English II

Week 3

English II, Week 3
Analyzing Writing and Pre-Writing for Explanatory Essays

For this activity, you will read another text that is thematically-related to the previous texts. You will analyze vocabulary and syntax choice for argumentative text and then plan/pre-write for an explanatory essay. You are not writing an essay in this week's KCS@Home lesson. Complete the tasks in the following sequence.

Task 1: Page 22-26 (45 minutes) - Article Annotation and Initial Analysis

- On page 22, review the "As You Read" bullet points for the annotation focus of this week's reading, the major claim, supporting statements, and vocabulary.
- Read the article "The Flight from Conversation" on pages 22-26.
- Answer the "Making Observations" questions by reviewing the claim and analyzing whether or not you agree. Review the supporting evidence you starred.

Task 2: Pages 27 & 28 (30 minutes) - Analyzing Vocabulary and Syntax

- Answer questions 4-10 on pages 27 and 28 in "Returning to the Text," with a focus on how vocabulary and syntax (sentence structures) are used. These are all short answer questions.
- Make any additional notes or questions about the text for discussion with peers or optional teacher sessions.

Task 3: Pages 31 - 32 (45 minutes) - Planning an Essay

- Read through the "Learning Targets" and "Preview" on page 31. Note that we are not going to write an entire essay. Rather, you will plan to write the essay, so this assignment is practice in planning and pre-writing.
- Answer questions 1-3 in "Examinga Mulitple-Meaning Word" to finalize your analysis and plan the essay's topic. Each question is designed to build towards the writing prompt in question 4.
- Read the box titled "Explain How an Author Builds an Argument." Read the Explanatory Essay prompt in this box as well as the instructions. Complete question 4 to pre-write the essay, looking back at your notes from this week. Write a thesis statement per the instructions under "Write a Thesis." You do not need to complete an essay at this time.

My Notes

Claims and Evidence

Although Jones has chosen to present his ideas in the form of a spoken word poem, it is possible to interpret his text as an argument with an implied claim that is supported through evidence in the form of word play. An implied claim is suggested through details rather than directly stated.

2. If you consider "Touchscreen" as an argument with an implied claim, how would you summarize that claim?

3. What is one example of diction Jones uses to support his claim?

As You Read

- Look for the claim of the text and underline it, then place stars next to statements that support it.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

About the Author

Sherry Turkle, PhD (b. 1948), a graduate of Harvard, is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She is a licensed clinical psychologist and has a joint doctorate in sociology and psychology. Professor Turkle is interested in the relationships between people and technology.

Op-Ed

The Flight from Conversation

by **Sherry Turkle, PhD**

1   We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection.

2   At home, families sit together, texting and reading e-mail. At work executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we're on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: it involves maintaining eye contact with someone while you text someone else; it's hard, but it can be done.

3   Over the past 15 years, I've studied technologies of mobile connection and talked to hundreds of people of all ages and circumstances about their

plugged-in lives. I've learned that the little devices most of us carry around are so powerful that they change not only what we do, but also who we are.

4   We've become accustomed to a new way of being "alone together." Technology-enabled, we are able to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to wherever we want to be. We want to customize our lives. We want to move in and out of where we are because the thing we value most is control over where we focus our attention. We have gotten used to the idea of being in a tribe of one, loyal to our own party.

5   Our colleagues want to go to that board meeting but pay attention only to what interests them. To some this seems like a good idea, but we can end up hiding from one another, even as we are constantly connected to one another.

6   A businessman laments that he no longer has colleagues at work. He doesn't stop by to talk; he doesn't call. He says that he doesn't want to interrupt them. He says they're "too busy on their e-mail." But then he pauses and corrects himself. "I'm not telling the truth. I'm the one who doesn't want to be interrupted. I think I should. But I'd rather just do things on my BlackBerry."[1]

7   A 16-year-old boy who relies on texting for almost everything says almost wistfully, "Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I'd like to learn how to have a conversation."

8   In today's workplace, young people who have grown up fearing conversation show up on the job wearing earphones. Walking through a college library or the campus of a high-tech start-up, one sees the same thing: we are together, but each of us is in our own bubble, furiously connected to keyboards and tiny touch screens. A senior partner at a Boston law firm describes a scene in his office. Young associates lay out their suite of technologies: laptops, iPods

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[1] A *Blackberry* was a wireless, handheld, communication device released in the early 2000s.

My Notes

and multiple phones. And then they put their earphones on. "Big ones. Like pilots. They turn their desks into cockpits." With the young lawyers in their cockpits, the office is quiet, a quiet that does not ask to be broken.

9   In the silence of connection, people are comforted by being in touch with a lot of people—carefully kept at bay. We can't get enough of one another if we can use technology to keep one another at distances we can control: not too close, not too far, just right. I think of it as a Goldilocks effect.

10   Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be. This means we can edit. And if we wish to, we can delete. Or retouch: the voice, the flesh, the face, the body. Not too much, not too little—just right.

11   Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move from conversation to connection is part of this. But it's a process in which we shortchange ourselves. Worse, it seems that over time we stop caring, we forget that there is a difference.

12   We are tempted to think that our little "sips" of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation. But they don't. E-mail, Twitter, Facebook, all of these have their places—in politics, commerce, romance, and friendship. But no matter how valuable, they do not substitute for conversation.

13   Connecting in sips may work for gathering discrete bits of information or for saying, "I am thinking about you." Or even for saying, "I love you." But connecting in sips doesn't work as well when it comes to understanding and knowing one another. In conversation we tend to one another. (The word itself is **kinetic**; it's derived from words that mean to move, together.) We can attend to tone and **nuance**. In conversation, we are called upon to see things from another's point of view.

14   Face-to-face conversation unfolds slowly. It teaches patience. When we communicate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. As we ramp up the volume and **velocity** of online connections, we start to expect faster answers. To get these, we ask one another simpler questions; we dumb down our communications, even on the most important matters. It is as though we have all put ourselves on cable news. Shakespeare might have said, "We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by."

15   And we use conversation with others to learn to converse with ourselves. So our flight from conversation can mean diminished chances to learn skills of self-reflection. These days, social media continually asks us what's "on our mind," but we have little motivation to say something truly self-reflective. Self-reflection in conversation requires trust. It's hard to do anything with 3,000 Facebook friends except connect.

16   As we get used to being shortchanged on conversation and to getting by with less, we seem almost willing to dispense with people altogether. Serious people muse about the future of computer programs as psychiatrists. A high school sophomore confides to me that he wishes he could talk to an artificial

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GRAMMAR & USAGE

Semicolon
Writers use a semicolon to join independent clauses when two or more clauses are of equal importance. In paragraph 11, notice the sentence **"Human relationships are rich; they're messy and demanding."** In this sentence, the two independent clauses are about two aspects of human relationships.

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kinetic: active
nuance: subtle distinction
velocity: speed

intelligence program instead of his dad about dating; he says the A.I. would have so much more in its database. Indeed, many people tell me they hope that as Siri, the digital assistant on Apple's iPhone, becomes more advanced, "she" will be more and more like a best friend—one who will listen when others won't.

17   During the years I have spent researching people and their relationships with technology, I have often heard the sentiment "No one is listening to me." I believe this feeling helps explain why it is so appealing to have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed—each provides so many automatic listeners. And it helps explain why—against all reason—so many of us are willing to talk to machines that seem to care about us. Researchers around the world are busy inventing sociable robots, designed to be companions to the elderly, to children, to all of us.

18   One of the most haunting experiences during my research came when I brought one of these robots, designed in the shape of a baby seal, to an elder-care facility, and an older woman began to talk to it about the loss of her child. The robot seemed to be looking into her eyes. It seemed to be following the conversation. The woman was comforted.

19   And so many people found this amazing. Like the sophomore who wants advice about dating from artificial intelligence and those who look forward to computer psychiatry, this enthusiasm speaks to how much we have confused conversation with connection and collectively seem to have embraced a new kind of delusion that accepts the simulation of compassion as sufficient unto the day. And why would we want to talk about love and loss with a machine that has no experience of the arc of human life? Have we so lost confidence that we will be there for one another?

20   We expect more from technology and less from one another and seem increasingly drawn to technologies that provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of relationship. Always-on/always-on-you devices provide three powerful fantasies: that we will always be heard; that we can put our attention wherever we want it to be; and that we never have to be alone. Indeed our new devices have turned being alone into a problem that can be solved.

21   When people are alone, even for a few moments, they fidget and reach for a device. Here connection works like a symptom, not a cure, and our constant, reflexive impulse to connect shapes a new way of being.

22   Think of it as "I share, therefore I am." We use technology to define ourselves by sharing our thoughts and feelings as we're having them. We used to think, "I have a feeling; I want to make a call." Now our impulse is, "I want to have a feeling; I need to send a text."

23   So, in order to feel more, and to feel more like ourselves, we connect. But in our rush to connect, we flee from solitude, our ability to be separate and gather ourselves. Lacking the capacity for solitude, we turn to other people but

My Notes

don't experience them as they are. It is as though we use them, need them as spare parts to support our increasingly fragile selves.

24 We think constant connection will make us feel less lonely. The opposite is true. If we are unable to be alone, we are far more likely to be lonely. If we don't teach our children to be alone, they will know only how to be lonely.

25 I am a partisan for conversation. To make room for it, I see some first, deliberate steps. At home, we can create sacred spaces: the kitchen, the dining room. We can make our cars "device-free zones." We can demonstrate the value of conversation to our children. And we can do the same thing at work. There we are so busy communicating that we often don't have time to talk to one another about what really matters. Employees asked for casual Fridays; perhaps managers should introduce conversational Thursdays. Most of all, we need to remember—in between texts and e-mails and Facebook posts—to listen to one another, even to the boring bits, because it is often in unedited moments, moments in which we hesitate and stutter and go silent, that we reveal ourselves to one another.

26 I spend the summers at a cottage on Cape Cod, and for decades I walked the same dunes that Thoreau[2] once walked. Not too long ago, people walked with their heads up, looking at the water, the sky, the sand and at one another, talking. Now they often walk with their heads down, typing. Even when they are with friends, partners, children, everyone is on their own devices.

27 So I say, look up, look at one another, and let's start the conversation.

Making Observations
- Review the claim you underlined. Do you find yourself agreeing with this claim?
- Which starred supporting evidence stands out to you and why?

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[2] *Henry David Thoreau* (1817–62) was an American writer and philosopher credited with helping to develop Transcendentalism—a system of thought that valued nature, experience, and intuition above religion, science, and reason.

Returning to the Text

- Reread the op-ed to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/ Writer Notebook.

4. In paragraph 4, Turkle uses an oxymoron (contradictory words): *alone together*. What does Turkle mean by this phrase? As Turkle elaborates on this phrase throughout the paragraph, how does it influence the op-ed as a whole?

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5. In paragraph 9, Turkle makes an allusion (reference to another author, character, or work) to Goldilocks. What do you think Turkle's purpose is in using this allusion?

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6. Turkle suggests people use technology to edit themselves to "present the self [they] want to be" in paragraph 10. How does Turkle view this practice?

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7. In paragraph 12, Turkle begins an extended metaphor: little "sips" of online connection. What does Turkle's metaphor describe?

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WORD CONNECTIONS

Etymology

The word **oxymoron** comes from the Greek *oxys*, meaning *sharp*, and *moros* meaning *stupid*. An oxymoron, therefore, is a rhetorical device where two contradictory terms are used together. For example, *open secret* and *deafening silence* are commonly used phrases that are oxymorons.

My Notes

8. In paragraph 19, Turkle poses a set of rhetorical questions (queries not meant to be answered directly). Find an example. What effect does Turkle create with these questions?

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9. In paragraph 22, the author says that our impuse has become to think, "I want to have a feeling; I need to send a text." How do the independent clauses in this sentence relate to each other?

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10. In paragraph 25, Turkle uses the phrase "partisan for conversation" to describe herself. Why does Turkle choose the word *partisan*?

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☑ Focus on the Sentence

Complete the following sentence.

Turkle calls herself a "partisan for conversation" because _____.

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Now, rewrite the sentence as two independent clauses joined by a semicolon.

Turkle calls herself a "partisan for conversation"; she _____.

_____

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Analyzing an Argument

Learning Targets

- Analyze the author's use of language and rhetorical devices.
- Write an explanatory essay with a clear thesis, relevant supporting evidence, and pertinent examples to support your explanation regarding how the author builds a persuasive argument.
- Use the writing process to plan, draft, and revise your essay.

Preview

In this activity, you will continue to analyze Sherry Turkle's op-ed, and write an original essay explaining how Turkle builds her argument in "The Flight from Conversation."

Examining a Multiple-Meaning Word

Return to the opening of Sherry Turkle's article "The Flight from Conversation":

We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection.

When constructing a claim, an author chooses her diction carefully. For example, Turkle's use of the word *mere* before *connection* reiterates the idea that she believes connection is worth less than conversation. In addition, *connection* is a multiple-meaning word that adds nuance to her claim. Use the following graphic organizer to explain the difference between two definitions of *connection* and *universe*.

1.

Definition	What Turkle Might Say About This Type of Connection
Connection: a relationship between two people	
Connection: a means of communication, as in a telephone connection	
Universe: all existing matter	
Universe: a space of activity, interest, or experience	

Developing the Claim

Turkle follows protocol by stating her claim in a sentence or two near the beginning of her article. In the remainder of the article, she works to further her ideas regarding this claim.

Learning Strategies

Drafting
Graphic Organizer
Guided Writing
Outlining
Self-editing/Peer Editing

My Notes

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Connect

In what ways does your Independent Reading text compare and contrast with the arguments you have been reading in class? Focus on the presentation of evidence. What types of evidence do you find in each text? In what order is evidence generally presented? Which evidence is most effective or least effective and why? Record your responses in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

My Notes

2. What does Turkle see as the most important distinction between face-to-face conversation and communication on digital devices?

3. What does Turkle see as the relationship between the use of tech devices, spending time alone, and the feeling of loneliness?

📝 Explain How an Author Builds an Argument

In Sherry Turkle's article "The Flight from Conversation," she makes the claim that we are allowing technology to have a negative effect on our personal lives and relationships. Write an explanatory essay analyzing how Turkle supports this claim. Consider her diction, rhetorical devices, and other persuasive strategies. You will use the steps that follow this prompt to plan and draft your essay. Be sure to:

- Plan your explanatory essay using a range of strategies such as brainstorming and reading.
- Choose an organizational structure for your essay appropriate to purpose, audience, topic, and context.
- Develop the essay with specific details, examples, and commentary.
- Review your draft to improve the clarity, organization, and diction.

Gather Ideas

4. Revisit the article, your annotations, and your notes to make a list here of the specific elements (minimum of two or three) of Turkle's argument you wish to consider in your essay. You may want to address anecdotes, interviews, allusions, figurative language, or diction, for example.

Write a Thesis

A thesis is usually one or two sentences that appear near the end of an introduction and act as a roadmap for the rest of the essay. In the case of your essay, it will act as a roadmap that provides the reader with a way to navigate or understand Turkle's argument through a specific lens. Your thesis should go beyond a vague assertion and instead make a clear, convincing claim.