

UNIT OUTLINE

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

- The teacher presents the purpose of the unit and explains the skill of making EBCs.
- Students independently read part of the text with a text-dependent question to guide them.
- Students follow along as they listen to the text being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.
- The teacher models a critical reading and thinking process for forming EBCs about texts.

PART 2: MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

- Students independently read part of the text and look for evidence to support a claim made by the teacher.
- Students follow along as they listen to the text being read aloud and discuss a series of text-dependent questions.
- In pairs, students look for evidence to support claims made by the teacher.
- The class discusses evidence in support of claims found by student pairs.
- In pairs, students make an EBC of their own and present it to the class.

PART 3: ORGANIZING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

- Students independently read part of the text and make an EBC.
- Students follow along as they listen to part of the text being read aloud.
- The teacher models organizing evidence to develop and explain claims using student EBCs.
- In pairs, students develop a claim with multiple points and organize supporting evidence.
- The class discusses the EBCs developed by student pairs.

PART 4: WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

- Students independently review the text and develop an EBC.
- The teacher introduces and models writing EBCs using a claim from Part 3.
- In pairs, students write EBCs using one of their claims from Part 3.
- The class discusses the written EBCs of volunteer student pairs.
- The class discusses their new EBCs and students read aloud portions of the text.
- Students independently write EBCs.

PART 5: DEVELOPING EVIDENCE-BASED WRITING

- Students review the entire text and make a new EBC.
- The teacher analyzes volunteer student evidence-based writing from Part 4 and discusses developing global EBCs.
- Students discuss their new claims in pairs and then with the class.
- Students independently write a final evidence-based writing piece.
- The class discusses final evidence-based writing pieces of student volunteers.

PART 1

UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“Government is not the solution to our problem: government is the problem.”

OBJECTIVE:

Students learn the importance and elements of making evidence-based claims through a close reading of part of the text.



ACTIVITIES

1- INTRODUCTION TO UNIT

The teacher presents the purpose of the unit and explains the proficiency of making EBCs.

2- INDEPENDENT READING

Students independently read part of the text with a text-dependent question to guide them.

3- READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Students follow along as they listen to the text being read aloud, and the teacher leads a discussion guided by a series of text-dependent questions.

4- MODEL FORMING EBCs

The teacher models a critical reading and thinking process for forming EBCs about texts.

ESTIMATED TIME: 2-3 days

MATERIALS:

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



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S): RI.11-12.1

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

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S): RI.11-12.2 RI.11-12.3 SL.11-12.1

RI.11-12.2 : Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussion(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: INTRODUCTION TO UNIT

The teacher presents the purpose of the unit and explains the proficiency of making evidence-based claims, making reference to the first five criteria from the EBC Checklist I.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Introduce the central purpose of the unit and the idea of a “claim” someone might make. The following is a possible approach:

Introduce the first characteristic of an evidence-based claim: “States a conclusion you have come to... and that you want others to think about.” Pick a subject that is familiar to students, such as “school lunches” and ask them to brainstorm some claim statements they might make about the subject. Introduce the fourth characteristic: “All parts of the claim are supported by specific evidence you can point to” and distinguish claims that can be supported by evidence from those that are unsupported opinions, using the students’ brainstorm list as a reference.

Move from experience-based claims to claims in a field like science. Start with more familiar, fact-based claims (For example, the claim “It is cold outside” is supported by evidence like “The outside thermometer reads 13 degrees F” but is not supported with statements like “It feels that way to me”). Then discuss a claim such as “Smoking has been shown to be hazardous to your health” and talk about how this claim was once considered to be an opinion, until a weight of scientific evidence over time led us to accept this claim as fact. Introduce the third characteristic/criterion: “Demonstrates knowledge of and sound thinking about a topic” and with it the idea that a claim becomes stronger as we expand our knowledge about a subject and find more and better evidence to support the claim.

Move from scientific claims to claims that are based in text that has been read closely. Use an example of a text read recently in class or one students are likely to be familiar with. Highlight that textual claims can start as statements about

what a text tells us directly (literal comprehension) such as “Tom Sawyer gets the other boys to paint the fence” and then move to simple conclusions we draw from thinking about the text, like: “Tom Sawyer is a clever boy” because (evidence) “He tricks the other boys into doing his work and painting the fence.” Then explain how text-based claims can also be more complex and require more evidence (e.g., “Mark Twain presents Tom Sawyer as a ‘good bad boy’ who tricks others and gets into trouble but also stands up for his friend Jim.”), sometimes – as in this example – requiring evidence from more than one text or sections of text.

Explain that the class will be practicing the skill of making evidence-based claims that are based in the words, sentences, and ideas of a text by closely reading and analyzing the text (or texts) selected for this unit.

In the activities that follow, students will learn to make a text-based claim by moving from literal understanding of its details, to simple supported conclusions or inferences, to claims that arise from and are supported by close examination of textual evidence. This inductive process mirrors what effective readers do and is intended to help students develop a method for moving from comprehension to claim. In addition, the guiding questions, model claims, and movement through the text over the course of the unit are sequenced to transition students from an initial, literal understanding of textual details to:

- Claims about fairly concrete ideas presented in short sections of the text;
- Claims about more abstract ideas implied across sections of the text;
- More global claims about the entire text and its meaning.



ACTIVITY 2: INDEPENDENT READING

Students independently read part of the text with a text-dependent question to guide them.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES



Students independently read the first paragraphs 1-11 of President Reagan's First Inaugural Address and answer a text-dependent question: How does Reagan introduce "individual liberty" in paragraph 2?

Briefly introduce students to the text. The introduction should be kept to naming President Reagan, the year, and the idea of an Inaugural Address.

Students should be allowed to approach the text freshly and to make their own inferences based on textual content. Plenty of instruction and support will follow to ensure comprehension for all students. The question helps orient students to the text and begins the focus on searching for textual evidence.



ACTIVITY 3: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Students follow along as they listen to the text being read aloud, and the teacher leads a discussion guided by a series of text-dependent questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES



The teacher plays a video of Reagan's speech or reads the paragraphs aloud.

The teacher leads a discussion guided by four text-dependent questions:

- 1- How does Reagan introduce "individual liberty" in paragraph 2?
- 2- What does Reagan cite as the primary cause of "America's problem?"
- 3- How does Reagan support his claim, "government is not the solution to our problem: government is the problem"?
- 4- What special interest group is Reagan endorsing and why?

The close reading of these paragraphs serves three primary purposes: to ensure comprehension of an important part of the text, to orient students to the practice of close reading, and to guide students in searching for textual evidence.

Use the discussion about the questions to help students learn the essential skills of selecting interesting and significant textual details and connecting them inferentially. This process links directly to the forming of evidence-based claims they will begin in Activity Four.

ACTIVITY 3: READ ALOUD AND CLASS DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

1- How does Reagan introduce “individual liberty” in paragraph 2?

Reagan begins his speech by commenting on how the outgoing President cooperatively maintained the “transfer of authority” between administrations. He uses the smooth transition process to show that it is the U.S. political system that both protects individual liberty and provides a transition of power. In these few sentences, Reagan does three things: compliments the outgoing President, argues for the miracle that is the US political system, and connects that political system to the idea of “individual liberty.” Discuss what Reagan accomplishes in these first two paragraphs – what points does he focus on? Ask the students to keep an eye on other ways Reagan includes the concept of “individual liberty” throughout his speech. It is not yet clear what he means and why he thinks it is so central to the U.S. political system, but key students to the importance Reagan gives it through his introduction.

2- What does Reagan cite as the primary cause of “America’s problem?”

Beginning in paragraph three, Reagan makes it clear that “economic affliction” is the cause of America’s current problems. He then unveils four primary points to support this argument: inflation, unemployment, taxes and government spending (P3-5). The “tax system” stifles economic growth by taking hard-earned money out of the pockets of hard-working Americans and giving it to an government. And the government spends this money to the point of racking up unsustainable debt that will affect future generations. With guiding questions, lead students through Reagan’s transition from “economic affliction” in paragraph 3 to paragraph 6 where he drives the point home further by comparing the nation’s debt to an individual’s debt. Students should understand Reagan’s argument that it is not simply economic woes that affect the United States, but the economic woes that the government has caused. Who, specifically, is the culprit in paragraph five?

3- How does Reagan support his claim, “government is not the solution to our problem: government is the problem”?

Focus discussion on this central theme of the speech. Reagan supports his claim in two ways. Before the quote in paragraph nine, he accuses the government of running up tremendous debt. Discuss where Reagan begins to argue against lots of government (“tax system,” “deficit,”). Secondly, after the quote, Reagan ironically remarks in paragraph ten that if we are not capable of governing ourselves, we surely are not capable of governing others. It is ironic because in the previous sentence, he says that we have been tempted to believe that we cannot rule ourselves, when he really believes that we can. And the government that thinks it can rule people better than the people can rule themselves is a government run by an “elite group.” Students should dissect these complex sentences to determine the two sides of the argument and their fundamental assumptions about humans. Also, students might be able to recognize how Reagan bolsters his argument by using the specific phrase; “superior to government for, by and of the people” (lines 38- 39). Ask how the inclusion of language from

4- What special interest group is Reagan endorsing and why?

“Special interest groups” are typically narrow, specific groups of people that petition for funding or rights based on who they are. Reagan uses the term, “special interest group,” ironically to say that the only special interest group he is interested in helping is the group of all Americans. He implies that special interest groups that are defined along racial or ethnic lines are less important than the group of all citizens, no matter race or ethnicity. Help students connect Reagan’s call for the ordinary American to be honored with his special interest group that includes the “men and women who raise our food, patrol our streets. . .” Draw out the contrast between “government” and “We the people.” How does Reagan speak about both?



ACTIVITY 4: MODEL FORMING EBCs

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Based on the class discussion of the text, the teacher models a critical reading and thinking process for forming EBCs: from comprehension of textual details that stand out, to an inference that arises from examining the details, to a basic EBC that is supported by specific references back to the text.

Once the class has reached an understanding of the text, use the Forming EBC Handout to introduce a three-step process for making a claim that arises from the text.

Exemplify the process by making a claim with the Forming EBC Tool. The tool is organized so that students first take note of “interesting” details that they also see as “related” to each other. The second section asks them to think about and explain a connection they have made among those details.

Such “text-to-text” connections should be distinguished from “text-to-self” connections readers make between what they have read and their own experiences. These “text-to-text” connections can then lead them to a “claim” they can make and record in the third section of the tool – a conclusion they have drawn about the text that can be referenced

back to textual details and text-to-text connections. Have students follow along as you talk through the process with your claim.

To provide structured practice for the first two steps, you might give students a textual detail on a blank tool. In pairs, have students use the tool to find other details/quotations that could be related to the one you have provided, and then make/explain connections among those details. Use the EBC Checklist 1 to discuss the claim, asking students to explain how it meets (or doesn't yet meet) the criteria.

[Note: Here and throughout the entire unit, you are encouraged to develop claims based on your own analysis and class discussion. The provided models are possibilities meant more to illustrate the process than to shape textual analysis. Instruction will be most effective if the claims used in modeling flow naturally from the textual ideas and details you and the students find significant and interesting. Also, while the tools have three or four places for supporting evidence, students should know that not all claims require three pieces of evidence. Places on the tools can be left blank.]



INDEPENDENT READING ACTIVITY

Students read paragraphs 12-39 of President Reagan's First Inaugural Address and use the Making EBC Tool to find evidence to support the teacher-provided claim. This activity overlaps with the first activity of Part 2 and can be given as homework or done at the beginning of the next class.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Forming EBC Tool should be evaluated to get an initial assessment of students' grasp of the relationship between claims and textual evidence. Even though the work was done together with the class, filling in the tool helps them get a sense of the critical reading and thinking process and the relationships among the ideas. Also make sure that students are developing the habit of using quotation marks and recording the reference.