ORGANIZING
EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

"Looking back over her shoulder at some fear"

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

ACTIVITIES

ESTIMATED TIME: 1-3 days

MATERIALS:
Organizing EBC Tool
Forming EBC Tool
Forming EBC Lit Handout
EBC Criteria Checklist I

1- INDEPENDENT READING AND FORMING EBCs
Students independently read another poem and use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim.

2- READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION
Students follow along as they listen to part of the poem being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.

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.

ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):   RL.9-10.1

RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):   RL.9-10.2   RL.9-10.4   RL.9-10.5   SL.9-10.1

RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

☰ ACTIVITY 1: INDEPENDENT READING AND FORMING EBCs

Students independently read the first 47 lines of "Home Burial" and use the Forming EBC Tool to make an evidence-based claim.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

➡️ Students independently read the first 47 lines of a new poem by Robert Frost called "Home Burial." Students can focus on a number of general guiding questions during their first read: What choices do I notice the author making? What form do I notice in the poem? What do the details and language reveal about the setting, characters and tone? How is it similar or different from the Dickinson poem?

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. After their independent reading, students might discuss observations they can already make in response to these questions, then read (or have a student volunteer read) the poem out loud to them – so they listen to how the poem sounds and feels.

☰ ACTIVITY 2: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Students follow along as they listen to the first 47 lines of "Home Burial" being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

➡️ *Do you notice any meter or rhythm to the poem? What effect does the meter have on the poem?*

While Dickinson's poem offered a clear look at how meter makes a poem feel, Frost's "Home Burial," written in blank verse, is not as apparent at first. The lines are not as rhythmic as with "Because I could not stop for Death," but the students should be able to recognize a rhythm in a few lines such as, "To raise herself and look again. He spoke" in line 5, or "She turned and sank upon her skirts at that" in line 8. If students have already studied Shakespeare, this form can be compared with a play. Discuss how the form is often used in poetry because it closely mimics the natural canter of the English language. Knowing this, ask the students to read the poem aloud (or read it aloud to them) to see if they can feel a

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

natural flow to the poem now. Like Dickinson, Frost, uses the form to bring out important elements such as in lines 31 and 32, where the sensitivity of the subject at hand literally breaks into the poem.

What physical and emotional landscapes are established in the beginning of the poem? What words help the reader build an image of the setting and the situation?

Frost paints a vivid picture of the setting of the house where the husband and wife argue. A staircase, a woman cowering under a man, a graveyard, a door latch. All of these details are carefully imbedded in the meter of the poem and afford the reader the chance to construct a clear image of the scene and action. Be sure to ask the students to pull out the words and phrases that help them visually construct the poem in their minds. How does this help them understand the poem? Now, ask students to pick out phrases that help them specifically understand the emotional atmosphere of the poem. In the third line, the reader already confronts the word "fear," which is followed by a flood of emotional imagery by use of the setting, body language, and dialogue. For example, in lines 14-16, the woman stiffens her neck and thinks of her husband as a "blind creature." Frost riddles the poem with descriptive words and phrases such as these giving the reader a very clear picture of the rocky relationship.

Why does the man say he "won't come down the stairs" in line 42?

The reader has already encountered a few words that describe the woman's behavior around the man. In line 11, she "cowers" under him, and in line 33, she "shrinks" from underneath his arm. Ask the students what these words hint at in the context of the poem. Now, the man assures his wife that he will not come down implying that he only wants to talk and for her to listen. But why assure her that he won't come down the stairs? Why wouldn't he come down the stairs after all?

What is the effect of having the conversation take place on a flight of stairs?

After dissecting "Because I could not stop for Death," students should already be thinking about going beyond the literal meaning of the images to uncover the poem's symbols. Remind students that a poet does not make decisions haphazardly, but rather each word, image, meter amounts to meaning. Stairs are a big visual for the reader to imagine. Students might have a visual like in a movie where combatants have the upper hand when above the other on a flight of stairs. The same is not untrue here. Frost uses the staircase as a tool to manage the development of the power relationships between the man and wife. Students can follow the characters' physical movement up and down the stairs while also keeping track of what is said, and *how* it is said to develop a good understanding of who is dominating the conversation.

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 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 experiences 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?

ACTIVITY 3:
MODEL ORGANIZING EBCs (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

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 the 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, have students work in pairs, using the tool to develop and organize another claim.

You might want to give students some general guidance by directing their focus to a specific section of the text.

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

Students independently read the rest of the poem and use the Forming EBC Tool to develop an evidence-based claim. 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 them 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 I to structure the evaluation and feedback to students.