

Grade Level | **9-10**

California Writing Project

Upstanders, Not Bystanders: Writing Reports of Information

CWP Improving Students' Analytical Writing Inquiry Teams

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From Teacher to Teacher

What does a team of twenty-five English teachers from two high schools do when every one of us have to admit to each other that we are not at all confident in our teaching of informative writing? Collectively, we decided to roll up our sleeves and begin to learn together, so we could do better for our students. This lesson is just one of the many great results of our collaborative work.

We selected the report of information genre as the one we would focus on because it seemed to be a good way to bridge the required narrative writing of the first quarter and the argument writing of the third quarter, while still addressing the second quarter informative requirements of our district.

We decided that we needed assessment information for where our ninth grade students were as writers of informative text types and genres. Why did we feel we needed to take the time to assess this type of writing before teaching it? We had no student data at all about this type of writing, and because we were so tentative about our own understanding of the genre, we needed to do two things: 1) learn what our students could do in their writing; and 2) learn about the report of information genre as learners and then as teachers.

After drafting many writing prompt possibilities, we decided to give all of our students our version of the Upstanders, Not Bystanders writing prompt as the assessment. We would collaboratively analyze the results and take what we learned from our students to create the lesson we would use to teach the report of information genre.

Based on our experience, we have one important recommendation for all fellow teachers: take the time to write your response to this writing topic. Try out some drafts about your choices of historic, public, and personal upstanders. Share them with your teaching colleagues. Grapple with what's hard for you as a writer and the connections to what's hard for you as a teacher of informative writing. We teachers needed to learn about the genre from the inside out— as writers.

By writing and discussing the genre ourselves, we realized that we didn't want our students just to write a chronological recount of their upstander's life. We wanted them to use the concept of upstander as the controlling idea for their essay. Then they would have to be selective about anecdotes or events from their upstander's life that link to and support that controlling idea. We could have assigned a more biographical writing task, but we wanted to challenge our students and ourselves to take on the complexities of organizing a report of information that blended features of narrative and informative writing.

One other recommendation: take time with your colleagues to hunt for good models of report of information writing. That is easier written here than accomplished, as you will see from what we had to do for this lesson. If you find good models, then you can collaborate with your colleagues on breaking down the rhetorical features of the genre and piecing them back together. That will help you find the ways to scaffold your students' reading and writing of the genre. But it will also help you think of ways to really teach students a report of information, so that they are not just copying or repurposing information from Wikipedia or similar sources,

Our ninth graders took their first report of information steps with us as together—students and teachers—we analyzed, reflected on, and wrote about upstanders who inspire us. Our students told us that they learned a lot. We are very certain that their teachers learned much more, and this lesson is evidence of that.

Text Resources

Print Resources: Texts to increase genre knowledge

Humphrey, S.M. *Dare To Dream! 25 Extraordinary Lives*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005.

Although this book was written for younger students, it is one of the few texts that includes lively biographical sketches, and the title serves as the controlling idea for all 25 biographical reports of information.

Humphrey, S.M. *They Stood Alone: 25 Men and Women Who Made a Difference*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books, 2011.

This book is an even better resource for genre models for writing about upstanders.

Web resources: All texts to increase content knowledge

1. Scholastic. Rosa Parks: How I Fought for Civil Rights

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/rosa/index.htm>

Puts Rosa Park's story in the broader context of civil rights and her participation in the fight for justice before and after her refusal to give up her seat.

2. Academy of Achievement—In the Achiever Gallery are numerous biographical resources of historic and public upstanders. Listings for each include a biography, profile, interview, and often photos and embedded videos. However, the website itself is a bit unstable.

Main Menu: <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/pageegen/index.html>

Rosa Parks—for use as content and genre model:

Biography: <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/par0bio-1>

Interview: <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/par0int-1>

3. Bio: True Story. Rosa Parks: <http://www.biography.com/people/rosa-parks-9433715>
4. The Henry Ford: Rosa Parks Bus. <http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/rosaparks/story.asp>
5. The Archives. An Act of Courage: The Arrest Records of Rosa Parks
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/rosa-parks/>
Includes additional print sources, too.
6. You Tube posted by Biography Channel. Rosa Parks Mini-bio
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8A9gvb5Fh0>

Teaching Context

Twenty-five English teachers at two large urban high schools were working together on transitioning their incoming ninth graders into a college-going culture and curriculum. Both high schools were API 1-2 schools and supported large numbers of English learners, long-term English learners, and students in poverty.

Text Type, Genre, Writing Prompt

The genre we selected is an informational essay, also termed a report of information, first given as a pre-assessment and then taught with scaffolded support. In a report of information, writers present themselves as authorities on a subject. They select and present enough specific details of a subject to characterize it for readers. They orient readers to their subject and keep them on track with a coherent report. Good reports of information have a controlling idea or focus. The best reports go still further to express writers' involvement with the subject and commitment to sharing it with readers.

(Adapted from CAP 8 and High School Report of Information)

▪ **Writing Prompt – Upstanders, Not Bystanders**

Writing Situation: Who comes to mind when you think about upstanders—people who have spoken out or taken action on behalf of others because of their principles or beliefs? Do you think of someone from history that you have studied or read about? Do you think of someone in public life that you have read about and watched in the news? Or do you think of someone from your personal life that you know or have observed in your community? Think about upstanders that come to mind. For your essay, choose one of those people to write about.

Directions for Writing: Write an essay that informs your readers about an upstander who inspires you. Describe one or more events that event or events that illustrate how this person spoke up or took action because of that belief. Explain how this person inspires you to stand up, speak out, or take action.

Instructional Strategies

- Quick Writes and whole class and small group discussions of them
- Teacher modeling and interactive development of the entire writing process, from generating ideas, to selecting examples from text and experience, to experimenting with patterns of organization, to revision and editing
- Student individual writing following teacher modeling
- Using student essays as models, for genre analysis and for assessment
- Self-assessment and peer assessment after early drafts
- Explicit teaching of features and language of the genre

Common Core State Standards

Standards in bold are focus standards. Those not in bold are important supporting standards.

Text Type and Purposes

Grade 9-10

2. **Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.**
 - a. **Introduce a topic or thesis statement; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions;** include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. **Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**
 - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
 - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
 - e. **Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.**
 - f. **Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**

Production and Distribution of Writing

Grades 9-10

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.)
5. **Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.** (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 on page 32.)

English Language Development Standards Grades 9 and 10

Collaborative: Bridging

1. Exchanging of information/ideas
2. Interacting via written English
3. Adapting language choices

Interpretive: Bridging

5. Listen Actively
6. Reading/viewing closely a) and b)

Productive: Bridging

10. Writing
11. Justifying/arguing
12. Selecting language resources

Structuring Cohesive Texts: Bridging

1. Text structure
2. Cohesion

Connecting and Condensing Ideas: Bridging

6. Connecting ideas

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

Interact with informational text by using the following critical reading strategies:

- taking notes
- choosing and explaining events from the text
- relating observations and other readings to the ideas and examples in the text
- engaging in academic discussions about the texts: texts for content, texts for genre, texts for language.

Write an informational essay in response to the writing topic that focuses on:

- selecting and narrating relevant events as examples that illustrate the subject of their essay as an upstander
- using “upstander” as the controlling idea/thesis and developing links or connections between examples and that claim
- providing a scenario to illustrate a point
- indicating facts about or qualities of the upstander
- using an organized pattern of development that supports the controlling idea and the writer's purpose
- practicing strategies for organizing the report of information and selecting those that work best.

Session One: Assessing Students' Report of Information Writing

1. We all began by scheduling two of our “block” days, so that the majority of the ninth graders at both schools could write the assessment essay. We announced to our students that we would be assessing them on a new type of writing that all their teachers would read and evaluate together. We were very honest with them that before we taught them this type of writing, we wanted to see what they already knew how to do. We asked them to try their best and trust us that we are going to take what we learned from their writing to make sure we were teaching them what they really needed to learn.
2. On our scheduled assessment days, we distributed the Upstander, Not Bystander writing prompt. We read it together and answered clarifying questions, but we didn't discuss specific upstanders or strategies for writing. We also didn't provide texts because we wanted to see what and if students could draw on from their experiences or studies. Finally, we wanted to see what our students could do independently, and we took observational notes as they worked.
3. We also took careful note of how well students responded to the writing prompt. Even if they weren't sure what to write about, there was something about the concept of “upstander” that engaged them in ways writing about a hero or “someone I admire” did not.
4. We met with our teaching colleagues on the following Saturday to assess and discuss the writing. To focus our work, we used both the Grade 8 and High School CAP Report of Information scoring guides. Because these scoring guides focus on the “rhetorical features” of report of information writing, we also made sure to gather information about how students were using language and what kind of errors they were making. However, we soon realized that those students who were confused by the writing genre or were struggling with the content looked to be making more language errors than they usually did. We charted the errors we noticed and decided to compare that information with what we saw during the teaching of the lesson. Then we would decide what language issues we would address with our students.

5. The annotated writing assessment samples in the Learning From Student Work section illustrate the most important lessons we learned from our students' writing. They can be summed up as follows: 1) students could narrate events but could not link them to a controlling idea; 2) students could give event paragraphs as examples, usually unelaborated, but could not link them to a controlling idea; 3) students could not address all aspects of the prompt; and 4) they did not know how to control the genre or how to present their information.
6. Over the course of the next week, we met after school to collaboratively develop the Upstanders, Not Bystanders lesson sequence. As we did so, we made an unusual decision, at least for us.

We were unable to find texts that we could use as examples and models for a report of information that would address any aspect of this prompt. We could find print and online texts to increase content information, primarily biographical sketches and profiles. But we could find nothing that would give a concrete example of the kind of report of information we wanted our students to write.

That meant we had only one option: we had to write the models. So in collaboration with our teaching colleagues, we picked one upstander we would all use as the subject for our ninth grade model: Rosa Parks. We did so because we all had print texts and online resources we could use for research and reference. We knew that most of our students knew about Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, but we were fairly certain they hadn't explored more of the Jim Crow context and the Birmingham bus boycott that followed her actions. We all decided to write and model every step of the lesson and writing process with our students about Rosa Parks. That meant she was off-limits as a subject for any students' individual reports of information, but they would benefit by working through the entire reading, researching, and writing process step by step.

Session Two: Teachers and Student Learning the Genre Together

1. Using Rosa Parks as the subject for our study, students and teachers worked through the following steps of the lesson that you will find in the appendix. (Maybe read what follows alongside that lesson.)
 - a. Getting Ready to Write and Anticipating Readers' Needs
 - We wrote and discussed what we knew about Rosa Parks as an upstander.
 - We read and discussed print and online texts, looking for more information about her beliefs and principles, as well as events beyond the bus incident.
 - We read the profile of Rosa Parks in *They Stood Alone: 25 Men and Women Who Made a Difference*. Even though the book was written for younger students, the author gives us a good example for selecting and organizing information that supports a controlling idea similar to Upstander, Not Bystander.
 - Teachers and students experimented with turning events into anecdotes for potential illustrations of Rosa Parks as an upstander.

- b. Organizing Your Information

We tried out each of the organizational strategies in the lesson and had lively discussions about which strategies seemed most promising for which students:

- Answering Questions that Connect Topic to Genre
- Writing Your Way into a Plan
- Drafting Leads or Introductions for Your Report of Information

- Mapping the Informational Territory

A common organizational strategy for report writing is listing all the information gathered, grouping the best of that information, and then labeling the groups. The strategy is much like what some of us used to do with the research information we wrote on index cards: list everything card by card, select the best information, stack those cards in groups, and label the categories of the stacked cards. The Mapping the Informational Territory strategy is closest to that.

More often though, writers use a combination of strategies. What was most important for our developing writers and for their developing writing teachers was to try out several, get stuck, make headway, and see if a particular strategy or two helped us organize for drafting.

Our students were surprised to find that some of their peers preferred to write lots of snippets and chunks of text, while others preferred to chart and list. We had never discussed before that writers choose different tools and strategies, or that they adapt a strategy to make it work better. We had never discussed before that writers can and should make such decisions, and that student writers can learn to make similar decisions.

We found two ways to expand on the suggested organizational strategies:

- To help us play with introductions/leads and conclusions, we returned to the texts we read about Rosa Parks to see if any of the introductions in them were examples of those suggested in the lesson. Many were, and that helped us all see how we could write similar sections of our report and then decide which introduction best accomplished our purpose for our writing.
- To figure out how to do the Mapping the Territory, we paired up and used large sheets of poster paper to create big Mapping the Territory charts. Then we listed our events and information on post-its and moved the post-its across the columns to determine how we would order and organize our information. It worked brilliantly.

We all, teachers included, drafted a report of information about Rosa Parks with partners or as individuals.

c. After Drafting: Suggestions for Response and Revision

We shared, discussed, and critiqued our drafts. We rewrote parts that needed clarification. Some students had time to polish their essay, and others wanted to conference to discuss aspects that they had questions about. But everyone felt they had a better understanding of the report of information genre, as well as specific processes and strategies that would help them write about their choice of an upstander.

Session Three: Individual Reports with Collaborative Support

1. We returned to the beginning of the lesson, beginning with selecting upstanders to write about. Only a few students wanted to rework their assessment essay. Most students wanted a new focus, and to our surprise, most students chose a public or historic upstander, rather than a personal one.

For our students that were more comfortable with Quick Writes, they used the early sections of the lesson as is. For those students who were more comfortable with organizers and charts, the teachers developed the charts you used at the beginning of this section of the PLM module. By this time, our students had a much better sense of these strategies as tools, and weren't looking for the one right way to prepare for drafting. (See Appendix for sequence of Upstander charts.)

2. As teachers, for this part of the lesson we were much more like coaches. We pointed students toward research resources and read drafts of anecdotes and event paragraphs rather than handling the “I don’t know what to do” questions. For all of us, the days when students worked on organizing their information were exhilarating. Students tried out a combination of organizational strategies. Drafting was not painful. Many of the students turned to each other, rather than to their teachers.
3. The primary difference in our teaching for the individual essay was the time we took for response and feedback over the course of the writing.
4. We also took more time for group and individual conferencing along the way, and it was during these conferences when we surfaced language issues that needed attention. Most of us concentrated on these language features:
 - Correct usage of linking verbs
 - More precise choices of action verbs
 - Watching for pronouns and their antecedents
 - Replacing conversational language with the presentational language of a report of information.

Session Four: Response in Small Groups and Using the Suggestions for Response and Revision

1. Students gathered up all their notes, including their first draft essay, for working in read-around groups of three students.
2. We asked them to read the essays written by the other two writers in their group closely, using the questions on the critique sheet (in the appendix) to respond to the essays. We emphasized that they needed to consider carefully if the writer had an “upstander controlling idea” because answering that question, determines the answers to all the other questions. We asked them to be as specific as possible in explaining their responses and offering advice for improvement.
3. When everyone in the class had finished, we opened up time for the groups to discuss their responses with each other.

Session Five: Self-assessment, Revision, Editing and Final Draft

Students took the suggestions from their classmates and used them and the response questions to weigh all their feedback, assess their own writing, and plan for what they needed to revise. They worked in class and at home on the revision and met one more time with their response group to compare drafts and take additional suggestions before completing their final drafts,

Reflections

We found that this lesson helped our students take what they had learned about writing a report of information essay and apply it, not just to our courses, but also to CAHSEE writing prompts and to writing assignments for their other classes.

The following writing prompts have been included in previous CAHSEE exams, and our students easily transferred what they learned to writing and addressing these practice topics (practice we'll provide until the exam is replaced):

Writing about People

1. Throughout your years in school, you have studied about many different people. Think about one of these people you have studied during your time at school. What makes this person special enough to study? Write an essay in which you inform your readers about a person you have studied in school. Explain what it is about this person that is special. Use details and examples to support your ideas.
2. A person who seems in charge of every situation is sometimes called a "natural leader." People often look to such a person to lead them in projects both great and small. Describe someone you have read about who seems to be a "natural leader." Write an essay in which you describe the person and his or her accomplishments so vividly that your readers will feel they know this person.

Writing About Historical Events

By the time students enter high school, they have learned about many moments in history that have influenced our world today. Think about a moment in history you studied and consider its importance. Write an essay in which you discuss a moment in history. Share its importance in today's world. Be sure to support the moment with details and examples.

We all saw the benefits of our hard work during follow-up assignments, which focused on more extensive research and report writing. We were able to challenge our students to draft their own controlling ideas/claims. We were able to work on using quotations, paraphrasing, citing sources because now that they had a better understanding of organizing their ideas, we could work on the conventions of crediting sources for their ideas. Our students were building on a more sure writing foundation, and they were writing with more confidence. And so were their writing teachers.

Instructional Resources and Professional Resources

The Writing Assessment Handbook, Grade Eight. California Department of Education. Sacramento, CA, 1990.

The Writing Assessment Handbook, Grade Twelve. California Department of Education. Sacramento, CA, 1992.

Writing Assessment – Student Sample A

Everyone has a need to belong. It doesn't matter who they are, what they look like, or from where they come. Many people go through similar hard times, especially immigrants because they leave their loved ones and their native homelands. Immigrants often feel as if they don't belong in this country like farm workers that harvest our crops, or mothers who work in the sewing factories. Although they adjust over time, still many feel like foreigners.

In this essay I will be writing about the story of Rosa Parks how she gave up her seat to defend the rights that black people deserved. In this story I will tell you the complications she had trying to achieve her goal. Rosa Parks was a very strong woman and she would do anything to finally end the problem in the bus, and she did.

One day when Rosa Parks came out of work she was really tired and decided to take the bus home she sat down in her seat tired from her hard day at working she worked designing clothes for people and making it fit right. The bus then stopped at another bus stop a white man came in and there wasn't any seats left so the bus driver decided to tell Rosa to stand up and let the white man take her seat Rosa was so tired from going to work and so tired of the white people telling the black people what to do that she refused to get off her seat the bus driver stood up his seat and walked towards her and told her if she wouldn't move he was going to call the police. Rosa refused again and she said she didn't care if she would get arrested. Then the man called the police and they arrested Rosa for breaking a law. She stood in jail and called her husband Rosa felt that her husband would be mad at her and he was so was the rest of the black people that knew about the incident.

Days passed Rosa was out of jail but the people and Rosa were still mad about it so they decided to do something about it. They came up with the idea of telling all of the black people not to take the bus anymore that if they couldn't walk they would all help each other together. The next day when the bus would get to the stop no black people would enter the bus since this was happening the bus drivers were not getting enough money, no matter what the black people wouldn't get on anymore. As time passed things began to get more complicated for Rosa people would treat her very differently. Things got more complicated the day that Rosa lost her job for what she did for black people. Her husband was really upset with this that he almost left her life just wouldn't get easier. Then after a while the people in the bus let the black people have the same rights and things got better she had accomplished what she wanted.

That was the story of Rosa Parks how she gave up her seat for her people and herself. I think that what she did was helpful for all of the people of color and I think that what she did was a very brave thing to do. If I was in her place I would never have done it.

Annotation for Student Sample A

(We used the CAP Report of Information scoring guides)

The writer can narrate the event (even though the actual bus boycott is barely mentioned), but the writer is uncertain about how to write about Rosa's belief beyond a simple statement. Writer provides general information without elaborating it or connecting it to a controlling idea. The lack of sentence level punctuation may be an indicator of genre uncertainty or may indicate a problem with run-ons when narrating.

Writing Assessment – Student Sample B

One person that comes to mind when thinking about a person who spoke out and took actions for their beliefs is Martin Luther King, Jr. This is a man who fought for what he believed in & not just sat back in a corner watching his people be persecuted.

He believed in equality. That a white child is not different from a black child. That our race should not determine, not even a little bit on how you are treated. He believed we should be looked upon as human beings, not white & blacks. That the color of a persons skin is not what we should look at, but we should look at the contents of the persons heart. Then determine what kind of person they are.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr was a strong African American man. He didn't let fear come between what he believed in. He also didn't show fear. This is because he believed so much in God. He knew that he was doing the right thing and that he would be rewarded. Then again who knows if he was nervous when he got up and gave speeches & did protests, only God knows.

Dr. MLK. Saw us as equals. He was tired of the hatred he was getting, so he gave the "I Have a Dream" speech. This changed the lives of many people. He got them to finally see his point of view. After this, they knew that something had to be done. And for the people who still didn't like MLK and tried to destroy him, they may have killed him physically, but after he was gone, his legacy still lived on, and still lives on today. He will never be forgotten.

He has in a sence changed the world. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be able to drink from the same water fountain as everyone else. I wouldn't be able to be in a diverse classroom, and have the privilege the associate with some of my best friends. He has made one huge difference in my life. Even though I didn't know him. But you didn't have to know him to feel the love he had for his people. You didn't have to know him to know that he was an amazing man and will live in in the hearts of many.

Annotation for Student Sample B

The writer provides information, sometimes inaccurately, but the presentation seems randomly organized, and the elaboration of it is sparse. The reader has to do all the work to discern the writer's intent. Sentence level errors accompany generalizations. However, the last paragraph includes an understanding of how Martin Luther King, Jr. inspires and affects the writer. Should the writer do a revision, this idea may help him or her in finding a controlling idea.

Writing Assessment – Student Sample C

Many people around the world stand up to what they believe in. They don't have to be famous like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rosa Parks. People everyday in our community speak out or take action for what they believe in. I believe everyone should do that because it helps build character and it will show that your beliefs are strong.

My neighbor, Margaret Burnett, also known as Peggy, has lived across from me ever since I can remember. She is a wonderful woman and leader in my community. From her actions, I could tell that she is gentle by the way she takes care of her plants as though they were her children. As far as I know, she lives by herself, but she does have a family—her neighbors.

I am not exactly sure about her profession, but she is a great photographer and a community person. Peggy always helps both the poor and me. We give her clothes to donate for the Salvation Army (I think she goes there quite often) and when I need sponsors for fundraising, she would usually help me. She's a generous and giving person.

What I really like about her is that she's not a lazy person. She takes, action, for example using her photography skills, she took pictures of the tagged areas of our neighborhood and helped get it cleaned and made the city officials aware of what was going on. Another thing she does in my community that she does is pick up trash. Also, last but not least, there was this incident that really impressed me. One day a few older kids were picking on young girl (it might've been their sister). She was treated like dirt and literally was getting beat up. Peggy came out to resolve the conflict, but the kids treated her with no respect. She didn't care, but wanted to make sure the girl was alright. Peggy didn't stand for kids being treated like they were nothing. I'm not sure what happened next, but I was impressed. I would've never gone out and spoke to them.

My neighborhood can be a horrible and dangerous place to be living in, but with people like Peggy, it makes it safe. She is one of my role models in my community. She does not let people ruin a community but help make it better. She takes action and speak out because she believes in a safe future for the young.

Annotation for Student Sample C

The writer has the beginning of a controlling idea but may not understand how to use it as a presentational, organizational tool. The upstander's belief in her community as her family, and her standing up for that community and the people in it, would make for an effective controlling idea. But the writer seems to be thinking on paper still.

Upstander Final Draft – Essay A

One of the biggest influences on a person's actions is their beliefs. I have read and heard about many people who stood up for something they truly believed in. However, the person I always think of when this subject comes up isn't so famously known. This person is my friend, Emma, the one person I personally know who always stands up for her beliefs even when it is difficult.

Emma had always been involved in many things as far back as I can remember. So it wasn't a shocking surprise when she decided to invite a few friends and relatives to hear her practice a speech she was planning to give in an upcoming competition. We gained the permission of her mother to turn the garage into kind of hall with place for a stage and an audience.

On the Saturday afternoon that Emma chose and as everyone started coming into the stuffy but cozy garage, I was becoming more and more anxious. Even though everyone was around my age, it was surprising to see that so many people were interested. Soon the many black and white chairs were filled up by kids, and Emma went toward the front to start her speech, which was as she called it: Abortion or Adoption. I knew Emma had been adopted, but it had never occurred to me before how much it had affected it life. All eyes were turned toward her as she started talking in that loud and confident voice of hers. Her speech was so amazing that no one dared talk.

Her statement was on how her own mother had to choose between killing her baby and giving her up for adoption. Emma made us realize that this sweet and loud girl talking in front of us may not have been there if someone had made a different decision. She told us how much she loved her adopted parents and that she would be absolutely lost without them. I'll never forget her concluding sentence, which had us on our feet applauding and some even crying. "I know life can be very hard at times, but it is also very rewarding, so taking it from a person should be just as hard as life itself. I'm so glad it wasn't taken from me."

Emma opened up many people's eyes, causing us all to see things from a different perspective. I know her belief of letting a child live instead of aborting him or her is so strong that she will always put up a good argument on the subject. Some people in the audience talked about how they were pro-choice, but they were very glad that Emma's birth mom made the choice to give her away for adoption. I haven't make up my mind on the subject yet, but I won't forget Emma's beliefs.

Later on I asked Emma how she had done it. I told her she was my hero to stand in front of everyone and express her opinion. She didn't know how to answer my question. "I just thought of the message I needed to get across, concentrated on it, and discussed it," she said shrugging her shoulders. Everyone has different beliefs and thoughts about certain things. Emma simply had a wonderfully talented way of letting others know she had them.

That's what makes Emma an upstander and that's how she inspires me. I disagree with people all the time, but I don't say much. I don't think of what I believe and the message I need to get across. I don't discuss what I believe very often. I stay quiet or I get mad. My mom tells me all the time to learn how to agree to disagree. Emma does that with her family and friends and she makes me want to learn how to be an upstander for my beliefs even when people don't agree with me.

Annotation for Upstander Final Draft Essay A

The writer selects a character trait of Emma, the subject of her report, that illustrates how and why she is an upstander who speaks up for her beliefs and principles. The writer then provides a scenario that supports the claim of Emma as upstander and how she inspires the writer. The pattern of development is clearly linked to the writer's purpose and message.

Upstander Final Draft – Essay B

My Upstander Team

Third grade. That's how old I was when my teacher read a book about Ruby Bridges with our class. I am in ninth grade now and I still wonder about how Ruby was so strong. Ruby Bridges was in first grade when she was the first African American student to go to an all white school. Could I have gone to a school where they treated me like the enemy? Would I have had the courage to walk past adults who hated me just for the color of my skin? When I was six years old? How about now that I'm fourteen?

Most of my fellow students have heard the story of Ruby Bridges too. But we only remember her lonely walk through the middle of those screaming adults, and being in a classroom all by herself with a white teacher. We don't know much more than that. I wanted to learn more about Ruby and how she was an upstander.

Ruby was born during the time of Jim Crow laws. That meant everything was segregated by white and colored. Schools were white or colored. Neighborhoods were white or colored. There were white seats at the movies, in restaurants, and on busses, and then there were colored seats.

In 1960 a judge decided that six black children would go to all white schools. I would really like to know why the judge sent a group of students to one school and Ruby all by herself to another. Even though the police would pick her up and bring her to school and home each day, it had to be dangerous. But Ruby's parents thought she had a chance to get a better education at the white school, so they had to trust that the police and the teachers would keep her safe.

Ruby didn't miss a day of school the whole year. Lots of white parents took their students out of school. But Ruby went every day. She said she prayed when people screamed at her and that's why she wasn't afraid all the time.

But even though going to school took a lot of courage, I think she's an upstander because of what she says she learned that year and what she has done with those lessons to today.

Ruby's white teacher, Mrs. Henry, talked with her many times about what integration was and why the white people were so scared and violent. Mrs. Henry reminded Ruby that not all white people were like that. Later in life, Ruby wrote her own story and she said, "Even though I was only six, I knew what she meant. The people I passed every morning as I walked up the school steps were full of hate. They were white, but so was my teacher, who couldn't have been more different from them. She was one of the most loving people I had ever known. The greatest lesson I learned that year in Mrs. Henry's class was the lesson Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., tried to teach us all. Never judge people by the color of their skin. God makes each of us unique in ways that go much deeper."

In a speech I read, Ruby told the audience, "she looked exactly like them, but she was different, and I knew that at six years old because she showed me her heart." In the middle of all that hatred, Ruby and Mrs. Henry were being upstanders together.

Ruby graduated from that elementary school and after she got married and became a mother, she was a volunteer at that school. Ruby has started the Ruby Bridges Foundation so she can talk to more students and teachers about her story. Mrs. Henry sometimes goes with her and they speak together. Ruby says when they speak together, "I tell them that another important thing I learned in first grade is that schools can be a place to bring people together - kids of all races and backgrounds. That's the work I focus on now, connecting our children through their schools. It's my way of continuing what God set in motion 40 years ago when he led me up the steps of William Frantz Public School and into a new world with my teacher, Mrs. Henry - a world that under his protection has reached for beyond just the two of us in that classroom."

I started my research thinking Ruby Bridges was my upstander. Now I have added Mrs. Henry. They are an upstander team that inspires me to wonder how students and teachers today can create schools that bring people together. Do I have the courage? Who will be on my team?

Annotation for Upstander Final Draft Essay B

The writer establishes a context for her being inspired by Ruby Bridges as a child and for her desire to learn more about Ruby. She selects and narrates relevant events as examples to illustrate why Ruby is an upstander: first, the event most people read about and then also events from Ruby's life as an adult. In describing the lessons that Ruby learned as a child and the ways those lessons led her to teach and inspire other children, she not only explains how Ruby teaches her, but also how Ruby calls her to be an upstander, too.

Planning, Writing, & Revising a Report of Information – Upstanders, Not Bystanders

Understanding the Writing Topic and Prompt

Read the writing prompt carefully. Underline or circle the words that tell you what you need to think about and then what you need to write about. Which words give you clues that you are writing an informational essay, not an argument or narrative essay?

Writing Topic

Upstander; an individual who chooses to take a positive stand and act on behalf of others.
Antonym: bystander. (From Facing History and Ourselves)

Writing Situation

Who comes to mind when you think about upstanders— people who have spoken out or taken action on behalf of others because of their principles or beliefs? Do you think of someone from history that you have studied or read about? Do you think of someone in public life that you have read about and watched in the news? Or do you think of someone from your personal life that you know or have observed in your community? Think about upstanders that come to mind. For your essay, choose one of those people to write about.

Directions for Writing

Write a report of information that informs your readers about an upstander who inspires you. Describe the belief or principle that was so important to this person. Describe one or more events that illustrate how this person spoke up or took action because of that belief. Explain how this person inspires you to stand up, speak out, or take action.

Writing Situation: Finding Out What You Already Know

To make sure you are writing an essay about a person you know enough about, first write about the questions in the Writing Situation. This will help you select the best upstander for your writing.

1. What does it mean to be upstanding and to speak out or take action because of an important belief or principle? What characterizes people who do this?
 - Who comes to mind from history, either from your reading or study? Again list as many as you can think of.
 - Which people from public life or current events come to mind? List as many as you can think of.
 - Or do you think of someone in your family or community that you know or have observed in action? Again list as many as you can think of.

2. Who comes to mind when you think about people who have spoken out or taken action because of their principles or beliefs?
 - Who comes to mind from history, either from your reading or study? Again list as many as you can think of.
 - Which people from public life or current events come to mind? List as many as you can think of.
 - Or do you think of someone in your family or community that you know or have observed in action? Again list as many as you can think of.

3. Look back over the list and pick one of the people you have listed in each category—historic, public, or personal—that you seem to know the most about. Do a Quick Write on each of these people just to test out which person will make the best subject for your essay.

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4. Who is your historic upstander? How would you describe the belief or principle this person held to be so important? Did the person speak out or take action because of this belief? Or did the person do both? How does what this person did inspire you?

5. Who is your public upstander? How would you describe the belief or principle this person held to be so important? Did the person speak out or take action because of this belief? Or did the person do both? How does what this person did inspire you?

6. Who is your personal upstander? How would you describe the belief or principle this person held to be so important? Did the person speak out or take action because of this belief? Or did the person do both? How does what this person did inspire you?

Discuss your Quick Writes with a partner or in triads. Help each other look for which upstander you know the most about or are most interested in writing about.

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7. After writing and discussing these Quick Writes, which person is the best subject for your essay? Why?

If the Quick Writes tell you that you don't know enough about either person, ask yourself if additional reading or research will help you gather more information and examples about the one that inspires you more.

Or go back to your list and choose another person and repeat the process. Or go back to your list and think about adding people you didn't think of at first and then write about one or two of them. Think back to the people you have studied, read about, or observed so that you choose the person who will be the best subject for your essay.

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Organizing Your Information

What follows are four different ways successful writers select and organize their ideas before writing their first draft. Try out a few; combine a few. Experiment and start thinking about which strategies help you the most.

Answering Questions that Connect Topic to Genre

Some writers begin by answering questions that connect with the writing prompt and the writing genre as a way to select and organize the information they have generated:

- How do I introduce my person/topic to the reader?
- From all the information I have gathered, what events and details will help the reader really understand my person as an upstander?
- How do I present the information, events, and details about my person/topic?
- How do I organize or order the presentation of my ideas?
- How do I link my points or examples to the topic of being an upstander?
- How do I conclude so my reader doesn't say, "So what?"

Writing Your Way Into a Plan

Some writers do best by writing elements of the essay because doing so helps them find a focus and a starting point.

- Brainstorm titles as a way to capture the direction and tone of your essay.
- Imagine your readers, draft the questions they will ask, and then put the questions in the order the readers will ask them. Then write the answers to the questions. This will help you find the direction for your essay and also show you which answers should be grouped into paragraphs. As writing teacher, Donald Murray, says, "Good writing is a conversation between an individual writer and an individual reader."
- Draft closings/endings until you have the one that says what you want the reader to think about your upstander and why he or she spoke up or took action because of a deeply held belief. What do you want your reader to keep thinking about after they finish your essay.

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Drafting Leads or Introductions for your Report of Information

Draft and “play” with leads or introductions until you have one you think will guide you to write a strong essay. Collaborate with others to search print and online biographies or informational reports for introductions that are examples of each of these.

- **Anecdote or vignettes:**

Try writing a short anecdote or vignette from the person's life that eventually led him or her to speak out or take action?

Is there a time or event that will help your readers see the person and why he or she spoke up or took action? Try writing an anecdote or vignette that captures this time.

- **Quotation:**

Is there a quote that this person is known for? Try starting your lead paragraph with that quote and then writing more about that person.

- **News:**

Try writing for your readers the who-what-where-when-why about this person.

- **Background:**

Try writing for your readers a brief history of the person. Or try writing for your readers the historical background at the time so that the reader will understand why the action your person took was so important.

- **Turning the writing prompt into a lead:**

Try writing an introduction that takes the questions of the prompt and turn them into statements that tell the reader what direction the essay will take.

Mapping the Informational Territory

Some writers prefer to chart, map, or outline their ideas. Using the chart, begin by listing everything that might be included in the essay in the far left column. Then move ideas from that column into the beginning, middle, or ending columns based on where they seem to belong in your essay. You don't need to use everything in the left-hand column, and new ideas might occur to you as you map your ideas. Add them and move them around in the columns until you have the order that seems best. When you're finished, number the items in each of the three lists in the order you want to use them. Start drafting the essay.

Everything that might be included in the essay	Introduction or beginning	Middle paragraphs	The ending— the significance of your upstander

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After Drafting: Suggestions for Response and Revision

The suggestions and questions that follow may be completed in discussions or in writing.

Has the writer convinced you that the subject of the report of information is an upstander?

Has the writer convinced you that the upstander is inspiring?

Answer or discuss the following questions as you look for parts of the report of information that could be improved.

- State the topic or controlling idea of the report of information in your own words. Does the writer agree that you understand the topic?
- Is the report of information well organized and easy to follow? If not, identify the sections that you found difficult to follow.
- Does the essay include any information that is not important to the writer's topic or would not be of interest to the reader?
- Do you need additional information to understand the report of information?
- Identify any key terms or phrases that, unless defined or explained, confused you.
- Describe the ending of the essay. Can you think of a more effective ending?

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Upstanders, Not Bystanders (My Ideas)

Possibilities	Upstanding Events	Upstanding How?	Inspiring How?
Historic 1. 2.			
Public 1. 2.			
Personal 1. 2.			

Upstanders, Not Bystanders (Others' Ideas)

Possibilities	Upstanding Events	Upstanding How?	Inspiring How?
Historic 1. 2.			
Public 1. 2.			
Personal 1. 2.			

Which Upstander Should I Choose for My Writing?

Possibilities	Recalled/Observed Events	Texts/Sources for Events	Significance: Most Inspiring? Risk-taker? Life's cause? Impacted People's Lives?
Historic			
Public			
Personal			