

PART 2

MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“You’ve got to find what you love.”

OBJECTIVE:

Students develop the ability to make evidence-based claims through a close reading of the text.



ACTIVITIES

1- INDEPENDENT READING AND FINDING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Students independently read part of the text and use the Making EBC Tool to look for evidence to support a claim made by the teacher.

2- READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Students follow along as they listen to the same part of the text being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.

3- FIND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IN PAIRS

In pairs, students use the Making EBC Tool to look for evidence to support additional claims about the text made by the teacher.

4- CLASS DISCUSSION OF EBCs

The class discusses evidence in support of claims found by student pairs.

5- FORMING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim of their own and present it to the class.

ESTIMATED TIME: 1-3 days

MATERIALS:

Making EBC Tool
Forming EBC Handout
Forming EBC Tool
EBC Criteria Checklist I
TCD Checklist



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RI.6.1

RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RI.6.2 RI.6.3 SL.6.1

RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.6.3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

SL.6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ACTIVITY 1: INDEPENDENT READING AND FINDING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Students independently read part of the text and use the Making EBC Tool to look for evidence to support a claim made by the teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students independently work on paragraphs 9-14 of the text. Depending on scheduling and student ability, students can be assigned to read and complete the tool for homework. Teachers should decide what works best for their students. It's essential that students have opportunity to read the text independently. All students must develop the habit of perseverance in reading. Assigning the reading as homework potentially gives them more time with the text. Either way, it might be a good idea to provide some time at the beginning of class for students

to read the section quietly by themselves. This ensures that all students have had at least some independent reading time.

Also depending on scheduling and student ability, some students might choose (or be encouraged) to read ahead. Instructional focus should follow the pacing outlined in the activities, but students will only benefit from reading and re-reading the text throughout the duration of the unit.

ACTIVITY 2: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Students follow along as they listen to the same part of the text being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students follow along as they listen to paragraphs 9-14 of the text being read aloud and discuss a three text-dependent questions:

1- In paragraph 10 we learn that between age 20 and 30, Steve Jobs experienced great success and great failure. What does the text tell us were his successes, and how did his failure occur?

2- Why does Jobs claim that, "getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me"?

3- What does Jobs mean when he says, "Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick"? He then tells his audience two things not to do, beginning his sentences with the word "Don't." What does paragraph 14 suggest he is trying to tell the Stanford graduates?

Read the text aloud to the class while students follow along. Alternatively, students could be asked to read aloud to the class. Work through the text using the following three text-dependent questions.

ACTIVITY 2: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

1- In paragraph 10 we learn that between age 20 and 30, Steve Jobs experienced great success and great failure. What does the text tell us were his successes, and how did his failure occur?

Paragraph 10 provides more key details about Steve Jobs' unusual path to success and fame. Students need to comprehend these details, and understand the perplexing story of a man who could found a \$2 billion company in his parent's garage and then get fired from his own company, all within ten years of his life. It may be worth stopping to let students comment on this turn of fate – which can provide opportunities to ask them if their comments are claims supported by the text or just expressions of their opinions. This question set, while focusing on the literal details of this part of the story, provides opportunities for students to scour the paragraph for both details that list his successes ("what") and details that explain his failure ("how"). The first sentence of this question set is also in itself a claim – an example that models how details lead to a conclusion and a statement of a claim ("Jobs experienced great success and great failure.") It is also closely related to the teacher-made claim students will have encountered in completing The Forming EBC Tool. Help students recognize the statement as a claim and understand that as they search for details in response to this questions set, they are also finding evidence to support and develop this simple, summary-based claim.

2- Why does Jobs claim that, "getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me"?

This question again leads students to attend to narrative details in paragraphs 12 and 13, some of which relate to Jobs' feelings ("The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything." – a great sentence to read and discuss closely) and some of which relate to his later successes with NeXT and Pixar (which students may want to discuss, being familiar with animated films such as Toy Story). It also uses the word "claim" to characterize what Jobs says in paragraph 13. Help students see that what Jobs is doing is making his own claim about events in his life – and have them look to see if he presents evidence to support his claim. Finally, the question calls for students to develop their own conclusions about "why" Jobs makes his claim – which they need to explain and support using specific references to the text.

3- What does Jobs mean when he says, "Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick"? He then tells his audience two things not to do, beginning his sentences with the word "Don't." What does paragraph 14 suggest he is trying to tell the Stanford graduates?

The third question set should force students to scan the text in paragraph 14 to find the "brick" sentence and the three sentences that begin with "Don't." This is good practice for a basic skill of close reading, and presents an opportunity for informal assessment of students' foundational reading skills (if they have trouble locating the sentences, they will also struggle with the tasks in this lesson). In answering the first question about Jobs' meaning, students have to draw a conclusion based on their reading of textual details (all the things he has mentioned about his unusual history at Apple) – which is the second step

ACTIVITY 2: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES



in the process of arriving at a claim. Finally, students are asked to interpret two very simple, but profound, statements: “Don’t lose faith” and “Don’t settle” (which, it should be pointed out, Jobs repeats for emphasis). The messages inherent in these direct statements to the graduates are expanded in paragraph 14, highlighted by Jobs’ advice that “You’ve got to find what you love.” With the final question of the set, students must draw a conclusion about Jobs’ advice and, essentially, make a claim about what they think (based on textual evidence!) he is trying to tell the graduates. Having students work on this question in pairs, then report out their claims about Jobs’ message, provides more practice in working from textual details to a claim (and back again) – and also another opportunity for informal assessment of students’ progress.

Following discussion, return to the Forming EBC Tool and discuss textual “details” that have emerged as “interesting” during the discussion of the text dependent questions.

ACTIVITY 3: FIND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

In pairs, students use the Making EBC Tool to look for evidence to support additional claims about the text made by the teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Once the class has reached a solid understanding of the text, connect it to the skill of making claims and supporting them with evidence by presenting a few main claims. Pass out the tools and have students work in pairs to find evidence to support the claims.

Collect each student’s Making EBC Tool with the evidence they found for the first claim. These should be evaluated to get an assessment of where each student is in the skill development. Students should use their tools for their work in pairs—repeating the first claim and refining their evidence based on the read aloud and class discussion. Even though students are not finding the evidence independently, they should each fill in the tools to reinforce their acquisition of the logical structure among the ideas. Students should get into the habit of using quotation marks when recording direct quotes and including the line numbers of the evidence.

The instructional focus here is developing familiarity with claims about texts and the use of textual evidence to support them. Students should still not be expected to develop complete sentences to express supporting evidence. The pieces of evidence should be as focused as possible. The idea is for students to identify the precise points in the text that support the claim. This focus is lost if the pieces of evidence become too large. The tools are constructed to elicit a type of “pointing” at the evidence.

One approach for ensuring a close examination of claims and evidence is to provide erroneous claims that contradict textual evidence and ask students to find the places that disprove the claim. Students could then be asked to modify it to account for the evidence.



ACTIVITY 4: CLASS DISCUSSION OF EBCs

The class discusses evidence in support of claims found by student pairs.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

After students have finished their work in pairs, regroup for a class discussion. Have pairs volunteer to present their evidence to the rest of the class. Discuss the evidence, evaluating how each piece supports the claims. Begin by modeling the evaluation, referring to the checklist, and then call on students to evaluate the evidence shared by the other pairs.

They can offer their own evidence to expand the discussion. Carefully guide the exchanges, explicitly asking students to support their evaluations with reference to the text.

These constructive discussions are essential for the skill development. Listening to and evaluating the evidence of others and providing text-based criticism expands students' capacity

to reason through the relationship between claims and evidence. Paying close attention to and providing instructional guidance on the student comments is as important to the process as evaluating the tools and creates a class culture of supporting all claims (including oral critiques) with evidence.

Using the Text-Centered Discussion Checklist is one way of talking about and supporting student participation in class and pair discussions, especially if students are already familiar with the TCD checklist from previous units. If not, time can be taken (if desired) to introduce them to some or all of the criteria of effective text-centered discussions.



ACTIVITY 5: FORMING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim of their own and present it to the class.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Once the claims and evidence have been discussed, students return to the pairs and use the tool to make an evidence-based claim of their own. Pairs should make a single claim, but each student should fill in his or her own tool. Regroup and discuss the claims and evidence as a class. Pairs can use their tool to present their claims and evidence orally.

Talk through the process modeled in the tool, including the nature of the details that stood out to students, the reasoning they used to group and relate them, and the claim they developed from the textual evidence.

Draw upon the Forming EBC Handout and EBC Criteria Checklist I to help guide discussion.



INDEPENDENT READING ACTIVITY

Read paragraphs 15-20 and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a claim and support it with evidence. This activity overlaps with the first activity of Part 3 and can be given as homework or done at the beginning of the next class.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Making EBC Tools should be evaluated to assess the development of the student's grasp of the relationship between claims and textual evidence. They should show progress in the relevance and focus of the evidence. The Forming EBC Tools are students' first attempts at making their own claims with the help of a peer. Basic claims are fine at this point. Use the EBC Criteria Checklist to structure the evaluation and feedback to students. Evaluation should focus on the validity and clarity of the claim and the relevance of the evidence. Recording the "thinking" part of the tool is important in order to strengthen the student's reasoning skills as well as provide them with the academic vocabulary to talk about them.

Evidence should be in quotation marks and the reference recorded. Using quotation marks helps students make the distinction between quotes and paraphrases. It also helps them to eventually incorporate quotes properly into their writing. Recording references is critical not only for proper incorporation in writing, but also because it helps students return to text for re-evaluating evidence and making appropriate selections.

The Text-Centered Discussion Checklist can be used to evaluate student participation in discussions for formative and diagnostic information. Teachers and students can get a sense of areas where development in speaking and listening skills are needed.