

Module: Language

Lesson Title: Finding Evidence that Supports an Opinion

Standards

Florida Adult Basic Education Language Standards	Level Expectation
Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. (CCR.RE.ABE.8)	NRS Level 3 – Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which points. (CCRS.RE.ABE.8.3)

Interpreting the Standard

1 Standards	2 Skills Included in the Standard	3 Concepts Included in the Standard	4 Through a Particular Context	5 Cognitive Demand/ Levels of Thinking	6 Sample Activity
Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. (CCR.RE.ABE.8)	delineate evaluate	claims evidence to support claims	opinion	DOK 2	Have students identify facts, examples, or quotes from experts in an opinion text.
NRS Level 3 – Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which points. (CCRS.RE.ABE.8.3)	explain	reasons and evidence		DOK 2	Have students evaluate the facts, examples or quotes to determine relevancy and sufficiency.

Objectives of the Lesson

Students will:

- Read closely to identify an author’s opinion in a given text
- Identify evidence the author used to support that opinion
- Determine if the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the author’s opinion

Materials

- White board and markers
- Chart paper and markers
- **Handout A: Where is the Evidence?**
- **Handout B: Finding Evidence – Graphic Organizer**
- **Handout C: What Do the Facts Tell You?**

Instructional Plan

Overview

Students often have difficulty separating fact from opinion. This is especially true when the author of an article or letter is well known. Students often see the author as an authority on a given subject, rather than someone who is expressing a personal point of view. However, opinion pieces can contain facts. An author may use evidence to convince the reader of a certain point of view. Students need to know how to identify facts within an opinion piece.

Process

Introduce the lesson by writing the following sentences on the board or on chart paper:

- My son had a temperature of one hundred and two degrees this morning.
- My son had a high temperature, so I thought it best that I stay home from work and take care of him.

Ask students which of the sentences states a fact and which provides an opinion. Ask students if there are any facts provided in the statement that are opinions. Students should indicate that the phrase a “high temperature” is a fact that is included to help convince the reader that the opinion is correct.

Have students brainstorm a list of words that denote an opinion. List their words on the board. Words may include:

Believe	Best/worst	Expect
Feel	In my opinion	Least/most
May/may not	Might/might not	My impression is...
My perspective is...	My point of view is...	My sense is...
Possibly	Probably	Should
Should not	Think	

Have students brainstorm a list of words that would show the writer is including a fact in his/her text. List their words on the board. Words may include:

For example	For instance	To illustrate
To show	Specifically	Such as
The fact is	Research shows	

In addition to the signal words listed above, students should look for specific names, dates, places, and other information that can be verified. Remind students that facts can be verified or proven. Opinions are someone's belief or personal judgment.

A writer can use facts, examples, or quotes from experts in order to support their opinion. The information provided in support of an opinion is called evidence. Explain that as students read they need to look carefully for evidence that supports a writer's claim or opinion. After they find the evidence, they need to evaluate the evidence to determine if it is relevant, reliable, and able to be verified.

Distribute **Handout A: Where is the Evidence?** Have students read through each of the paragraphs. Explain that in an initial reading, they are getting a general idea about the text. They are not looking for specific evidence, but rather learning what the overall position of the writer is in each of the instances provided.

After students finish the initial reading, divide the class into small groups or teams. Have each team read each paragraph again. Explain that this time they should read more closely and underline any evidence that supports the claim or opinion presented in that paragraph. After each paragraph is read again, the teams should discuss among themselves the evidence found. Repeat the process for each of the three paragraphs. Debrief the activity by discussing each of the paragraphs and the evidence that was found. Ask students if the evidence provided in each paragraph made them more or less likely to agree with the opinion of the writer. Have students explain their answers.

Distribute **Handout B: Finding Evidence – Graphic Organizer** and **Handout C: What Do the Facts Tell You.** Explain that in this activity, they will be reading an opinion piece and identifying evidence that the writer has used to support her opinion. Explain to the students that before doing a close reading of the text, they will first preview the text. Take the students through the previewing process to help them activate their own background knowledge. You may wish to use a strategy such as **TIPP?** to preview the text.

TIPP? requires that students focus on each of the following

Title – what is the title and what does it tell them?

Introduction – quickly read the first sentence of the text to get a general idea of the text

Paragraphs – check and see how long the text is by counting the number of paragraphs

Pictures or Photographs – look at the pictures or any other graphics provided

? – have students think about what they may learn from the text

After completing the preview process, have students read to get a general idea of the claim or opinion that the writer has taken. When students finish the first read, briefly discuss the text and its central idea. Do not begin to talk about the evidence that supports the writer's claim or opinion.

Review the process for the activity with students. Explain that they will:

1. Complete a close reading of the text.
2. Circle the sentence that provides the writer's claim or opinion.
3. Underline any facts that the writer provides to support that claim or opinion.

4. Write down the facts on the graphic organizer in the appropriate box so they can categorize the types of facts that are provided.
5. Be prepared to discuss the writer's use of evidence to support her claim and whether or not the evidence has convinced the student that the claim is valid.

Circulate around the room as students read and identify the evidence in the text. Answer any questions that students may have. Check that students are organizing the facts/evidence appropriately and placing them in the correct box in the graphic organizer.

After all students have completed the activity, debrief by asking students the following questions:

1. Do you believe that the writer's use of evidence made the claim or opinion stronger?
2. Do you believe that the writer's use of evidence did not support the claim or opinion and thus made it weaker?
3. Which evidence do you think was the strongest? Why?
4. Which evidence do you think was the weakest? Why?

Modifications for Different Levels

At lower achievement levels, provide students with a copy of **Handout A**. Have students follow along as you read the text to them. Ask students questions about the text, including:

- What was the writer's claim or opinion?
- What evidence made you think the writer was correct?
- What other evidence would you like to have before deciding if the writer is correct or not?

For students at higher achievement levels, have them practice locating evidence in letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Have students read, identify the claim/opinion of the writer, and evidence to support the claim. Discuss students' findings. This will help students become more critical readers in order to be able to more effectively evaluate what they read.

Assessments/Extensions

Have students write their own claims/opinions. Have students brainstorm topics of interest and then do some basic research on the Internet. Have students write one or two paragraphs that include a clearly stated claim or opinion and evidence to support their position. Have students share their responses with their peers. Discuss any challenges students had while writing.

Handout A: Where is the Evidence?

Texting – A Good Thing or Not?

A recent Nielsen survey found that American teens text an average of 3,339 messages per month. That is a lot of texts every day. Some people claim that texting leads to illiteracy. In fact, one historian said, “Teens who text do not read books.” However, I believe that it actually helps improve students’ literacy skills.

The Journal of Computer Assisted Learning found a positive link between texting and literacy. Researchers found that children who can read “creative” texts are often stronger readers than those who can’t. They recognize that “ur” is your and “w8” is wait. The Australian Journal of Educational Development and Psychology found that in order to text, students have to understand how sounds and letters work. They also have to know how words are put together. As a result, texting actually helps students to understand and use phonics.

Abbreviations like the word OK have been around a long time. Teachers long ago thought it was terrible to use words like OK or ASAP. Now those words are in English language dictionaries. While some people will always see texting as a bad thing, I believe that there are many good things about texting – and the research says that as well.

Texting While Driving – Not a Good Thing

Cell phones are wonderful tools for everyone. Cell phones let us stay in touch with friends and family. We can Instagram or text from anywhere at any time. As much as I love to stay in touch with everyone, I believe that texting is not a good thing when driving.

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of car accidents. While some people think that it is okay to text and drive, the numbers say otherwise. According to the NHTSA, almost 18% of all fatal crashes were caused by the driver being distracted. A Pew survey said that 40% of teens reported that they had been in a car when the driver was texting. Everyone knows that texting causes more crashes than anything else. There are probably many accidents that were caused by teens who were looking at their text messages when they should have been paying attention to the road.

AT&T started a new ad campaign called “It Can Wait” to get drivers to pledge not to text while on the road. The Huffington Post stated that 46 states have banned texting while driving. If there is so much attention paid to texting while driving, then the experts must be right. It is wrong to text and drive.

Handout B: Graphic Organizer – Finding Evidence that Supports an Opinion

A writer often uses evidence to help convince a reader that his/her opinion is correct. There are three primary types of evidence that writers use: facts, examples, and quotes. Categorize the evidence from the text into one of the three categories. Be prepared to give your reasons for your selection.

FACTS
EXAMPLES
QUOTES

Handout C: What do the Facts Tell You?

Vaccinations - Essential for Everyone

Recently, I have noticed more news about measles, whooping cough, and other diseases that I thought were just a part of history. Last year, there was a huge measles outbreak around the time of the Super Bowl. Why is this happening today, when vaccines are available to everyone? I believe that something must be done to make sure that everyone has their children vaccinated.

According to the American Medical Journal, vaccinations have eliminated Smallpox in most of the world. Until the past few years, the measles were also a thing of the past. In the U.S., Rotary Clubs are known for their work in erasing polio around the world through a vaccination program. That is just one example of a program that has made a difference in children's health. I know that some people disagree with me, but it is important that everyone do his/her part to keep our children safe.

I know that some people believe that vaccinations may hurt their children. However, the research published in 1998 in Great Britain was wrong. The researcher even admitted that his statistics were wrong. Dr. Andrew Wakefield said, "Autism is linked to the Measles-Mumps-Rubella vaccine." However, he was later convicted of fraud. So, how can anyone believe what he said?

In our state, the number of people who asked for an exemption from vaccinations increased from 452 to 3,865 in just five years. The Department of Health said, "When a significant number of people have not been vaccinated, the 'herd effect' that protects all children is weakened." As a result, children who can't be vaccinated get sick and some have even died.

Tell your legislators to vote for the new bill that would ensure that all of our children are protected from these terrible diseases. Parents have to do what is right and get their children vaccinated. I believe it is the right thing to do.

D.D. Smith
Vaccination Advocate for the Florida Panhandle