

### **Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts: English Language Arts**

- Students *delineate* and *evaluate* the *argument* that Thomas Paine makes in *Common Sense*. They *assess the reasoning* present in his analysis, including the *premises and purposes* of his essay. [RI.11–12.8]
- Students *analyze* Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, identifying its *purpose* and evaluating *rhetorical features* such as the listing of grievances. Students compare and contrast the *themes* and argument found there to those of other *U.S. documents of historical and literary significance*, such as the Olive Branch Petition. [RI.11–12.9]
- Students *provide an objective summary* of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* wherein they *analyze how* he articulates *the central ideas* of living simply and being self-reliant and how those ideas *interact and build on one another* (e.g., “According to Thoreau, how specifically does moving toward complexity in one’s life undermine self-reliance?”) [RI.11–12.2]
- Students *analyze how* the *key term success* is interpreted, *used, and refined over the course of* G. K. Chesterton’s essay “The Fallacy of Success.” [RI.11–12.4]
- Students determine Richard Hofstadter’s *purpose and point of view* in his “Abraham Lincoln and the Self-Made Myth,” *analyzing* how both Hofstadter’s *style and content contribute* to the *eloquent and powerful* contrast he draws between the younger, ambitious Lincoln and the sober, more reflective man of the presidential years. [RI.11–12.6]