

PART 4

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“This is one story I’ve never told before.”

OBJECTIVE:

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



ACTIVITIES

1- INDEPENDENT READING AND MAKING EBCs

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

2- MODEL WRITING EBCs

The teacher introduces and models writing evidence-based claims using a claim developed in Part 3.

3- WRITING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students write evidence-based claims using one of their claims from Part 3.

4- CLASS DISCUSSION OF WRITTEN EBCs

The class discusses the written evidence-based claims of volunteer student pairs.

5- READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

The class discusses their new evidence-based claims and students read aloud portions of the text.

6- INDEPENDENT WRITING OF EBCs

Students independently write their new evidence-based claims.

ESTIMATED TIME: 1-3 days

MATERIALS:

Writing EBC Handout
Forming EBC Tool
Organizing EBC Tool
EBC Criteria Checklist II
TCD Checklist



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.1 W.11-12.9a W.11-12.4

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.

W.11-12.9a: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.3 RL.11-12.5 RL.6 W.11-12.2

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.

W.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

ACTIVITY 1: INDEPENDENT READING AND MAKING EBCs

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

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

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

While practicing the skills of writing evidence-based claims, students will also be reading and analyzing (more independently) a second work, Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River," a fictional narrative that recounts O'Brien's struggles with what to do after receiving his draft notice in 1968 and facing a military stint in Vietnam (which, like Henry's in "The Red Convertible," is not described for us). O'Brien's narrative presents an interesting pairing with "The Red Convertible," not only because of its topical and thematic connections, but also because of its use of similar narrative techniques: first person narration, episodic narrative structure employing foreshadowing and flashback, techniques of character presentation and development, and ironic resolution.

Students should first read the entire narrative independently, thinking about several broad guiding questions that should now be familiar to them: What choices do I notice the author making? How is the narrative structured? How does it unfold in time – chronologically or not? Who tells the story? What do details and language reveal about the point of view of its narrator?

After their independent reading, students might discuss observations they can already make in response to these questions, then the teacher can read (or have a student volunteer read) the narrative out loud to them – so they can hear the narrator's voice telling his story. Following this, students might work in pairs to analyze how O'Brien has structured his narrative, keying each episode with the introductory sentence(s) to each section (Note: sections are marked by additional white space between paragraphs). Student pairs might go back and examine those section-opening sentence(s) (listed below), then closely re-read what follows:

- 1 – "This is one story I've never told before."
- 2 – "I spent the summer of 1968 working in an Armour meat packing plant in my hometown..."
- 3 – "I drove north."
- 4 – "We spent six days together at the Tip Top Lodge."
- 5 – "Looking back after twenty years, I sometimes wonder if the events of that summer didn't happen in some other dimension..."

ACTIVITY 1: INDEPENDENT READING AND MAKING EBCs (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

6 – “On my last full day, the sixth day, the old man took me out fishing on the Rainy River.”

7 – “I don’t remember saying goodbye.”



Examining the transitions into each episodic section of the narrative can help students see its skeletal structure – from which they can identify important narrative details that emerge in each of the story’s episodes. They might then discuss, analyze, and form a written claim about how O’Brien has used and presented time and or narrative details within his work, and the impact of narrative structure on their reading and understanding.

ACTIVITY 2: MODEL WRITING EBCs

The teacher introduces and models writing evidence-based claims using a claim developed in Part 3.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Parts 1-3 have built a solid foundation of critical thinking and reading skills for developing and organizing evidence-based claims. Parts 4 and 5 focus on expressing evidence-based claims in writing. Class discussions and pair work have given students significant practice expressing and defending their claims orally. The tools have given them practice selecting and organizing evidence. Expressing evidence-based claims in writing should now be a natural transition from this foundation.

Begin by explaining that expressing evidence-based claims in writing follows the same basic structure that they have been using with the tools; one states a claim and develops it with evidence. Discuss the additional considerations when writing evidence-based claims like establishing a clear context and using proper techniques for incorporating textual evidence. Introduce the EBC Criteria Checklist II with the additional writing-related criteria. The Writing EBC Handout gives one approach to explaining writing evidence-based claims. Model example

written evidence-based claims are provided with the materials.

Explain that the simplest structure for writing evidence-based claims is beginning with a paragraph stating the claim and its context and then using subsequent paragraphs logically linked together to develop the necessary points of the claim with appropriate evidence. (More advanced writers can organize the expression differently, like establishing a context, building points with evidence, and stating the claim at the end for a more dramatic effect. It’s good to let students know that the simplest structure is not the only effective way).

Incorporating textual evidence into writing is difficult and takes practice. Expect all students to need a lot of guidance deciding on what precise evidence to use, how to order it, and deciding when to paraphrase or to quote. They will also need guidance structuring sentence syntax and grammar to smoothly and effectively incorporate textual details, while maintaining their own voice and style.



ACTIVITY 2: MODEL WRITING EBCs (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Three things to consider when teaching this difficult skill:

- A “think-aloud” approach can be extremely effective here. When modeling the writing process, explain the choices you make. For example, “I’m paraphrasing this piece of evidence because it takes the author four sentences to express what I can do in one.” Or, “I’m quoting this piece directly because the author’s phrase is so powerful, I want to use the original words.”
- Making choices when writing evidence-based claims is easiest when the writer has “lived with the claims.” Thinking about a claim—personalizing the analysis—gives a writer an intuitive sense of how she wants to express it. Spending time with the tools selecting and organizing evidence will start students on this process.
- Students need to know that this is a process—that it can’t be done in one draft. Revision is fundamental to honing written evidence-based claims.



ACTIVITY 3: WRITING EBCs IN PAIRS

In pairs, students write evidence-based claims using their claims from Part 3.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students return to the same pairs they had in Part 3 and use their Organizing EBC Tools as guidelines for their writing. Teachers should roam, supporting pairs by answering questions

and helping them get comfortable with the techniques for incorporating evidence. Use questions from pairs as opportunities to instruct the entire class.



ACTIVITY 4: CLASS DISCUSSION OF WRITTEN EBCs

The class discusses the written evidence-based claims of volunteer student pairs.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Have a pair volunteer to write their evidence-based claim on the board. The class together should evaluate the way the writing sets the context, expresses the claim, effectively organizes the evidence, and incorporates the evidence properly. Use the EBC Criteria Checklist II to guide evaluation. The Text-Centered Discussion Checklist (if being used) is helpful here to guide effective participation in discussion. Of course, it’s also a good opportunity to talk about grammatical structure

and word choice. Let other students lead the evaluation, reserving guidance when needed and appropriate. It is likely and ideal that other students will draw on their own versions when evaluating the volunteer pair’s. Make sure that class discussion maintains a constructive collegial tone and all critiques are backed with evidence.

Model written evidence-based claims are provided in the materials.

ACTIVITY 5: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

The class discusses their new evidence-based claims from Activity 1 and students read aloud portions of the text.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

At this stage, this activity is reversed from earlier similar ones. Students should present their evidence-based claims and allow discussion to determine areas of the text to be read aloud. Students read aloud relevant portions to help

the class analyze claims and selected evidence. Have students transfer their claims from the Forming EBC Tool to the Organizing EBC Tool to help them organize and refine their evidence in preparation for writing.

Here students might again be engaged in independent close reading and analysis of parts of the O'Brien personal narrative. As an interesting comparison to "The Red Convertible," students might focus on passages in which O'Brien reveals aspects of characterization – either his own (as narrator and protagonist) or that of his benefactor, Elroy Berdahl. Students who study how the narrator's character is revealed and developed will want to read sections 1-2 and 5-6 closely. Students interested in studying the old man, and how he is described and revealed through the narrator's eyes, will want to focus on sections 3-4 and 6. Either analysis can be driven by the following general and text-specific questions:

1. Whose story is it? How do we come to know its characters (exposition)? What internal conflicts do they seem to face? What details suggest how/why they change (or don't)? How does characterization influence our reading and understanding of the narrative?

2. O'Brien initially tells us that "for more than twenty years I've had to live with it, feeling the shame," then concludes his narrative by flatly (and perhaps unexpectedly) saying: "I was a coward. I went to the war." In between this foreshadowing and ironic resolution, how does O'Brien use narrative structure and textual details to suggest his internal conflict, why it might have driven him to do what he recounts in the story, and why he ultimately sees himself as a "coward"? What claim might a reader make about how O'Brien's revealing of his own character influences our reading and understanding of his narrative?

3. In his final description of the old man in paragraphs 75-6, O'Brien says, "He was a witness, like God, or like the gods, who look on in absolute silence as we live our lives, as we make our choices or fail to make them. 'Ain't biting,' he said." How have textual details, as presented through O'Brien's recollection of them, created a rich and intriguing picture of the old man to set up this final observation? If we think of the story as being about Elroy Berdahl as much as it is about O'Brien himself, what new meaning can we derive from it? What claim might a reader make about the narrative as also being the old man's story, and about how O'Brien has structured it thus to provide a balancing contrast to the "shame" of his own perceived failure?

ACTIVITY 6: INDEPENDENT WRITING OF EBCs

Students independently write their evidence-based claims from their Organizing EBC Tools.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Students should have refined their claims and developed an Organizing EBC Tool based on class discussion. Now they independently write their claims based on their tools.

INDEPENDENT READING ACTIVITY

Students review the two texts and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a new claim of their choice and develop it with evidence. This activity overlaps with the first activity of Part 5 and can be given as homework or done at the beginning of the next class.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

At this stage teachers can assess students' reading and writing skills. Students should be comfortable making claims and supporting them with organized evidence. Their tools should demonstrate evidence of mastery of the reading skill. Student writing should demonstrate the same qualities of organization. Make sure they have properly established the context; that the claim is clearly expressed; and that each paragraph develops a coherent point. Evaluate the writing for an understanding of the difference between paraphrase and quotation. All evidence should be properly referenced. Use the EBC Criteria Checklist II to structure the evaluation and feedback to students.

PART 5

DEVELOPING EVIDENCE-BASED WRITING

“I survived, but it’s not a happy ending.”

OBJECTIVE:

Students develop the ability to express global evidence-based claims in writing through a close reading of the text.



ACTIVITIES

1- INDEPENDENT READING AND MAKING EBCs

Students independently review the two texts and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a new evidence-based claim.

2- CLASS DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL EBCs

The teacher analyzes volunteer students’ written evidence-based claims from Part 4 and discusses developing global EBCs.

3- PAIRS DISCUSS THEIR EBCs

Students discuss their new claims in pairs and then with the class.

4- INDEPENDENT WRITING OF FINAL PIECE

Students independently write a final evidence-based writing piece using their new claims.

5- CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL WRITING PIECES

The class discusses final evidence-based writing pieces of student volunteers.

ESTIMATED TIME: 1-2 days

MATERIALS:

Forming EBC Tool
Organizing EBC Tool
Writing EBC Handout
EBC Criteria Checklist II
Evidence-Based Writing Rubric



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.1 W.11-12.9a W.11-12.4

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.

W.11-12.9a: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RL.11-12.3 RL.11-12.5 RL.6 W.11-12.2

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.

W.11-12-2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

≡ ACTIVITY 1: INDEPENDENT READING AND ≡ MAKING EBCs

Students independently review the entire text and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a new evidence-based claim.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

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

≡ ACTIVITY 2: CLASS DISCUSSION OF ≡ GLOBAL EBCs

The teacher analyzes volunteer students' written evidence-based claims from Part 4 and discusses developing global EBCs that relate the meaning of a work to its literary craft and/or that compare two literary works in relationship to their authors' craft.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES



In the final activity sequence of the unit, students are writing and developing evidence-based claims that look more globally at the works they have studied, the authorial choices and techniques they have analyzed, and the meanings they have derived. Students should be encouraged to emphasize analysis of craft in their final claims and expected to reference specific textual evidence. However, they should also be allowed to make claims about what they have come to understand from the texts and the various meanings they have found in them – which may take some students into claims that are more thematic in nature. For their final claim, students might pursue any of the following options, or follow a path of the teacher's or their own choosing:

ACTIVITY 2: CLASS DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL EBCs (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

1. Write and explain a global, multi-part claim about some aspect of author's craft in "The Red Convertible," and how that craft contributes to a "general and pervasive" meaning of the story (Brooks and Warren) as it has emerged for them through close reading and analysis.

2. Write and explain a global, multi-part claim about some aspect of author's craft in "On the Rainy River," and how that craft contributes to a "general and pervasive" meaning of the story as it has emerged for them through close reading and analysis.

3. Write and explain a global, multi-part claim that compares the two narratives in terms of an aspect of craft (e.g., narrative structure, point of view, character development, etc.) and the separate meanings that have emerged for them through their reading and analysis.



4. Write and explain a global, multi-part claim about an identified theme in one or both of the narratives, considering this definition by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren about the relationships between theme and other aspects of a literary work: "The theme is what is made of the topic. It is the comment on the topic that is implied in the process of the story... The theme is what a piece of fiction stacks up to... the pervasive and unifying view of life which is embodied in the total narrative... the structure into which the various elements are fitted and in terms of which they achieve unity."

[Bibliographic Note: This and all other references to the thinking of critics Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren about aspects of author's craft come from critical essays presented as framing devices in their seminal anthology *The Scope of Fiction*, Prentice Hall, 1960. This particular quotation is extracted from their discussion of "What Theme Reveals," pp. 228-30.]



ACTIVITY 3: PAIRS DISCUSS THEIR EBCs

Students discuss their new claims from Activity 1 in pairs and then with the class.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Once the class has a general understanding of the nature of more global claims, break them into pairs to work on the claims they have begun to develop in Activity 1. Have the pairs discuss if their claims contain sub-claims and how best they would be organized. It may be helpful to provide students with both the two-point and

three-point organizational tools to best fit their claims.

Volunteer pairs should be asked to discuss the work they did on their claims. At this point they should be able to talk about the nature of their claims and why they have chosen to organize evidence in particular ways.



ACTIVITY 4: INDEPENDENT WRITING OF FINAL PIECE

Students independently write a final evidence-based writing piece using their new claims.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

This evidence-based writing piece should be used as a summative assessment to evaluate acquisition of the reading and writing skills. Evaluating the claims and discussing ways of

improving their organization breaks the summative assessment into two parts: making an evidence-based claim, and writing an evidence-based claim.



ACTIVITY 5: CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL WRITING PIECES

The class discusses the final evidence-based writing piece of student volunteers. If the Text-Centered Discussion Checklist has been used throughout the unit, this activity can be used for formative assessment on student discussion skills. In this case, the activity can be structured more formally, as small group discussions where each student reads, receives constructive evidence-based feedback from other group members, and then responds orally with possible modifications.

ASSESSMENT

At this stage teachers can assess students' reading and writing skills. Students should be comfortable making claims and supporting them with organized evidence. Their tools should demonstrate mastery of the reading skill. Their final evidence-based writing piece can be seen as a summative assessment of both the reading and writing skills. Use the Evidence-Based Writing Rubric to evaluate their pieces.

If activity 5 is used for assessment of discussion skills, use the Text-Centered Discussion Checklist to structure evaluation and feedback.

ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATION OF PART 5

The activities of Part 5 can be re-ordered to provide a slightly different summative assessment. Teachers could choose not to give Activity 1 as an initial homework assignment or begin the part with it. Instead they can begin with the analysis of student writing from Part 4 and the discussion of global claims. Then students can be assigned to review the entire speech, use a tool to make a global evidence-based claim, and move directly to developing the final evidence-based writing piece. This configuration of the activities provides a complete integrated reading and writing assessment. Depending on scheduling, this activity could be done in class or given partially or entirely as a homework assignment. Even with this configuration, ELL students or those reading below grade level can be supported by having their claims evaluated before they begin writing their pieces.

ACTIVITY 1- CLASS DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL EBCs

The teacher analyzes volunteer students' written evidence-based claims from Part 4 and discusses developing global claims.

ACTIVITY 2- INDEPENDENT READING AND MAKING EBCs

Students review the entire text and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a global EBC.

ACTIVITY 3- INDEPENDENT WRITING OF FINAL PIECE

Students independently write a final evidence-based writing piece using their global claims.

ACTIVITY 4- CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL WRITING PIECES

The class discusses final evidence-based writing pieces of student volunteers.