

Table 1
Brief Guide for Providing Written Feedback to Support Students' Higher Level Thinking in Text-Based Writing

Text-based writing task and thinking goal	Common missteps in students' writing	Recognizing common missteps	Written feedback that gets students back on track
<p><i>Analysis of literary elements:</i> Construct new ideas not explicitly stated in the text about the relation between elements (e.g., setting and character).</p>	Summarizing individual elements rather than showing how they relate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the elements merely identified, without being explicitly linked to each other? Does the response neglect to clearly address how one element affects or causes the other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press students to explicitly articulate the cause-and-effect relation between the elements of analysis. Remind students to use linking words and phrases that convey relation (e.g., <i>because, makes, affects</i>).
	Getting sidetracked by alluring details rather than focusing on a larger idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the response only recapitulate (interesting, memorable) facts and details? Does the response feature an idea that is explicitly given in the text and does not require inference? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redirect students to consider bigger ideas and messages in the text (i.e., throughout the text, not a single incident or phrase). Encourage students to consider how elements (e.g., setting, characters) change and develop and the effects of this on the text.
<p><i>Comparing and contrasting:</i> Break down a subject into constituent parts and show their relation to each other by examining nuanced, implicit similarities and differences.</p>	Focusing on superficial rather than nuanced similarities and differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the response only address superficial, obvious, explicitly stated similarities and differences (e.g., characters' physical features)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct students to consider larger ideas in the text or in the discipline. Help students recognize similarities within apparent differences and distinguish differences among seemingly similar things.
	Treating topics of comparison separately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the response summarize or describe each topic separately without explicitly discussing them in relation to each other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest that students reorganize their writing by "slicing" rather than "chunking" points of comparison in order to highlight similarities and differences.
<p><i>Interpreting theme:</i> Synthesize discrete events or details into a coherent, generally applicable (and often abstract) statement about life.</p>	Identifying the topic rather than articulating a full statement of theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the theme stated in less than a full sentence that says something about the topic (e.g., friendship) and does not just identify the topic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions that prompt students to make an observation or claim about the topic. For example, ask, "What is the author saying about courage?"
	Summarizing the text rather than discussing theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the response feature only a literal, straightforward summary of the plot or description of characters? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a series of questions that guide students to identify a theme statement, which unpacks the theme statement in a logical way.
	Using clichés	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the statement of theme trite, overly generic, and universally applicable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the stated theme, if appropriate, but encourage students to be more specific. Guide students to delineate the big concept more by thinking of specific subtypes or contexts (e.g., love → sibling love, love separated by distance).