The Six Traits Across the Curriculum: *A Writer's Roadmap*

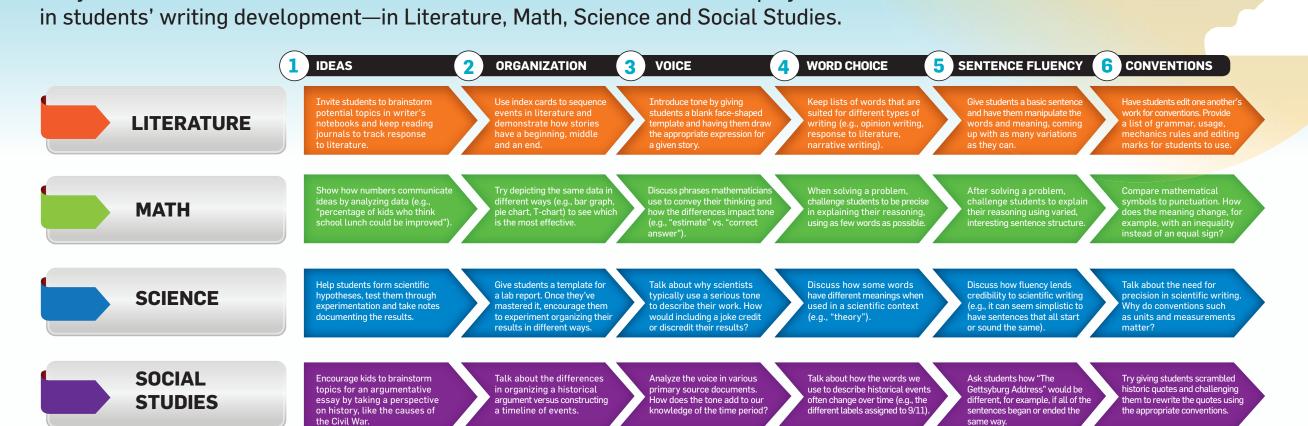Did you know? The Common Core State Standards ask EVERY teacher to play a role in students' writing development—in Literature, Math, Science and Social Studies.

	1 IDEAS	**2 ORGANIZATION**	**3 VOICE**	**4 WORD CHOICE**	**5 SENTENCE FLUENCY**	**6 CONVENTIONS**
LITERATURE	Invite students to brainstorm potential topics in writer's notebooks and keep reading journals to track response to literature.	Use index cards to sequence events in literature and demonstrate how stories have a beginning, middle and an end.	Introduce tone by giving students a blank face-shaped template and having them draw the appropriate expression for a given story.	Keep lists of words that are suited for different types of writing (e.g., opinion writing, response to literature, narrative writing).	Give students a basic sentence and have them manipulate the words and meaning, coming up with as many variations as they can.	Have students edit one another's work for conventions. Provide a list of grammar, usage, mechanics rules and editing marks for students to use.
MATH	Show how numbers communicate ideas by analyzing data (e.g., "percentage of kids who think school lunch could be improved").	Try depicting the same data in different ways (e.g., bar graph, pie chart, T-chart) to see which is the most effective.	Discuss phrases mathematicians use to convey their thinking and how the differences impact tone (e.g., "estimate" vs. "correct answer").	When solving a problem, challenge students to be precise in explaining their reasoning, using as few words as possible.	After solving a problem, challenge students to explain their reasoning using varied, interesting sentence structure.	Compare mathematical symbols to punctuation. How does the meaning change, for example, with an inequality instead of an equal sign?
SCIENCE	Help students form scientific hypotheses, test them through experimentation and take notes documenting the results.	Give students a template for a lab report. Once they've mastered it, encourage them to experiment organizing their results in different ways.	Talk about why scientists typically use a serious tone to describe their work. How would including a joke credit or discredit their results?	Discuss how some words have different meanings when used in a scientific context (e.g., "theory").	Discuss how fluency lends credibility to scientific writing (e.g., it can seem simplistic to have sentences that all start or sound the same).	Talk about the need for precision in scientific writing. Why do conventions such as units and measurements matter?
SOCIAL STUDIES	Encourage kids to brainstorm topics for an argumentative essay by taking a perspective on history, like the causes of the Civil War.	Talk about the differences in organizing a historical argument versus constructing a timeline of events.	Analyze the voice in various primary source documents. How does the tone add to our knowledge of the time period?	Talk about how the words we use to describe historical events often change over time (e.g., the different labels assigned to 9/11).	Ask students how "The Gettysburg Address" would be different, for example, if all of the sentences began or ended the same way.	Try giving students scrambled historic quotes and challenging them to rewrite the quotes using the appropriate conventions.

Want more help writing across the curriculum using the six traits? Check out Strategies for Writers, a new curriculum from Zaner-Bloser!