



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 8: Module 2A: Performance Task



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.  
Exempt third-party content is indicated by the footer: © (name of copyright holder). Used by permission and not subject to Creative Commons license.



Readers Theater and Analytical Commentary:  
Taking a Stand in Maycomb

Summary of Task

- After reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, students will analyze key quotes from the novel that reflect the overarching themes they studied in Units 1 and 2. Students then will form small groups and develop a Readers Theater script in which each student will select a different critical scene from the novel that develops the theme of their group's assigned quote. Their group Readers Theater script combines these individual scene selections and will be accompanied by two short written pieces that students will write on their own: a justification (students' Mid-Unit 3 Assessment) in which students justify and explain how the passage develops the main idea of their group's quote and a commentary (students' End of Unit 3 Assessment) in which they explain how their script is a response to *To Kill a Mockingbird* and how it connects to and diverges from the novel. The final performance task will be a presentation of the Readers Theater Script by the small group. This Readers Theater final performance task centers on **NYSP12 ELA Standards RL.8.2, RL.8.3, W.8.4, and W.11b**.

Format

Narrative Script (3–4 pages, typed, one-sided, on 8.5" x 11" paper)

Standards Assessed Through This Task

- RL.8.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.8.3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- RL.8.11. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate narratives, poetry, and drama, artistically and ethically by making connections to: other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.
  - a. Self-select text to develop personal preferences.
  - b. Establish and use criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.
- W.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.8.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- W.8.11. Create a presentation, artwork, or text in response to a literary work with a commentary that identifies, connects, and explains divergences from the original.
  - b. Create poetry, stories, plays, and other literary forms (e.g., videos, artwork).



Readers Theater and Analytical Commentary:  
Taking a Stand in Maycomb

Student-Friendly Writing Invitation/Task Description

- After reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, analyze key quotes that reflect the overarching themes studied in Units 1 and 2. In a small group, you will develop a Readers Theater script based on your group's quote. Your group will develop the script by selecting critical scenes from the novel that develop the theme expressed in the quote. On your own, you also will write two pieces: a justification (Mid-Unit 3 Assessment) to explain how the scenes that your group selected help develop the main idea of the quote, and a commentary (End of Unit 3 Assessment) to explain how your group's script is a response to *To Kill a Mockingbird* and how it connects to and diverges from the novel.

**Key Quotes (each quote was spoken by Atticus)**

- a. "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin *To Kill a Mockingbird*." (90)
- b. "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." (30)
- c. "I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do." (112)
- d. "... before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience." (105) □

**Part 1: Individual Scripting**

- Each member will write an individual narrative "passage script" from the novel relating to the key quote provided to your group. On your own, you will choose a scene from the novel that develops the main idea of your key quote. Along with that, you will write narration that introduces that passage and a short commentary that explains how the passage develops the main idea of the key quote.

**Part 2: Group Scripting**

- Then you will collaborate with your small group to produce one longer script that connects each person's passage. When you work as a group, you will focus on making sure the passages flow together: You will refine each person's narration, add transitions, and work as a group to write a conclusion to the group's script. You also will choose props and plan blocking for your performance and rehearse as a group. Your group will perform your final high-quality narrative script for the class and/or school or community members.
- Below are key criteria students need to address when completing this task. Specific lessons during the module build in opportunities for students to understand the criteria, offer additional criteria, and work with their teacher to construct a rubric on which their work will be critiqued and formally assessed.



### Key Criteria For Success (Aligned With Nysp12 Ela Ccls)

Below are key criteria students need to address when completing this task. Specific lessons during the module build in opportunities for students to understand the criteria, offer additional criteria, and work with their teacher to construct a rubric on which their work will be critiqued and formally assessed.

- At least one speaking part for each member of the group (including at least one narrator)
- Three to five passages that develop the main idea of your key quote (each group member should contribute at least one passage; some passages may be combined)
- An omniscient narrator role to clarify the connections between passages and the main idea of your key quote
- Smooth transitions from one passage to the next
- A strong beginning and conclusion that frame the main idea of your key quote.
- Key academic vocabulary and details from *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Clearly identified speaking roles for each group member (within the performance)
- Props and blocking to enhance the performance
- A clear speaking voice, using appropriate pacing, fluency, and intonation



**Readers Theater and Analytical Commentary:**  
Taking a Stand in Maycomb

**Options for Students**

- Some students may dictate or record their scripts.

**Options For Teachers**

- Students may organize a public performance of their Readers Theater scripts.
- Students may combine each group's script into a full-length script to create a single performance.
- For all students independently proficient with technology, consider allowing them to incorporate script passages, imagery, and/or sound effects/musical score by using appropriate technology (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, OpenOffice Impress, Garage Band).
- Students interested in, or independently proficient in, the arts may consider:
  - \* Enlarging script passages and creating accompanying illustrations
  - \* Creating a "playbill" for their performance
  - \* Producing a radio or print advertisement about their play
  - \* Writing a short song or poem to conclude the play
  - \* Designing or determining costumes (as part of props)
  - \* Choreographing/"staging" actors for the performance

**Resources And Links**

- Consider finding a theater professional to critique scripts, coach students' performances, and/or be a special guest at the final performance