

## 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 review 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.11-12.2 RL.11-12.3 RL.11-12.4 W.11-12.2

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.)

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.

## 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.

The following questions can be used throughout Parts 4 and 5 to stimulate discussion if needed.

1. Aside from episodes within stories told by Mel and Terri, identify instances of marital tension between the couple. What impact do these moments have on the immediate events of the story? How might they relate to the overall theme?

2. How does Terri characterize her relationship with her former lover, Ed? How is this different from how Mel characterizes his relationship to his ex-wife, Marjorie? How might these different characterizations inform the theme of the story?

3. Compare the two couples—their ages, interpersonal relationship, and ways of contributing to the conversation. Why might Carver have chosen to pair these couples together in his story?

4. Carver provides minimal background information on the characters through Nick's narration, so what might be the significance of Nick reporting, in the first paragraph, that the people gathered in Mel's kitchen "were all from somewhere else"?

5. Using evidence from the text, hypothesize why everyone sits motionless and silent in the dark at the end. Why might Carver have chosen to end the story with this image?

6. Looking again at the title, and presuming the couples in the story are representative of "us," what do we talk about when we talk about love?

## **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 entire story 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.