

Critical Concepts 8.1B Literary Lesson Plans

Skill Focus: CC.8.1 – Citing the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Vocabulary: analyze, cite, evidence, explicit, inference, strong

September Lesson Objectives

- Students will be able to draw **inferences** from complex literary texts.
- Students will be able to **cite multiple, strong pieces of evidence** to support their analysis.
- Students will be able to use **academic vocabulary** in discussion and writing.

Non-Fiction Texts Suggestions for September (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)

- *Les Misérables* (Victor Hugo, excerpt)
- *Why the Dog Hates the Cat* (Norman Hinsdale Pittman, excerpt)
- *Joe Lambert's Ferry* (author unknown, excerpt)
- *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens, excerpt)

Graphic Organizer: Citing Evidence Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 8.1B-2 (pages 13-16 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text: *Les Misérables* (Victor Hugo)

Steps:

1. Distribute CC 8.1B-2.
2. Review vocabulary (analyze, cite, explicit, inference, strong).
3. Read aloud the passage where Jean Valjean struggles with whether to reveal his true identity to save another man.

Teacher Think-Aloud:

"In this excerpt, Hugo never directly says that Jean Valjean feels torn between justice and self-preservation. But I can **infer** this from his inner conflict. For example, when he says, 'If I remain silent, I am damned at heart. If I speak, I am condemned in the eyes of men,' that tells me he feels caught between his moral responsibility and his safety. Another strong piece of evidence comes when he thinks of the man wrongly accused, saying, 'That innocent man will suffer in my place.' These details show us explicitly what he says and implicitly how deeply he wrestles with sacrifice and truth. Notice how I'm not just finding any evidence —

I'm asking myself: **Which quotes most powerfully prove my analysis?** In this case, the strongest evidence is the one that reveals both his fear and his moral struggle."

Sample Organizer Response:

- **Inference:** Jean Valjean feels torn between protecting himself and doing what is right.
- **Evidence 1:** "If I remain silent, I am damned at heart. If I speak, I am condemned in the eyes of men."
- **Evidence 2:** "That innocent man will suffer in my place."
- **Evidence 3:** "A voice within him cried out for justice."
- **Evidence 4:** "He trembled as he thought of what the truth would cost him."

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text: *Why the Dog Hates the Cat* (Norman Hinsdale Pittman)

Steps:

1. Read the excerpt aloud as a class.
2. Take turns between teacher and student reading. Guide students to highlight important details in the text as you read.
3. Ask: *What can we infer about the dog's character? Why does the fable suggest long-lasting conflict between cats and dogs?*

Teacher Think-Aloud:

"This story doesn't say outright that the dog feels betrayed, but I can infer it. When the dog trusts the cat to carry his bag, and the cat loses it, that trust is broken. The text says, 'The cat promised faithfully to guard the bag, but when night fell, he curled up and went to sleep.' That's explicit evidence. From that, I infer that the dog sees the cat as untrustworthy and careless.

The stronger evidence, though, comes at the end: 'From that day on, the dog chased the cat wherever he saw him.' That's powerful because it explains not just an event, but a lasting behavior – a symbolic reason for the eternal conflict between cats and dogs."

Sample Organizer Response (Class):

- **Inference:** The dog feels betrayed and sees the cat as untrustworthy.
- **Evidence 1:** "The cat promised faithfully to guard the bag, but when night fell, he curled up and went to sleep."
- **Evidence 2:** "The dog returned to find the bag gone."
- **Evidence 3:** "The cat offered no excuse, only shame."
- **Evidence 4:** "From that day on, the dog chased the cat wherever he saw him."

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text: *Joe Lambert's Ferry* (Anonymous)

Steps:

1. Pairs read the passage together.
2. Highlight passages that reveal Joe's values and decisions.
3. Agree on an inference about what Joe represents.

Teacher Think-Aloud (before they begin):

"Joe is not described as a hero outright. But when I notice how he risks his life to carry people across dangerous waters, I can infer that he represents selflessness and duty.

For instance, when the text says, 'Though the river was high and the current fierce, Joe rowed without hesitation,' that shows bravery. Later, 'He asked no payment from those too poor to give,' is even stronger evidence, because it shows not only action but his values.

When you and your partner choose your inference, think about which evidence is *just okay* versus which is *powerful enough* to prove your point beyond doubt."

Sample Organizer Response (Partners):

- **Inference:** Joe Lambert represents selflessness and duty.
- **Evidence 1:** "Though the river was high and the current fierce, Joe rowed without hesitation."
- **Evidence 2:** "He asked no payment from those too poor to give."
- **Evidence 3:** "He carried sick children across the river in storms."
- **Evidence 4:** "His ferry became a symbol of safety for the town."

You Do Independently

Text: *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens, excerpt)

Task:

Students read the excerpt (from *The First of the Three Spirits* through *Let Us See Another Christmas*). Students complete the graphic organizer by identifying one inference about Scrooge's transformation and four strong supporting quotes.

Teacher Think-Aloud (scaffolding if needed):

"Dickens doesn't simply tell us Scrooge is changing — he shows us through Scrooge's reactions. For example, when Scrooge sees his younger self alone at school, I can infer he feels regret.

The text says, 'A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.' That's explicit, but the stronger evidence is Scrooge's response: 'And Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.' That pairing shows both the fact and the feeling.

When you work alone, remember: strong evidence doesn't just *repeat* what happened — it reveals the depth of the character's emotions or growth."

Sample Organizer Response (Independent):

- **Inference:** Scrooge begins to feel regret and compassion as he revisits his past.
- **Evidence 1:** "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."
- **Evidence 2:** "And Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed."
- **Evidence 3:** "There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at his door, and Scrooge said he wished he had given him something."
- **Evidence 4:** "Let us see another Christmas."