



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# **Grade 6: Module 2B: Unit 2: Lesson 9**

## **Qualities of a Strong Literary Essay**



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**Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)**

I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1)

I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.6.4)

With support from peers and adults, I can use a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing. (W.6.5)

**Supporting Learning Targets**

- I can describe the qualities of a literary argument essay.
- I can analyze how evidence from the text supports a claim in a model essay.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Model essay text-coded to show claim ©, text evidence (T), examples from life today (L), and explanation (E)



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Unpacking Learning Targets (5 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Work Time               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Unpacking the Prompt: End of Unit Assessment (10 minutes)</li> <li>B. Reading like a Writer: Annotating the Model Essay (12 minutes)</li> <li>C. Analyzing Evidenced-Based Claims: Model Essay (16 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Closing and Assessment               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Reflection: Why Do We Analyze Models? (2 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Homework               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Read “Simon, the Knight’s Son” and complete the Themes of Adversity graphic organizer.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson launches the end of unit assessment, in which students will write a literary argument essay. Within this essay, they will answer the question: “Do we struggle with the same adversities as the people of <i>Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!?</i>” The task is labeled a literary argument because students compare the adversities described in <i>Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!</i> to the adversities they face in their own lives and use evidence from the novel and their own experiences to support their position.</li> <li>• For the purpose of the end of unit Assessment, the New York State Grades 6–8 Expository Writing Evaluation Rubric has been adapted to assess the standard about written arguments, Writing 6.1, and has been renamed the Literary Argument Essay Rubric.</li> <li>• In this lesson, students closely examine the prompt and a model essay. This process is meant to ensure that they have a clear understanding and purpose for the work ahead. To do this, students first “code” the essay to make note of claims, evidence, and analysis. Then, they use the Forming Evidence-Based Claims graphic organizer to solidify their thinking. They will use another one of these graphic organizers during the pre-writing process for their own essay, beginning in Lesson 10.</li> <li>• Teachers co-create the Qualities of a Strong Literary Argument Essay anchor chart with students in Work Time A. As students share the qualities they think should be added to the anchor chart, do your best to translate their ideas into language from the rubric. Students will use the rubric in later lessons to evaluate their writing, and this will help them become familiar with the language and eventually the rubric itself.</li> <li>• In advance:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prepare the definition of a “literary argument” to display with a document camera.</li> <li>– Prepare three questions for unpacking targets on the board. See “Opening.”</li> <li>– Review the student model essay.</li> <li>– Create a coding guide.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Post: Learning targets and coding guide.</li> </ul>



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
literary argument, qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Document camera</li><li>• Are We Medieval? A Literary Argument Essay Prompt (one per student and one to display)</li><li>• Qualities of a Strong Literary Argument Essay anchor chart (new; co-created with students in Work Time A)</li><li>• Model Essay: “Are We Medieval? Opportunities in the Middle Ages and Today” (one per student and one to display)</li><li>• Are We Medieval?: Forming Evidence-Based Claims graphic organizer (one to display)</li><li>• Are We Medieval?: Forming Evidence-Based Claims graphic organizer (answers, for teacher reference)</li><li>• Themes of Adversity graphic organizer for “Simon, the Knight’s Son” (one per student)</li></ul>



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Unpacking Learning Targets (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets. Invite them to follow along as you read the learning targets out loud:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "I can describe the qualities of a literary argument essay."</li><li>* "I can analyze how evidence from the text supports a claim in a model essay."</li></ul></li><li>• Explain that understanding a literary argument is key to their success in the next several lessons. Begin with having them think about what an argument is.</li><li>• Ask students to discuss with an elbow partner:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "Think about a time that you were in an argument with someone. What causes an argument?"</li></ul></li><li>• Cold call a pair to share their thinking. Ideally, students will say: "We disagreed about something" or "We had different ideas."</li><li>• Explain that in writing, there is a difference between argument and opinion. In speaking, we often say we had an argument because we had a difference of opinion, but when we refer to writing, the meaning of the two words is different. Writing an opinion piece means that it's something a person believes, whether or not the person has evidence to prove it. However, in a written argument, the author will make a claim, support it with reasons, and prove those reasons with evidence.</li><li>• Ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "If a written argument involves an author making a claim, supporting it with reasons, and proving those reasons with evidence, what can you infer is a literary argument?"</li></ul></li><li>• After giving students some think time, ask for a volunteer to share his or her answer. Listen for students to infer that a literary argument means the supporting reasons and evidence come from a text, from a piece of literature.</li><li>• Using a <b>document camera</b>, display the definition of a literary argument: "A literary argument is a piece of writing that makes a claim about a literary text and uses details and evidence to support that claim."</li><li>• Tell students that in order for them to get ready to write their own essays, they will look at a model essay today.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussing and clarifying the language of learning targets helps build academic vocabulary.</li></ul>



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Unpacking the Prompt: End of Unit Assessment (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display and distribute <b>Are We Medieval? A Literary Argument Essay Prompt</b>. Invite students to follow along with you as you read the prompt aloud. Ask them to circle any unfamiliar words. Clarify words as needed.</li><li>• Direct students to underline words and phrases in the prompt that help make a strong literary argument.</li><li>• Invite them to close their eyes for a moment and envision themselves writing their essay. Ask them to think about what the essay needs to include and what thinking they need to do in order to write.</li><li>• Now, have students open their eyes, get with a partner, and discuss the three questions displayed on the board. Ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What is this prompt asking you to do?”</li><li>* “What will your writing have to include to address the question?”</li><li>* “What thinking will you have to do to complete that writing?”</li></ul></li><li>• Refocus students whole group. Begin creating the <b>Qualities of a Strong Literary Argument Essay anchor chart</b>.</li><li>• Cold call pairs to share what they discussed. Add these contributions to the anchor chart. As students share, put their answers into language from the rubric. For example, if a student says, “We have to choose a position,” you might write: “Make a claim = choosing a side.” Be sure the chart includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Make and introduce a claim. (Students may say, “Choose a side and write it at the beginning.”)</li><li>– Choose text evidence and examples from life today that support the claim.</li><li>– Explain how each piece of evidence and example supports the claim. (Students might say, “Add my own thinking” or “Explain the evidence.”)</li><li>– Make it coherent. (Students might say, “Make it stick together; have everything connect.”)</li><li>– Make it logical. (Students might say, “Have it make sense.”)</li></ul></li><li>• For anything students do not identify on their own, add it to the anchor chart and explain why you are adding it.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anchor charts provide a visual cue to students about what to do when you ask them to work independently. They also serve as note-catchers when the class is co-constructing ideas.</li><li>• Adding visuals or graphics to anchor charts can help students remember or understand key ideas or directions.</li></ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Reading like a Writer: Annotating the Model Essay (12 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display and distribute the <b>Model Essay: “Are We Medieval? Opportunities in the Middle Ages and Today.”</b></li> <li>• Congratulate students on recognizing the criteria for a strong literary argument. Tell them they will now begin reading like a writer, studying a model literary argument essay to see what they will be writing.</li> <li>• Invite students to follow along while you read the model essay out loud.</li> <li>• Ask students to turn to their partner and talk about the gist of the essay. If necessary, prompt them about the content of the essay:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “What claim is the author of this essay making?”</li> <li>* “What is the purpose of the body paragraphs?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Listen for students to explain that the author is making the claim that the opportunities available to children in the Middle Ages were very different from the opportunities available to them today. Also listen for students to explain that the purpose of the body paragraphs is to justify this claim with reasons and evidence from the text and from personal life experiences.</li> <li>• Explain that based on the close reading of the prompt, students already know that a strong essay includes a claim, text evidence, and an explanation of how the evidence supports the claim.</li> <li>• Direct students' attention to the posted coding guide.</li> <li>• Ask them to write the codes on the top of the model essay so they remember what they are: C=claim, T=evidence from the text, L=examples from life today, E=explanation.</li> <li>• Reread the first two paragraphs of the model essay aloud as students follow along. After reading these paragraphs, stop to model the process of coding. Ask:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “Where is the claim?”</li> <li>* “Where is the evidence from the text?”</li> <li>* “Where are the examples from life today?”</li> <li>* “Where is the explanation about the evidence?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Listen to student suggestions and mark the displayed model essay as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mark a C next to the first sentence of the first paragraph, in which the author states the opportunities were different back then.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for students to process and understand the “content” of the essay before they look more closely at the writer’s craft.</li> <li>• Consider giving select students pre-annotated or pre-highlighted texts. This will allow them to focus on key sections of the essay.</li> <li>• Coding the text will allow students to return to the model essay later to help guide them in their independent writing.</li> </ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Mark a T next to the first piece of evidence in quotation marks in the first body paragraph.</li><li>– Mark an L at the end of the paragraph in which the author discusses his/her father.</li><li>– Write an E next to the sentence after the first sentence in quotation marks in the first paragraph.</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check for student understanding by asking:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “Show a Fist to Five about how well you understand how I coded our model essay.”</li></ul></li><li>• Note any students who have less than a three and circulate to them first when they work on subsequent paragraphs.</li><li>• Prompt students to read the remainder of the model essay, using the coding guide to annotate it.</li><li>• Circulate and observe annotations, making note of whether students are able to find the text evidence and the explanations.</li><li>• Refocus whole group. Ask students to turn to a different elbow partner and discuss their annotations.</li><li>• Most likely, you will notice some students struggling to make a decision about whether part of the essay is a T, L, or E, or whether they should code T and E for the same part of the essay. Let them know that explaining supporting evidence is the analysis part of the essay, and many times it can be challenging to identify it on a first read.</li></ul>	





Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>C. Analyzing Evidenced-Based Claims: Model Essay (16 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display the <b>Are We Medieval?: Forming Evidence-Based Claims</b> graphic organizer.</li><li>• Invite a volunteer to tell you how she or he coded the second paragraph (Body Paragraph 1).</li><li>• Write the evidence in the “text evidence” box of the graphic organizer, the real life experience evidence in the “examples from life today” box. Record the explanation in the “explaining the thinking” box of the graphic organizer under both the text evidence and examples from life today.</li><li>• Refer to the <b>Are We Medieval?: Forming Evidence-Based Claims</b> graphic organizer (answers, for teacher reference) as necessary.</li><li>• Invite students to discuss with their new elbow partner how they think the second column of the organizer should be filled out for the third paragraph, Body Paragraph 2.</li><li>• Invite volunteers to share out and fill in the displayed graphic organizer.</li><li>• Ask students to give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down if they felt successful separating the text evidence from the explanations.</li><li>• Note the students who show a thumbs-down; they may need more scaffolding to separate text evidence and explanations in Lesson 10.</li></ul>	



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Reflection: Why Do We Analyze Models? (2 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to Think-Pair-Share with their elbow partner:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “Why are we studying our model essay so closely?”</li></ul></li><li>• Invite volunteers to share their answers. Guide students to understand that they are reading like writers as they study the model essay in preparation for writing their own essay. Analyzing the text is helping them to identify the type of content and evidence they need to include in a strong essay.</li><li>• Distribute a <b>Themes of Adversity graphic organizer for “Simon, the Knight’s Son.”</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing self-assessment and reflection supports all learners, but research shows it supports struggling learners most.</li></ul>
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read “Simon, the Knight’s Son” and complete the Themes of Adversity graphic organizer.</li></ul>	



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## Supporting Materials



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**Are We Medieval?:**  
A Literary Argument Essay Prompt

**Learning Targets**

I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1)

I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.6.1)

I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.6.4)

**Focus question:** Do we still struggle with any of the same adversities as the people of *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*?

In *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*, the character monologues describe the adversities faced by different kinds of people in the Middle Ages.

In this assessment, you are going to write a literary argument essay in which you will establish a claim about whether we struggle today with the same adversities as those faced by the people in *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* You will establish your claim in an introduction. Then to support your claim, you will choose two adversities that are either the same as those experienced by children in the Middle Ages or different, and use examples from life today and from *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* Finally, you will provide closure to your essay with a conclusion.

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

- Write an introduction that presents your claim (either yes we do still struggle with some of the same adversities, or no we don't).
- Use two adversities faced by the people in the Middle Ages to support your claim.
- Use relevant and specific text evidence, including direct quotations from *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* to support each adversity.
- Support your claim with examples from life today for each adversity.
- Explain how your text and examples from life today support your claim.
- Use transitional words and phrases to make your writing cohesive and logical.
- Write a conclusion that provides further thinking on the subject.

**Model Essay:** “Are We Medieval?  
Opportunities in the Middle Ages and Today”

**Focus question:** Did children in the Middle Ages have similar opportunities to those available to us today?

I think the opportunities available to children in the Middle Ages were very different from the opportunities available to us today. In some ways, children in the Middle Ages had employment and work opportunities that are no longer an option today. However, today we have educational opportunities that were not available to some children in the Middle Ages.

Although many of the children in the Middle Ages weren’t able to go to school, they learned useful work skills and were guaranteed jobs in the future. This is an opportunity that isn’t available for us today. For example, Thomas, the doctor’s son in *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*, learned the skills to be a doctor from his father. He said, “And I am bound to carry on tradition. With every patient that my father cures, I learn more medicine” (page 18). It is no longer possible to become a doctor just by having a father who is a doctor and by working with him and learning from him from a young age. Today, if I wanted to become a doctor I would have to do very well in school and study at college for many years.

Another difference in opportunity is that today we all have the opportunity of education. This means we are able to make choices about what we want to do in the future. The work children did with their parents or as apprentices limited them in their choices for their future. They were unable to change their social position because they had to follow in their parents’ footsteps and do the same work. Otho, the miller’s son, described how being a miller is something the males in his family have done for a few generations and how he would automatically become the miller after his father. He said, “Father is the miller, as his father was of old, and I shall be the miller, when my father’s flesh is cold” (page 27). It seems that being a miller isn’t what he would like to do and he says at the very end, “And someday I will have a son—and God help him!” (page 29) as if he feels sorry for any sons that he may have because they will also have to be millers like him. Today, if I would like to be a teacher, when I graduate I can go to college to study education.

I selected two differences in opportunities available to children in the Middle Ages and children today: an opportunity that children in the Middle Ages had that we don’t have, and an opportunity available to us today that wasn’t available to children back then. Overall, I think that we have more opportunities today than children did in the Middle Ages. We can choose our future based on what we are interested in, and we can change our social position.



**Are We Medieval?:**

Forming Evidence-Based Claims Graphic Organizer

**Focus question:** Did children in the Middle Ages have similar opportunities to those available to us today?

<b>The Claim</b> <b>Children in the Middle Ages had very different opportunities than those available to us today</b>	
Opportunity 1	Opportunity 2
Opportunity 1 text evidence (T)	Opportunity 2 text evidence (T)
Opportunity 1 examples from life today (L)	Opportunity 2 examples from life today (L)
Explaining the thinking about this evidence ... (E)	Explaining the thinking about this evidence ... (E)

**Are We Medieval?:** Forming Evidence-Based Claims Graphic Organizer  
(Answers, for Teacher Reference)

**Focus question:** Did children in the Middle Ages have similar opportunities to those available to us today?

<b>The Claim</b> <i>Children in the Middle Ages had very different opportunities than those available to us today</i>	
<b>Opportunity 1</b> <i>becoming a doctor by learning from father</i>	<b>Opportunity 2</b> <i>becoming a miller because his father was and his grandfather was</i>
<b>Opportunity 1 text evidence (T)</b> <i>“And I am bound to carry on tradition. With every patient that my father cures, I learn more medicine” (page 18).</i>	<b>Opportunity 2 text evidence (T)</b> <i>Father is the miller, As his father was of old, And I shall be the miller, When my father’s flesh is cold” (page 27).</i>  <i>“And someday I will have a son—and God help him!” (page 29)</i>
<b>Opportunity 1 examples from life today (L)</b> <i>My father is a teacher, and I would actually really like to be a teacher too because I love teaching my friends how to do things that I can do better. But in order to do so, I am going to have to go to school to learn all of the things that a teacher needs to know and be able to do.</i>	<b>Opportunity 2 examples from life today (L)</b> <i>I would like to be a teacher, so when I graduate I am going to go to college to study education, so that I can become a teacher.</i>



**Are We Medieval?:** Forming Evidence-Based Claims Graphic Organizer  
(Answers, for Teacher Reference)

**Focus question:** Did children in the Middle Ages have similar opportunities to those available to us today?

**The Claim**

**Children in the Middle Ages had very different opportunities than those available to us today**

Explaining the thinking about this evidence ... (E)  
*It is no longer possible to become a doctor just by having a father who is a doctor and by working with him and learning from him from a young age. Today, if I wanted to become a doctor I would have to do very well in school and study at college for many years, taking very difficult exams to achieve specialist college degrees.*

*I can't automatically become a teacher just because my father is.*

Explaining the thinking about this evidence ... (E)  
*He implies throughout his monologue that being a miller isn't what he would like to do, and we can infer from his quote at the very end that he feels sorry for any sons that he may have because they will also have to be a miller.*

*Today we all have the opportunity of education, which allows us to make choices about what we want to do in the future.*





Themes of Adversity Graphic Organizer for “Simon, the Knight’s Son”

Name:

Date:

**Guiding question:** How do individuals survive in challenging environments?

**Directions:** Read the monologue in *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* Determine the theme/themes of adversity and the group or groups of people affected. Record the text-based evidence. Include the page number where the evidence was found.

Theme of adversity faced in this monologue and group of people affected	Text-based evidence (include the page number where the evidence was found in the text)	Does this theme of adversity exist today? Explain.