

PART 2

MAKING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

“What do any of us really know about love?”

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.11-12.2 RL.11-12.3 RL.11-12.4 SL.11-12.1

RL.11-12.2: Determine two or more themes or 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 produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
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.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

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 pages 174-183 ("Do you see what I'm saying?") of the text and use the Making EBC Tool to look for evidence to support a claim made by the teacher.

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 pages 174-183, ("Do you see what I'm saying?") of the text aloud. Following the reading, the teacher leads a discussion guided by text-dependent questions that focus on specific passages and narrative techniques.

1. What feeling(s) does the text create within you, the reader? How does the text create these feeling(s)? What decisions has Carver made in the construction of the story that contribute to the mood? How does language use, setting, and imagery contribute to mood?

It might be helpful to link this discussion with the previous discussion on tone as it's a good opportunity to revisit with students the difference between the two. Tone is one of the many literary elements that contributes to the mood (or the atmosphere) of a text. Discuss with students the difference between how a text may reveal an author's or character's attitude to the reader or to the theme of the text, and how this differs with how that tone (or any literary element) might affect a reader's mood. For

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

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

instance, going back to the example of the text message, the tone—through word choice, punctuation, use of emoticons—might be light-hearted, which is different than its effect upon the reader, which may be to generate happiness or a positive rapport with the writer.

Discuss what mood is established by Carver in this section of the story. What emotions do students say they feel as they read or listen to this part of the text? As with the discussion on tone, show how Carver does not merely create one mood in his story, but uses different literary elements to create a multidimensional atmosphere; e.g., reported action, “[Ed] shot himself in the mouth in his room” and imagery, “His head swelled up to twice the size of a normal head” effect a grim and foreboding mood, while “She poured the rest of the gin in her glass and waggled the bottle” and “I made a big production out of kissing her hand. Everyone was amused” contribute a comforting sense of domesticity and humor to the mood. As with tone, encourage students to begin thinking about how mood might interact with and further theme.

2. By this point in the story, certain recurring symbols and actions should begin to become apparent. Identify one symbol and one motif. What significance do you think they may have to the subject of the story and its developing theme?



Point out some instances of the description of sunlight in the story—how it’s described in the beginning and now through the middle of the story. How has its description changed? Along with simply marking the passage of time during the couples time together in Mel’s kitchen, the sun also symbolizes the contour of the discussion and the mood of the inquiry into the subject of love—e.g., the optimistic beginning of an illuminating conversation when “sunlight filled the room from the big window behind the sink” (170) to the acme of that optimism and cheerful inquiry when “the afternoon sun was like a presence in this room, the spacious light of ease and generosity. We could have been anywhere, somewhere enchanted” (176) to the spiraling attempt to define love and increased drunkenness of the group, “The sunshine inside the room was different now, changing, getting thinner” (182).

Carver also uses the repeated action of drinking related activities as a motif that serves to help bind the text, giving it artistic cohesion, and also, symbolically supporting and furthering the development of the story’s theme. Drinking is a repetition of an action that runs through the story. Discuss some instances of drinking or drinking related activities, and how they help bind the story together for the reader. Encourage students to think about how the instances of drinking might contribute to the emerging theme of the text. For example, drinking might be fuel for the conversation, the inquiry into the nature of love: “Mel got up from the table and went to the cupboard. He took down another bottle” and “Mel opened the gin and went around the table with the bottle” (175). Drinking and its ceremonies helps bind the couples, the participants in the inquiry, together; it celebrates the quest, in a manner of speaking: “Let’s have a toast. I want to propose a toast. A toast to love. To true love,”

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

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Mel said. We touched glasses. 'To love,' we said" (176). When Mel begins exploring more complicated recesses of the nature of love, positing that if he or Terri died, the other partner would "go out and love again, have someone else soon enough," Terri questions his sobriety: "Are you getting drunk? Honey? Are you drunk?" (177). Discuss other ways that recurring actions of drinking relate to the theme and help bind the text together.

3. What can be said about the theme at this point? Does the text seem to have a primary subject, a central concern? How would you describe the emerging meaning of the story? How does Mel contribute through his storytelling and ruminations to the discussion about love? How does this contrast with how Nick and Laura contribute to the conversation?

The theme and main concern of the story have obviously something to do with love. Love is the subject of the couple's conversation. It is in the title of the story. But what is being said about love? How are Mel's attempts to define it going? "I'll tell you what real love is," he says, and then, "I mean, I'll give you a good example" (176). Discuss explicit remarks made by Mel—e.g., "If that's love, you can have it," in reference to Ed killing himself possibly out of love for Terri—and more implicit points he makes—e.g., love is confusing: "There was a time when I thought I loved my first wife more than life itself. But now I hate her guts. I do. How do you explain that?"; and love is complex: "... but then the surviving party would go out and love again [...] all of this love we're talking about, it would just be a memory. Maybe not even a memory" (177). Contrast this with how Nick and Laura contribute to the conversation about love. Laura, when she says that she and Nick know what love is, bumps her knee against Nick's, and says to him, "You're supposed to say something now," to which Nick responds by bringing Laura's hand to his lips and "mak[ing] a big production out of kissing her hand" (175). Discuss the significance of their mostly nonverbal contribution to the conversation and the craft by which Carver underscores it by having Nick respond to Laura's request to "say something" with kissing her hand.

The story is rife with comments made explicitly and implicitly about love. Help students cite and extrapolate larger points from a selection of the many comments made about love. How is love characterized? Are contributions made by each character consistent with other character's contributions? With the character's own contributions? Do the comments add up to something illuminating about the nature of love? What is Mel finally saying about love through his many stories, remarks, and asides? And, more importantly, how may Carver be constructing a larger theme through these many remarks?

It may be helpful when developing discussion on the story's theme to recur to the selection of title and include it in the conversation. Why might Carver have entitled the story as he did? Ask for other, alternate love-themed titles to be considered, such as "What is Love" or even simply "Love," and hypothesize why Carver didn't entitle his story as such. Would they relate adequately to the theme?



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 rest of the story (pages 183-185) and use the Forming EBC Tool to make a claim and support it with evidence. This activity overlaps with the first activity of Part 3 and can be given as homework or done at the beginning of the next class.

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.