

Response Frames for Academic Writing and Speaking

To successfully write a formal paper in common academic genres, skilled student writers rely on their command of text structure and functional language. When assembling a cohesive piece of writing, a proficient writer calls upon her knowledge of language to choose the words, transitions, and structure that best represent her ideas. Fluency in the academic genres is dependent upon a deep working knowledge of several dominant language functions.

The Relationship between Functions and Genres

Academic genres are complex and often utilize more than one language function. An expository writing prompt will likely require a student to use multiple functions. For example, when asked to explain the significance of a historical event, students will need to incorporate the language of cause and effect, sequencing, and elaboration.

Experienced writers know when and how to merge the language of multiple functions to create a genre-specific essay. Less experienced writers need deliberate modeling and extensive practice to learn the skill of moving between the functions. The table below provides examples of how several dominant functions appear as part of genre-driven writing tasks.

Expository	Narration	Persuasive	Response to Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast points of view. • Sequence historical events or steps in a process. • Elaborate (describe) on the significance of a cause and effect relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use elaboration to describe characters and setting. • Develop a clearly articulated sequence of events. • Identify cause and effect in character's actions and reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast opinions and potential solutions. • Describe a sequence of events leading to a problem or solution. • Identify cause and effect relationship between actions and issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast characters, themes, points of view. • Retrace the sequence of events in a plot. • State a claim of interpretation and support it with textual evidence.

Purpose of Response Frames for Academic Writing and Speaking

Systematic ELD is an opportunity to break down complex writing tasks by making explicit the language needed to construct coherent short paragraphs for high-leverage functions. As students become adept at drafting coherent summaries or short paragraphs, they are better equipped for content-specific genre-driven writing instruction that relies on the ability to draw on language for multiple functions.

The following pages are drawn from a Student Flipbook for Constructing Meaning. They provide specific language support to secondary English learners as they prepare to write or speak academically around five high-leverage cognitive and linguistic functions:

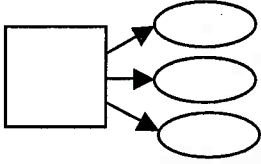
- Cause and effect
- Describe or explain
- Sequence
- Compare and contrast
- Proposition/Support (Persuasion)

These tools work well with short written or oral assignments. Provide students with these frames during writing-to-learn activities, such as free writes, journal entries, or reading summaries - or when preparing to share their thinking. To ensure that students use the tool properly, model and practice the process of selecting specific words or phrases to respond to a question or complete a task.



For best results, (1) direct students to the function that addresses the cognitive demands of the task, (2) allow them time to craft their thinking, (3) then hold them accountable for using the target language accurately and appropriately.

Cause and Effect

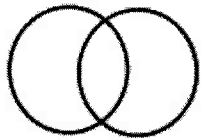


The language of cause and effect is needed when students are asked to:

- o predict an outcome
- o analyze how an event or phenomenon occurred
- o identify what led to an action or decision

Use the following frames when you draft a paper or prepare to speak:

To open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ _____ had a significant impact on _____. ■ The major causes of _____ can be traced to _____. ■ The factors which led to _____ were _____.
To discuss causes and effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Because of _____, _____. ■ _____ contributed to _____ because of _____. ■ _____ happens when _____.
To support your ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One cause was _____. ■ A reason for _____ was _____.
To close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The end result was _____. ■ The findings suggest that _____.



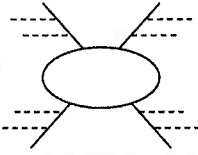
Compare and Contrast

The language of cause and effect is needed when students are asked to:

- o discuss similarities and differences
- o choose the best option
- o identify common characteristics

Use the following frames when you draft a paper or prepare to speak:

To open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The similarities between _____ and _____ are _____. ■ By comparing _____ to _____, it becomes clear that _____. ■ A comparison of _____ to _____ shows _____.
To compare or contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Although _____ and _____ are, _____ is _____. ■ _____ is _____, whereas _____ is _____. ■ The most significant difference between _____ and _____ is _____.
To support your ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One similarity / difference is _____. ■ Their common characteristics include: _____, _____, and _____.
To close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ By comparing _____ to _____, we learn _____. ■ The differences between _____ and _____ are important because _____.



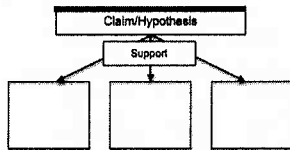
Explain and Describe

The language of cause and effect is needed when students are asked to:

- analyze character traits
- define complex ideas or events
- discuss your understanding of a theme or concept

Use the following frames when you draft a paper or prepare to speak:

To open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ _____ is best described as _____. ■ To define _____, it is necessary to understand _____. ■ _____ is known for _____, and is important because _____.
To explain or describe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ _____ is an illustration of _____; ■ _____ is frequently referred to _____.
To support your ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Critical attributes of _____ include _____ and _____. ■ A defining characteristic is _____. ■ The key components are _____ and _____.
To close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An explanation of _____ provides insight into _____. ■ A complete definition of _____, allows us to _____.



Proposition and Support

The language of cause and effect is needed when students are asked to:

- state a position
- recommend a solution
- present an interpretation

Use the following frames when you draft a paper or prepare to speak:

To open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In regards to _____, I believe _____. ■ My opinion on _____ is _____. ■ _____ presents the position that _____.
To state a position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ _____ proves that _____. ■ I base my views on _____.
To support your ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Many experts claim (argue) that _____. ■ According to _____, _____. ■ More evidence that _____ is _____.
To close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is little doubt that _____. ■ _____ urges us (suggest we) to _____.