanation sheet and sample letter outline. Explain the structure of an editorial letter. **Preparation:** Pass out the RAFT assignment handout, Self Check Sheet, Rubric and Scoring Guide. Explain the information.	**Objective:** Students will write the rough draft of an editorial letter based on the parameters of the assignment. **Teacher Input:** Explain to students they will have to opportunity in class to write the rough draft of their letter to the editor using the RAFT sheet, Self Check Sheet, Rubric and Scoring Guide, "How To Write a Letter to the Editor" handout and a sample of current letters to the editorial to guide their efforts. Remind students they must be ready with their letter draft for editing team review in two days.	**Objective:** Students work in Editing Teams to peer assess their letter to the editor draft using their Peer Response Sheets to guide the process. **Teacher Input:** Remind students that each "editor" on the team must fill out a Peer Response sheet" for every paper reviewed and that at the end of the process each student writer will have 2 Peer Response Sheets to use for guiding their revising and rewrite. Remind students that the final draft of the letter is due in two days.	**Summative Assessment:** The student will demonstrate synthesis of challenges and opportunities related to living on the U.S./Mexico border by writing a multi-paragraph editorial letter. Students will share their final letters in a reading to a "new" group in the class. Then the teacher will collect the final copies, the rough drafts, and peer response sheets.

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Student Activities	**Discussion:** Students participate in active mini lecture, asking questions and gaining clarity about the structure and validity of editorials. **Modeling:** Students independently read the common newspaper editorials and analyze them for the following characteristics : 1) Background information provided 2) Supportive evidence for the point the author is making (details, facts, examples, reasons, or personal examples) 3) Look for details that reference a previous letter, event, situation, etc. They then read along as teacher reads aloud and explains the structure, facts, and feelings found in reading. **Independent Practice:** Students independently read a second common newspaper editorial and identify structural elements, facts, feelings, and question its validity **Whole Class:** Students share out their findings.	**Linking:** Students participate in active discussion, recalling and linking the information from the reading to the class discussion and the idea of writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. Students read the assignment handout and ask for clarity of proposed assignment. Students review the "How to Write a Letter to the Editor" explanation sheet and sample letter outline, and ask clarifying questions about the structure of an editorial letter. Students review the RAFT assignment handout, Self Check Sheet, Rubric and Scoring Guide.	Students begin the rough draft of their letter to the editor and review the assignment parameters outlined on the RAFT sheet, Self Check Sheet, Rubric and Scoring Guide, "How To Write a Letter to the Editor" handout and sample editorial letter to guide their efforts.	Students participate in their Editing Team to review each other's rough drafts and complete the Peer Response Sheet for each paper edited.	Students share their final essays in a reading to a "new" group in the class before turning in the final essay, the rough drafts, and peer response sheets to the teacher for scoring.

RAFT Assignment for Editorial Letter

Role: You are young concerned person living along the U.S./Mexico border

Audience: The readers of your local newspaper

Format: A Letter to the Editor (See the handout for an illustration and explanation of this Format. This letter should be one page or more.)

Topic: The challenges and opportunities that face young people who live along the U.S./Mexico border (From everything that you have read and understood about the U.S./Mexico border – write a letter to the editor, expressing the facts and feelings that are connected to the experience of young people living on the border.)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Make sure you have at least one rough draft with the final copy of the letter. This draft must be peer-edited. Use the Peer Editing Sheet for this.

RAFT LETTER SELF-CHECK SHEET

(SEE PEER RESPONSE SHEET)

CRITERIA TARGETS	YES	NO
Has a clear **ROLE** defined (A young person living on U.S./Mexico border)		
Is "speaking" to an **AUDIENCE** that can relate to the information		
Document is a letter to the editor and follows the provided **FORMAT**		
TOPIC of letter is Challenges & Opportunities of living as a young person on the border		
Includes appropriate background information about the topic.		
Has clear sentence structure – letter can be read without reader saying, "huh?"		
Rough draft completed by deadline date (TBD)		
Final draft completed by deadline date and handed in with Rough Draft (TBD)		
Final Draft of letter is typed		
There are no spelling errors in Final Draft		

How To Write a Letter to the Editor

Are you fired up over something you've read? Whether you're motivated by a passionate point of view or you're responding to a class assignment, you can use these guidelines to draft a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine.

Here's How:

1. **Select a topic or a publication.** If you are motivated to write a letter to the editor because you've been instructed to do so, you should start by reading a publication that is likely to contain articles that interest you. It is a good idea to read your local newspaper to look for local and current events that matter to you.
   You may also choose to look in magazines that contain articles that interest you. Fashion magazines, science magazines, and entertainment publications all contain letters from readers.
2. **Read instructions provided.** Most publications provide guidelines for writing a letter to the editor. Look over the first few pages of your publication for guidelines and follow them carefully.
3. **Include your name, address, email address and phone number at the top of your letter.** Editors often require this information because they will need to verify your identity. You can state that this information is not to be published.
   If you are responding to an article or letter, say so right away. Name the article in the first sentence of the body of your letter.
4. **Be concise and focused.** Write your letter in pithy, clever statements, but remember that this easy to do! You will probably need to write several drafts of your letter to condense your message.
5. **Limit your letter to two or three paragraphs.** Try sticking to the following format:
   In your first paragraph, introduce your problem and sum up your objection.
   In the second paragraph, include a few sentences to support your view.
   End with a great summary and a clever, punchy line.
6. **Proof read your letter.** Editors will ignore letters that contain bad grammar and poorly-written rants.
7. **Submit your letter by email if the publication allows it.** This format enables the editor to cut and paste your letter.

Tips:

1. If you're responding to an article you've read, be prompt. Don't wait a few days or your topic will be old news.
2. Remember that the more popular and widely-read publications receive hundreds of letters. You have a better chance of getting your letter published in a smaller publication.
3. If you don't want your name to be published, state so clearly. You can put any direction or request like this in a separate paragraph. For example, you can simple put "Please note: I do not want my full name to be published with this letter." If you are a minor, inform the editor of this as well.
4. Since your letter may be edited, you should get to the point early. Don't bury your point inside a lengthy argument.
   Don't appear to be overly emotional. You can avoid this by limiting your exclamation points. Also avoid insulting language.
5. Remember that short, concise letters sound confident. Long, wordy letters give the impression that you're trying too hard to make a point.

511 State Street
San Antonio, TX 78212
January 21, 2011

Editor
The Daily Gazette
San Antonio, TX 78217

Dear Editor:

As we all know, the streets at the corner of Marsh and Washington are in complete disrepair. Driving to work is a dangerous adventure for anyone. Traffic can suddenly slow down as drivers try to avoid the ruts and bumps created from years of use. Folks pull to one side or the other to avoid bad spots. Not only can these conditions cause damage to our cars, it creates a hazardous condition for pedestrians who have a chance of tripping as they make their way across the street.

What we need to do is _____

I have four suggestions on how this could be done.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I don't think my suggestions are out of line. We already have _____

If you feel the same way I do about the situation, contact your city council. You can also _____

Sincerely,
Dawn Smith
Dawn Smith
dawns@cool.net

Peer Response Sheet Student Editor's Name _____

Letter to the Editor: "Youth on the Border"

Writer's Name: _____

Please provide feedback to the writer on the following 6-Traits criteria:

TRAIT	CRITERIA	Looks Good	Revisit This
Ideas & Content	Writing is clear, focused, and interesting.		
	The main idea addresses the assignment for writing about challenges and opportunities related to living on the U.S./Mexican border.		
	Document is a Letter to the Editor and includes: **heading, salutation, body, closing, signature**.		
	Includes appropriate background information for the reader.		
	Supportive detail addresses the main idea in the form of facts, details, examples, and reasons.		
Organization	Details are placed in logical order.		
	Details are presented effectively to keep the reader interested.		
	The writer reaches the purpose of the letter immediately.		
	There is recognizable developed conclusion.		
	Transition words/phrases used effectively and smoothly.		
	Effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience.		
Voice	The writing speaks to an audience that can relate to the information.		
	Precise, vivid, natural language creates a clear and complete picture in the reader's mind.		
Word Choice	Powerful verbs, precise nouns, appropriate adjectives and phrases enhance meaning.		
	Vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural and not emotional although may evoke emotion from the reader.		
	Sentences contain words that are relevant so the meaning is enhanced.		
Sentence Fluency	Sentences vary in beginnings, length and structure.		
	Sentences sound smooth and rhythmic when read aloud; they invite expressive reading.		
Conventions	Words are spelled correctly.		
	Commas and internal punctuation are used correctly.		
	Subject and verb agree.		
	Indent and space where needed.		

This letter represents a thorough, mature writing and demonstrates the writer's personal best.

1. Indicate what specific areas of the letter are confusing or unclear:

   Comment: _____

   _____

2. Describe the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of any section of the letter\ (introduction, support paragraphs, conclusion.)

   Comment: _____

   _____

2. Tell what you liked best about the letter. Be as specific as possible.

   Comment: _____

   _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS MAY BE APPRECIATED BY THE WRITER:

Summative Assessment

RUBRIC and SCORING GUIDE

Letter to the Editor

OUTCOME: The student will demonstrate synthesis of challenges and opportunities related to living on the U.S./Mexico border by writing a multi-paragraph editorial letter.

Writing Trait	Criteria	Score			
		F 1-2	**A** 3	**M** 4	**E** 5-6
Ideas & Content	1. Writing is clear, focused, and interesting.				
	2. The main idea addresses the assignment for writing about challenges and opportunities related to living on the U.S./Mexican border.				
	3. Document is a Letter to the Editor and includes: **heading, salutation, body, closing, signature**.				
	4. Includes appropriate background information for the reader.				
	5. Supportive detail addresses the main idea in the form of facts, details, examples, and reasons.				
	6. Attributes sources of information as appropriate.				
Organization	7. Details are placed in logical order.				
	8. Details are presented effectively to keep the reader interested.				
	9. The writer reaches the purpose of the letter immediately.				
	10. There is recognizable developed conclusion.				
	11. Transition words/phrases used effectively and smoothly.				
	12. Effective level of closeness to or distance from the audience.				
Voice	13. The writing speaks to an audience that can relate to the information.				
	14. Precise, vivid, natural language creates a clear and complete picture in the reader's mind.				
Word Choice	15. Powerful verbs, precise nouns, appropriate adjectives and phrases enhance meaning.				
	16. Vocabulary that is striking and varied, but that is natural and not emotional although may evoke emotion from the reader.				
	17. Sentences contain words that are relevant so the meaning is enhanced.				
Sentence Fluency	18. Sentences vary in beginnings, length and structure.				
	19. Sentences sound smooth and rhythmic when read aloud; they invite expressive reading.				
	20. Capital letters and punctuation are used correctly.				
Conventions	21. Words are spelled correctly.				
	22. Commas and internal punctuation are used correctly.				
	23. Subject and verb agree.				
	24. Indent and space where needed.				

FINAL SCORE: _____/6_____

Scores are awarded percentages:
6 = 100%
5 = 90%
4 = 80%
3 = 70%
2 = 60%
1 = 50%

Scoring criteria are shown at MEETS the Standard from the ADE Rubric for Writing