

New York State Common Core

# English Language Arts Curriculum



## GRADE 8 Module 4 Unit 3

Student Workbook



**End of Unit 3 Assessment:**  
Position Paper Prompt

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**Name:**

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**Date:**

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**Learning Target:** “I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.” (W.8.1)

**Focusing question: Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chain would you choose to feed the United States?**

Throughout Unit 2 you identified the consequences and stakeholders of each of Michael Pollan’s four food chains in order to choose a food chain to answer the focus question. In this assessment, you will organize your ideas into a position paper. You have already done the thinking for this paper when writing your position speeches, so you should use your speech to help you write your paper.

**In your essay, be sure to:**

- State which food chain you would choose and at least two reasons why.
- Provide evidence and sound reasoning for each of the reasons you have provided.
- Provide a counterclaim and respond to it.

## Position Paper Rubric

Scores 2 - 0

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduces the text and the claim in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose</li> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate a literal comprehension of the topic</li> <li>- acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s), but thinking</li> <li>- partially develops the argument (claim and reasons) with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant</li> <li>- uses relevant evidence inconsistently</li> <li>- sometimes logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduces the text and the claim in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose</li> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate little understanding of the topic</li> <li>- does not acknowledge and/or respond to counterclaim(s)</li> <li>- demonstrates an attempt to use evidence, but only develops ideas with minimal, occasional evidence that is generally invalid or irrelevant</li> <li>- attempts to explain how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> <li>- exhibits little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task</li> <li>- lacks a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task</li> <li>- provides a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the claim and reasons presented</li> <li>- demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- claim and reasons demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the topic or task</li> <li>- provides no evidence or provides evidence that is completely irrelevant</li> <li>- does not explain how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> <li>- exhibits no evidence of organization</li> <li>- uses language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s)</li> <li>- does not provide a concluding statement or section</li> <li>- minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exhibits some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions</li> <li>- establishes but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>- provides a concluding statement or section that follows generally the claim and reasons presented</li> <li>- demonstrates emerging command of conventions with some errors that may hinder comprehension</li> </ul>		

Position Paper Rubric  
Scores 4 - 3

4	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clearly introduces the text and the claim in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose</li> <li>– claim and reasons demonstrate insightful analysis of the topic</li> <li>– acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s) skillfully and smoothly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clearly introduces the text and the claim in a manner that follows from the task and purpose</li> <li>– claim and reasons demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the topic</li> <li>– acknowledges and responds to counterclaim(s) appropriately and clearly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develops the argument (claim and reasons) with relevant, well-chosen facts; definitions; concrete details; quotations; or other information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>– sustains the use of varied, relevant evidence</li> <li>– skillfully and logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develops the argument (claim and reasons) with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>– sustains the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety</li> <li>– logically explains how evidence supports the claim and reasons</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– exhibits clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning</li> <li>– establishes and maintains a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice</li> <li>– provides a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the claim and reasons presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– exhibits clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole</li> <li>– establishes and maintains a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>– provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the claim and reasons presented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension</li> </ul>

**Position Paper Rubric**  
Criteria and CCLS

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>CCLS</b>
<p><b>CLAIM AND REASONS:</b> the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to logically support the author's argument</p>	<p>W.2 R.1-9</p>
<p><b>COMMAND OF EVIDENCE:</b> the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support the author's argument</p>	<p>W.9 R.1-9</p>
<p><b>COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE:</b> the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language</p>	<p>W.2 L.3. L.6</p>
<p><b>CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS:</b> the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</p>	<p>W.2 L.1 L.2</p>

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Name:

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Date:

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**Prompt: Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chains is best for the environment?**

As Michael Pollan points out in his book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, the path our food takes from the farm to our plates can have a major impact on the environment. When we decide what to eat, we should take into account which “food chain” negatively impacts the environment the least. While the hunter-gatherer food chain has very little impact on the environment, it is not realistic to think that this is a viable food chain for our country. Therefore, out of the three food chains that could realistically feed our nation, I think that the local sustainable food chain is the best food chain for the environment; it uses the fewest raw materials and gives off the least amount of pollution.

Local sustainable farms use very few additional materials because they use the natural resources available from the land. For example, Michael Pollan explains that on the Polyface farm, Joel Salatin farms following the natural cycle, which means he does not need to use toxic chemicals to get rid of parasites on his cows. In nature, “birds follow and clean up after herbivores” (Pollan 147). After the cows graze in a pasture, Salatin puts the hens in to eat the grubs and larvae from the cowpats. This prevents bugs and parasites from bothering the cows, so the cows don’t need insecticides (Pollan 165). Additionally, unlike industrial and industrial organic farms, Salatin’s local sustainable farm doesn’t require any added fertilizer. Salatin leaves the chickens in the pasture just long enough for their droppings to give the grass the right amount of nitrogen it needs (Pollan 163). Salatin does have to buy chicken feed since only 20 percent of his chickens’ diet comes from the grass, worms, and insects they find; but that chicken feed is one of the few raw materials he needs (Pollan 163). Because farmers like Joel Salatin orchestrate their animals and plants to work together just like they do in nature, local sustainable farms require very few added inputs and are therefore best for the environment.

In addition to using few raw materials, the local sustainable food chain gives off very little pollution. Unlike industrial farms and feedlots where the animal manure is unusable “toxic pollution” (Pollan 49), farms like Salatin’s don’t have any manure waste. On Salatin’s farm the manure either fertilizes the field directly, or it is turned into compost. For example, he suspends his rabbits’ cages over woodchips so the urine sinks into the chips. He lets hens loose in the woodchips to eat worms. According to Pollan, “the scratching of the hens turns the chips and the rabbits’ nitrogen-rich urine into valuable compost” (166). Rather than having manure and urine that has to be disposed of or hauled away, on a local sustainable farm like Salatin’s, this waste is not waste at all. It actually enriches the fields to keep the grass and the animals healthy. Another way in which the local

sustainable farm creates less pollution is through transportation. Because local sustainable farms sell food locally, there is less pollution created by transporting the food. Pollan states that growing, processing, and transporting lettuce from the industrial organic food chain uses 57 times more calories in fossil fuel than it contains in food (125). Fossil fuels emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Food from farms like Polyface requires little transportation and therefore creates much less pollution.

Many people say that eating from the local sustainable food chain is not that much better for the environment if you eat meat, particularly beef. According to a 2006 report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 18 percent of the world's man-made greenhouse-gas emissions come from livestock (Abend). This is because cows and other ruminants emit a large amount of methane and nitrous oxide through their digestion process (DeWeerd). However, people who argue that grass-fed beef is not better for the environment are not looking closely at farms like Salatin's. Because cows at Polyface are moved from pasture to pasture to graze, the cows actually make the pastures healthier. And the healthy pastures keep carbon in the ground, reducing the amount of carbon released into the air as a greenhouse gas (Abend). Eliot Coleman, who runs a farm similar to Polyface, points to the value of eating from the local sustainable food chain, including meat. He says: "A vegetarian eating tofu made in a factory from soybeans grown in Brazil is responsible for a lot more CO<sub>2</sub> than I am" (Abend). The evidence shows that local sustainable meat does not harm the environment.

If we all eat food that is grown using local sustainable practices, following the natural cycle, then our food choices will not hurt the environment. Stakeholders—such as the farm animals like cows and chickens—will benefit from this food chain because they will live more naturally. In fact, if we, as consumers, show farmers that we want food grown on small sustainable farms like Joel Salatin's, and more farmers start running their farms so that nothing is wasted, little input is required, and there is no pollution, then our land will actually begin to be repaired from the environmental degradation caused by the industrial food chain.

### Works Cited

- Abend, Lisa. "How Cows (Grass-Fed Only) Could Save the Planet." *Time*. 25 Jan. 2010. Web. 12 Aug. 2013.
- Chevat, Richie, and Michael Pollan. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat*. Young Readers ed. New York: Dial, 2009. Print.
- DeWeerd, Sarah. "Is Local Food Better?" *Worldwatch Institute*. n.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2013.

**Position Paper**  
Sandwich Organizer

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**Name:**

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**Date:**

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A sandwich is made up of three parts—the bread on top, the filling in the middle, and the bread on the bottom. A Quote Sandwich is similar; it is how you use evidence in an position paper. First, you introduce a quote (evidence from a text) by telling your reader where it came from. Then, you include the quote. Lastly, you explain how the quote supports your idea, which is the reasoning.

**Claim:**

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**Reason for Making that Claim:**

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**Introduce the Quote:**

For example: In Chapter 17 of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan writes ...

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**Include the Quote:**

Tip: Make sure to punctuate quotes correctly using quotation marks.

Remember to cite the page number in parentheses after the quote.

For example: "Because of the chickens, Joel doesn't have to treat his cattle with toxic chemicals to get rid of parasites" (165).

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**Analyze the quote:**

Tip: This is where you explain how the quote supports your idea.

For example: This shows that in local sustainable farming, animals are healthier because they don't need to be given toxic chemicals.

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**Mid-Unit 3 Assessment:**  
Draft Position Paper

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**Name:**

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**Date:**

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Learning Target: I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence (W.8.1)

**Focus question: Which of Michael Pollan’s four food chain would best feed the US?**

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**In your essay, be sure to:**

- State which food chain you would choose and at least two reasons why.
- Provide evidence and sound reasoning for each of the reasons you have provided.
- Provide a counterclaim and respond to it.

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**Name:**

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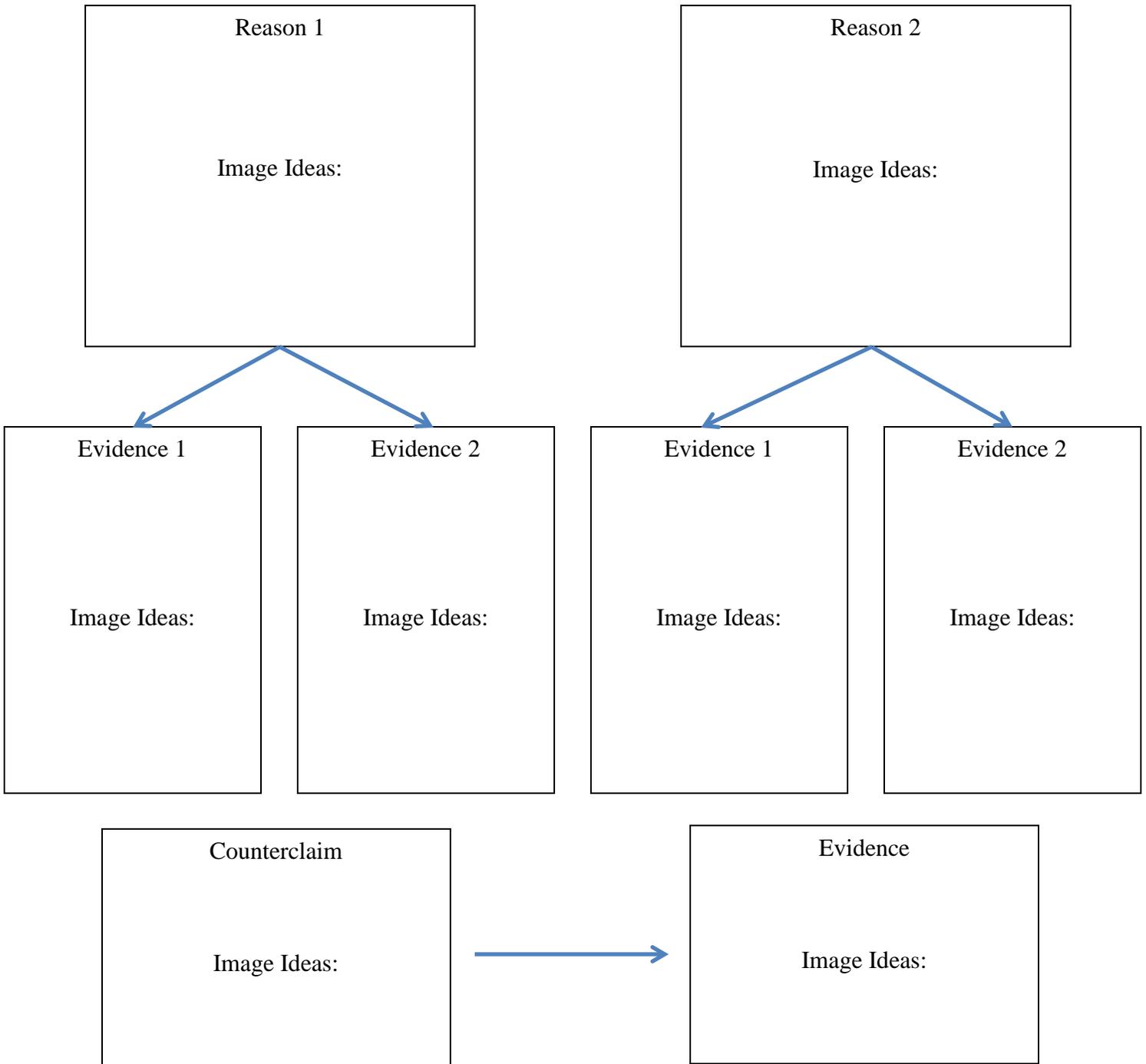
Your task is to create a visual representation of your argument from your position paper. To do so, you will use your claim, your reasons, and at least three of your pieces of evidence. You will then select images that represent your key pieces of evidence and organize them on a page or poster, using either chart paper and markers or a computer.

You will share your performance task with the rest of the class in a classroom Gallery Walk at the end of this unit.

See the next page for a sample.

Use the rest of the next page for your planning.

**CLAIM:**



**MICHAEL POLLAN'S LOCAL SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHAIN IS BEST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE ...**

Uses few additional materials



\* MS Word Clipart

Reason 2

(Picture to represent reason)

\*citation for image

Chickens stay in the pasture just long enough for their droppings to give the grass the right amount of nitrogen it needs.



\* MS Word Clipart

Evidence 2

(Picture to represent evidence)

\*citation for image

Evidence 1

(Picture to represent evidence)

\*citation for image

Evidence 2

(Picture to represent evidence)

\*citation for image

Counterclaim

(Picture to represent counterclaim)

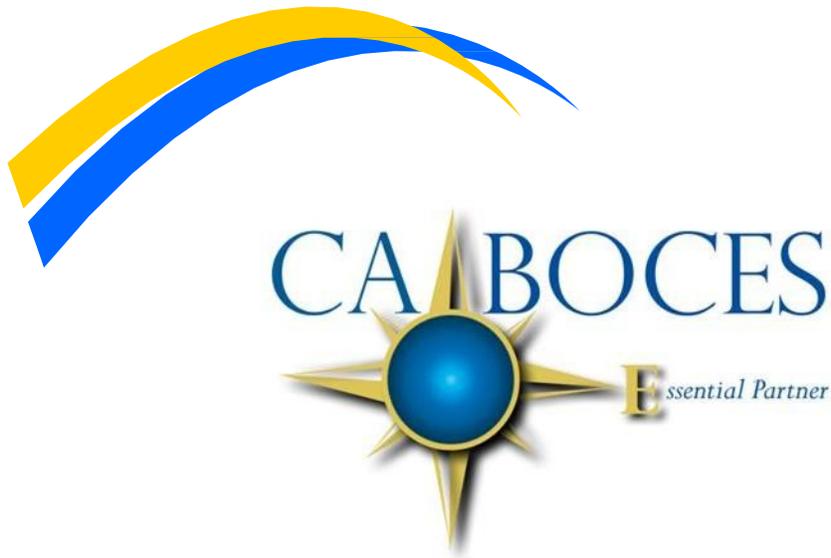
\* citation for image

Evidence

(Picture to represent evidence)

\* citation for image





Learning Resources  
CoSer 501  
Educational Media

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