
Designing Writing Assignments

NCTE Editorial Board: Cathy A. Fleischer, Jeffrey N. Golub, Carol Jago, Sonia Nieto, Derek Owens, Tonya B. Perry, Mark Reynolds, R. Joseph Rodríguez, Sharon Taberski, Kurt Austin, Chair, ex officio, Kent Williamson, ex officio

Designing Writing Assignments

Traci Gardner
National Council of Teachers of English

Student handouts throughout this book appear in, or were adapted from, lesson plans on the ReadWriteThink website (<http://www.readwritethink.org>) and are used by permission. Part of Verizon's Thinkfinity, ReadWriteThink is a nonprofit website maintained by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, with support from the Verizon Foundation. The site publishes free lesson plans, interactive student materials, Web resources, and standards for classroom teachers of reading and the English language arts.

Staff Editor: Becky Standard

Interior Design: Doug Burnett

Cover Design: Frank P. Cucciarre, Blink Concept & Design, Inc.

Cover Photos: ©2008 Jupiterimages Corporation

NCTE Stock Number: 10850

©2008 by the National Council of Teachers of English.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the copyright holder. Printed in the United States of America.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

Every effort has been made to provide URLs that were accurate when the text was written, but because of the rapidly changing nature of the Web, some sites and addresses may no longer be accessible.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gardner, Traci.

Designing writing assignments/Traci Gardner.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8141-1085-0 (pbk.)

1. English language—Composition and exercises—Study and teaching—United States. 2. English language—Rhetoric—Study and teaching—United States.

I. National Council of Teachers of English. II. Title.

PE1405.U6G37 2008

808'.042071—dc22

For my father and mother

Charles and Patti Gardner

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Introduction</i>	xi
1. The Essentials of an Effective Writing Assignment	1
2. Putting Beliefs into Practice	9
3. Designing Writing Assignments	35
4. Defining New Tasks for Standard Writing Activities	48
5. Preparing for Standardized Testing	67
6. More Writing Assignment Resources	75
<i>Appendix: NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing</i>	89
<i>Bibliography</i>	105
<i>Author</i>	109