

PART 3

ORGANIZING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“If today were the last day of my life...”

OBJECTIVE:

Students expand their ability into organizing evidence to develop and explain claims through a close reading of the text.



ACTIVITIES

1- INDEPENDENT READING AND FORMING EBCs

Students independently read part of the text and use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim.

2- READ ALOUD

Students follow along as they listen to part of the text being read aloud.

3- MODEL ORGANIZING EBCs

The teacher models organizing evidence to develop and explain claims using student evidence-based claims and the Organizing EBC Tool.

4- ORGANIZING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students develop a claim with multiple points using the Organizing EBC Tool.

5- CLASS DISCUSSION OF STUDENT EBCs

The class discusses the evidence-based claims developed by student pairs.

ESTIMATED TIME: 1-3 days

MATERIALS:

Organizing EBC Tool
Forming EBC Tool
EBC Criteria Checklist I



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 FORMING EBCs

Students independently read part of the text and use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students independently work on paragraphs 15-20. 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 an 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 quietly by themselves. This ensures that all students have had least some independent reading time.

ACTIVITY 2: READ ALOUD

Students follow along as they listen to part of the text being read aloud.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Read paragraphs 15-20 aloud to the class while students follow along. Alternatively, students could be asked to read aloud to the class.

ACTIVITY 3: MODEL ORGANIZING EBCs

The teacher models organizing evidence to develop and explain claims using student evidence-based claims and the Organizing EBC Tool.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

The central focus of Part 3 is learning the thinking processes associated with developing an evidence-based claim: reflecting on how one has arrived at the claim; breaking the claim into parts; organizing supporting evidence in a logical sequence; anticipating what an audience will need to know in order to understand the claim; and, eventually, planning a line of reasoning that will substantiate the claim. This is a complex set of cognitive skills, challenging for

most students, but essential so that students can move from the close reading process of arriving at a claim (Parts 1-2 of the unit) to the purposeful writing process of explaining and substantiating that claim (Parts 4-5).

How a reader develops and organizes a claim is dependent upon the nature of the claim itself – and the nature of the text (or texts) from which it arises. In some cases – simple claims involving literal interpretation of the text – indicating

ACTIVITY 3: MODEL ORGANIZING EBCs (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

where the claim comes from in the text and explaining how the reader arrived at it is sufficient. This suggests a more straightforward, explanatory organization. More complex claims, however, often involve multiple parts, points, or premises, each of which needs to be explained and developed, then linked in a logical order into a coherent development.

Students only learn how to develop and organize a claim through practice, ideally moving over time from simpler claims and more familiar organizational patterns to more complex claims and organizations.

Students can be helped in learning how to develop a claim by using a set of developmental guiding questions such as the following:

[Note: the first few questions might be used with younger or less experienced readers, the latter questions with students who are developing more sophisticated claims.]

- What do I mean when I state this claim? What am I trying to communicate?
- How did I arrive at this claim? Can I “tell the story” of how I moved as a reader from the literal details of the text to a supported claim about the text?
- Can I point to the specific words and sentences in the text from which the claim arises?
- What do I need to explain so that an audience can understand what I mean and where my claim comes from?
- What evidence (quotations) might I use to illustrate my claim? In what order?

- If my claim contains several parts (or premises), how can I break it down, organize the parts, and organize the evidence that goes with them?
- If my claim involves a comparison or a relationship, how might I present, clarify, and organize my discussion of the relationship between parts or texts?

Students who are learning how to develop a claim, at any level, can benefit from graphic organizers or instructional scaffolding that helps them work out, organize, and record their thinking. While such models or templates should not be presented formulaically as a “how to” for developing a claim, they can be used to support the learning process. The Organizing EBC Tool can be used to provide some structure for student planning – or you can substitute another model or graphic organizer that fits well with the text, the types of claims being developed, and the needs of the students.

Begin by orienting students to the new tool and the idea of breaking down a claim into parts and organizing the evidence accordingly.

Ask for a volunteer to present his or her claim and supporting evidence. Use the example as a basis for a discussion. Based on the flow of discussion, bring in other volunteers to present their claims and evidence to build and help clarify the points. Work with students to hone and develop a claim. As a class, express the organized claim in Organizing EBC Tool. The provided teacher version is one possible way a claim could be expressed and organized.



ACTIVITY 4: ORGANIZING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students develop and organize a claim using the Organizing EBC Tool.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

When the class has reached a solid expression of an organized evidence-based claim about paragraphs 15-20, repeat the process for the next portion of text.

Students follow along and listen to paragraph 21. Discuss the paragraph with another question:

Why does Steve Jobs make the puzzling claim in paragraph 21 that “Death is very likely the single best invention of Life”?



This question again asks students to realize that Jobs himself makes claims in his speech, about which the reader can also make a text-based claim. This particular claim is perhaps the most difficult and paradoxical sentence in the speech, but it is also a key to understanding Jobs’ final thoughts and his ultimate message to the graduates. It is worth taking the time with students to break down every word of the sentence and the one that follows, to dissect how Death might be seen as being “invented” by Life and as “Life’s change agent.” Students can also use this question and cryptic quotation as a springboard to consider each of the other ideas and claims presented in paragraph 21, every sentence of which is worthy of close scrutiny and discussion.

After discussion, students then work in pairs using the tool to develop a claim, subpoints, and supporting evidence about this section.

ACTIVITY 5: CLASS DISCUSSION OF STUDENT EBCs

After students have finished their work in pairs, regroup for a class discussion about their EBCs.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Have pairs volunteer to present their claims and evidence to the rest of the class. Discuss the evidence and organization, evaluating how each piece supports and develops the claims. Repeat the process from activity two, using

student work to explain how evidence is organized to develop aspects of claims. The teacher version of the Organizing EBC Tool is one possible way a claim could be expressed and organized.



INDEPENDENT READING ACTIVITY

Review the speech and use the Forming EBC Tool to make any claim and support it with evidence. This activity overlaps with the first activity of Part 4 and can be given as homework or done at the beginning of the next class.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Students are now beginning to develop more complex claims about challenging portions of the text. Their Forming EBC Tool should demonstrate a solid grasp of the claim-evidence relationship, but do not expect precision in the wording of their claims. Using the Organizing EBC Tool will help them clarify their claims as they break it into parts and organize their evidence. How they have transferred their information will demonstrate their grasp of the concept of organizing. Their second Organizing EBC Tool should show progress in all dimensions including the clarity of the claim and the selection and organization of evidence. Use the EBC criteria checklist to structure the evaluation and feedback to students.