

## Critical Concepts7.8A Non Fiction Lesson Plans

**Skill Focus:** CC.7.8A – Trace and evaluate an author’s argument and specific claims in a text. Assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

**Vocabulary Word Bank:** Argument, Assess, Claim, Evaluate, Relevant, Sufficient, Trace

### April Lesson Objectives

- SWBAT identify an author’s overall argument in a nonfiction text.
- SWBAT trace individual claims made by the author.
- SWBAT evaluate whether reasoning is sound and evidence is relevant and sufficient to support claims.
- SWBAT use academic vocabulary (argument, assess, claim, evaluate, relevant, sufficient, trace) in discussion and writing.

**Non-Fiction Texts Suggestions for April** (text selections are suggestion only, teachers can change the text to fit their classroom needs, if choosing another text it should come from the Educational Epiphany Curriculum)

- *Under the Influence of Music* – Tara Parker Pope
- *Energy Drinks are Dangerous to Kids* – Associated Press, Feb 15, 2011
- *An Argument for Paying College Athletes* – Keith Reifel
- *Advantages and Disadvantages of Advanced Technology* – Jin Sun-K Wellesley

**Graphic Organizer:** Citing Evidence Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 7.8A1 & 2 (pages 137-144 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

### I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

**Text:** *Under the Influence of Music* – Tara Parker Pope

#### Steps & Think-Alouds:

1. Distribute organizer & display on smartboard.
2. Read opening paragraph aloud.
3. **Model identifying the author’s argument:**  
“The overall argument seems to be that listening to music affects people’s behavior and decision-making. This is not just a casual observation; the author uses studies and expert quotes to support it.”

**4. Trace first claim & evidence:**

"The first claim is that music influences mood. The text states, 'Studies show that upbeat music increases energy levels and happiness.' I note this in the organizer under Claim 1 → Reason/Evidence."

**5. Evaluate Claim 1:**

"Is this evidence sufficient? The study is relevant, but I notice it only focuses on a small sample size. That's a limitation."

**6. Trace Claim 2 & 3:**

"Claim 2: Music affects risk-taking behavior. Evidence: 'Adolescents who listened to intense music were more likely to take risks.' Claim 3: Music can improve productivity. Evidence: 'Workers reported higher focus when listening to classical music.' I record these with reasoning in the middle boxes."

**7. Evaluate each claim:**

"For Claim 2, the evidence is relevant, but the author doesn't discuss alternative explanations. Claim 3 seems strong—multiple studies support it, making the evidence sufficient."

**Sample Organizer (I Do):**

- **Author's Argument:** Music affects emotions, behavior, and productivity.
- **Claim 1:** Music influences mood.
  - Evidence: "Studies show that upbeat music increases energy levels and happiness."
  - Evaluation: Relevant but limited sample size; reasoning is logical but not fully conclusive.
- **Claim 2:** Music affects risk-taking.
  - Evidence: "Adolescents who listened to intense music were more likely to take risks."
  - Evaluation: Relevant, evidence reasonable, but lacks counterexamples.
- **Claim 3:** Music improves productivity.
  - Evidence: "Workers reported higher focus with classical music."
  - Evaluation: Relevant and sufficient; claim strongly supported.
- **Claim 4:** [Not in text; leave blank or optional]

**We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)**

**Text:** *Energy Drinks are Dangerous to Kids* – Associated Press

**Steps & Teacher Think-Alouds:**

1. Students read excerpt together.
2. Trace author's argument:
 

"The overall argument is that energy drinks pose health risks to children due to caffeine and additives."
3. Trace claims & evidence:
 

**Claim 1:** High caffeine levels can cause heart issues. Evidence: 'Several cases of heart palpitations were linked to energy drinks.'"

**Claim 2:** Additives can impact sleep. Evidence: ‘Children reported difficulty sleeping after consumption.’”

4. Evaluation of claims:

**Claim 1** is relevant and supported by case studies, though we might want larger sample sizes for sufficiency. **Claim 2** is relevant; repeated studies back it, making evidence more sufficient.”

5. Complete organizer together.

**Sample Class Organizer (We Do):**

- **Author’s Argument:** Energy drinks are dangerous for children.
- **Claim 1:** High caffeine is harmful. **Evidence:** “Heart palpitations reported in several cases.” **Evaluation:** Relevant but limited; reasoning sound.
- **Claim 2:** Additives disrupt sleep. **Evidence:** “Children reported difficulty sleeping.” **Evaluation:** Relevant, supported by multiple studies; evidence sufficient.

**You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)**

**Text:** *An Argument for Paying College Athletes* – Keith Reifel

**Steps:**

1. Partners read excerpt together.
2. Identify author’s argument:  
The author argues that college athletes should receive compensation beyond scholarships.
3. Trace claims, evidence, and evaluate:
  - Claim 1:** Athletes generate significant revenue. **Evidence:** “Universities earn millions from sports programs.” **Evaluation:** Evidence strong and relevant.
  - Claim 2:** Scholarships don’t cover all expenses. Evidence: “Athletes struggle with travel and living costs.” **Evaluation:** Relevant and sufficient.
  - Claim 3:** Paying athletes incentivizes performance. **Evidence:** “Financial incentives increase motivation.” **Evaluation:** Relevant, reasoning plausible.
4. Teacher circulates and prompts discussion:
  - “Is the evidence sufficient for each claim?”
  - “Are there alternative viewpoints acknowledged?”
  - “Which claims are strongest and why?”

**Sample Partner Organizer Response:**

- **Author’s Argument:** College athletes should receive monetary compensation.
- **Claim 1:** Revenue generation justifies pay. **Evidence:** “Universities earn millions from sports programs.” **Evaluation:** Strong, relevant, and compelling.

- **Claim 2:** Scholarships insufficient. **Evidence:** "Athletes face additional costs."  
**Evaluation:** Relevant and supported; reasoning clear.
- **Claim 3:** Financial incentive increases motivation. **Evidence:** "Athletes perform better when compensated." **Evaluation:** Plausible but could use more evidence.

### You Do Independently

**Text:** *Advantages and Disadvantages of Advanced Technology* – Jin Sun-K Wellesley

#### Steps & Teacher Think-Alouds (for small group scaffolding):

1. "Start by reading carefully and highlighting the author's main argument. What is the text trying to convince the reader of?"
2. "Trace the key claims. Ask yourself: What statements support the argument?"
3. "Identify the evidence provided for each claim. Is it sufficient? Is it relevant?"
4. "Evaluate each claim. Could the author have strengthened it? Are there weaknesses or alternative explanations?"
5. Teacher circulates, asking small groups:
  - "Which claim do you find strongest and why?"
  - "Is any evidence weak or insufficient?"
  - "How does tracing claims help you assess the overall argument?"

#### Sample Student Response (Independent):

- **Author's Argument:** Advanced technology has both benefits and drawbacks for society.
- **Claim 1:** Technology improves communication. Evidence: "People can connect instantly across the globe." Evaluation: Relevant and sufficient; claim well-supported.
- **Claim 2:** Technology reduces attention spans. Evidence: "Studies show frequent device use decreases focus." Evaluation: Relevant, but studies are limited; could use more data.
- **Claim 3:** Technology boosts productivity. Evidence: "Automation allows more tasks to be completed efficiently." Evaluation: Strong and relevant; reasoning clear.
- **Claim 4:** Technology can harm privacy. Evidence: "Data breaches compromise personal information." Evaluation: Relevant and sufficient; evidence is current and supports claim.