

PART 2

MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“I still see that picture now, as if it tugs at me”

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 Lit Handout
Forming EBC Tool
EBC Criteria Checklist I
TCD Checklist



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.1

RL.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.3 RL.11-12.5 RL.6 SL.11-12.1

RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

≡ 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 read sections 5-8 (paragraphs 26-46) of “The Red Convertible,” through: “We started off, east, toward Pembina and the Red River because Henry said he wanted to see the high water.”

As students read, they should be thinking about several broad guiding questions, related to the author’s choices, the narrative’s structure, and the ways in which characters and their relationships are revealed: What choices do I notice the author making? How is the narrative structured and how does it unfold in time? How do I come to know more about its characters, their conflicts, and their relationships?

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 the teacher (or a volunteer student) read sections 5-8 of “The Red Convertible” aloud. These sections of the story are largely focused on revealing and developing the two main characters of the story, Lyman (the narrator) and Henry Junior. The narrative structure is again episodic in nature, presenting the narrator’s description of scenes in which Henry sits in front of the TV “completely still,” Lyman takes a hammer to the red convertible and “whacks it up,” Henry nearly “freeze[s] himself to death” restoring the ruined car, and the two of them “stand together for a picture” before

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

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

going for a drive. The final section of this passage (section 8, paragraphs 45-46) presents Lyman's conflicted musings about that haunting picture. Thus, this segment of the narrative provides opportunities to read closely for details and form claims related to the author's choices regarding narrative structure and character development – which is why the set of questions below suggest directions for possible claims (which can be followed or ignored in favor of a more student-directed approach).

At the start of section 5 (paragraph 26), the narrative structure has jumped forward to “when Henry came home... very different” and “the change was no good.” What details does Erdrich (through Lyman) choose to give us about Henry? What details does she omit? What claim might a reader make about the impact of Erdrich's description on our sense of Henry as a conflicted and evolving character?

Students should now be reading the text with an eye to forming claims and finding supporting evidence. Students might do close readings of paragraphs 26-29, in which the author both tells the reader about how Henry is “very different” and describes several scenarios that provide ample evidence of Henry's disintegration. This is a first opportunity for students to use descriptive details to generate a claim about how a character is revealed and the impact on the reader's experience.

The Red Convertible returns as a “character” in the story in paragraph 33 when Lyman simply says, “Then I thought about the car.” Why might Erdrich again have chosen to understate this key narrative turning point?

An interesting aspect of this question bundle (and point in the story) is to discuss whether the car can be seen as an actual “character” in the story – or whether it is just an object, or a symbol. Either way, the author again introduces a key turning point in the story, through Lyman's narration, in a most understated way. Students might now be able to form claims about the use of such understatement within the narrative sequence, and the impact on a reader's experience.

What details from the episodes and events in these sections of the narrative complicate our understanding of Henry and Lyman? What claim might a reader make about how and why Erdrich chooses to present their changing relationship as characters?

Students have previously examined how Erdrich chooses to reveal her characters, and in this section they can examine textual details to discuss how those characters, and their relationship, change within the narrative, why those changes occur, what their impact is on the story and its meaning, and the ways in which the author “complicates” the narrative through character development.

What details contribute to the vivid image of the “picture” Bonita takes of Henry and Lyman? Why does Erdrich present these details, then have Lyman tell us, “That picture. I never look at it anymore,” and later say, “I still see that picture now, as if it tugs at me, whenever I pass that closet door”? What claim might a reader make about Erdrich's use of the picture as a representation of Lyman's evolving relationship with Henry?

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

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES



In a reading of the story on a “symbolic” level, the two prominent symbolic images are arguably the car itself and the photo that Bonita takes just before Lyman and Henry go on their final drive. Students might do a close reading of paragraphs 44 and 46 (“We went out to the car...” and “I still see that picture now...”) and discuss the details of what Lyman (and Erdrich) cause them to “see” in the photo, and how those details are representative of Lyman’s and Henry’s characters and relationship. Section 8 of the story also turns out to be another instance in which the narrative structure jumps in time (to a point after its final events but perhaps before what is recounted in the first paragraph). If we ask (as we later do), “whose story is it,” this section of the narrative seems to make it be Lyman’s story, suggesting what has happened to him as a result of his changing relationship with Henry. It is one of the most interesting sections of the text to use for close examination of the author’s craft, and the contribution of Erdrich’s choices and techniques to the story’s emerging meaning.

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 Lit Handout and EBC Criteria Checklist I to help guide discussion.



INDEPENDENT READING ACTIVITY

Students independently read the final two sections of “The Red Convertible” (paragraphs 47-69). As students read, they should be thinking about several broad guiding questions – related to the author’s choices, the narrative’s resolution, and its impact on the meaning they derive from the story: What choices do I notice the author making? Where does the narrative end - with what details, events, or thoughts? What seems unexpected, troubling, or ironic about the resolution of the narrative? How does the ending influence/change our reading and understanding of the narrative? They use the Forming EBC Tool to make a claim and support it with evidence.



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 is needed.