

Critical Concepts 8.1A Non Fiction 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: analysis, cite, explanation, evidence, explicit, inference, quote, strongest evidence

September Lesson Objectives

- Students will be able to identify explicit statements in nonfiction texts.
- Students will be able to infer meaning from nonfiction texts.
- Students will be able to select and cite the **most relevant and strongest textual evidence** to support explicit statements and inferences.
- Students will be able to use academic vocabulary in both discussion and written responses.

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)

- *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller, Part I, Chapter 7
- *Influx from the Orient* by Eleanor Roosevelt
- *Eulogy for John F. Kennedy*
- *Address to the Public* by Benjamin Franklin
- *Elizabeth I's Farewell Speech*

Graphic Organizer: Citing Evidence Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 8.1A-1 (pages 1-4 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text: *The Story of My Life* (Helen Keller, Chapter 7)

Steps:

1. Distribute CC 8.1A-1.
2. Review the word bank, emphasizing “**strongest evidence**” (not just any evidence).
3. Read the first section aloud.

Model:

- What does the text say explicitly?
Helen Keller explicitly states that her teacher, Anne Sullivan, transformed her life by giving her language.

- What inference can be drawn?
I can infer that Keller believed education was the key to independence and personal freedom.
- What textual evidence most strongly supports both?
"The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me."

Think-Aloud:

"When Keller writes, 'The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher came to me,' that's an explicit statement. But I don't just stop there—I ask myself: why would Keller single out this day as the 'most important' above all others in her life? It suggests that this wasn't just about meeting a teacher—it was about gaining access to the world through language. That's my inference. Now, which evidence is strongest? She mentions being given a doll, but the stronger evidence is, 'My teacher spelled into my hand the word "doll," and suddenly I knew that words could name things.' This is more powerful because it shows the moment her mind opened up, not just the event itself. I want to show students that not all evidence is equal—some evidence carries more weight in proving both the explicit statement and the inference."

Sample Student Response:

Question	Response
What does the text say explicitly?	1. "The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me." 2. "I was eager to learn, and my teacher was determined to teach me."
What inference can be drawn?	Education and language gave Keller independence and a sense of freedom.
What textual evidence most strongly supports each explicit idea?	1. "The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll." (Shows the moment her education began.) 2. "My teacher spelled into my hand the word 'doll,' and suddenly I knew that words could name things." (Shows Keller's eagerness and the teacher's persistence.)

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text: *Influx from the Orient* (Eleanor Roosevelt)

Steps:

1. Read aloud the first two paragraphs.
2. Ask: What is explicitly stated? What can we infer? What is the **strongest evidence**?

Teacher Think-Aloud:

"The passage explicitly says immigration from the Orient had an important impact on America. But notice how Roosevelt doesn't just mention immigrants—she highlights how their *'talents and contributions'* shaped the nation. That makes me infer that she views diversity not as a problem, but as a source of strength. Now, here's the tricky part: which evidence is stronger? She says, *'Our nation has benefited in countless ways,'* but she also says, *'Without the mixture of cultures and traditions, America would not have the rich diversity it enjoys today.'* The second piece is stronger because it doesn't just praise immigrants generally—it links immigration to the very identity of America itself. When choosing evidence, I want us to think: Which line gets closer to the author's main purpose?"

Sample Class Response:

Question	Response
What does the text say explicitly?	1. Immigration from the Orient had an important impact on America. 2. America's progress depends on contributions from many cultures.
What inference can be drawn?	Roosevelt values diversity as essential to the nation's growth.
What textual evidence most strongly supports each explicit idea?	1. "Our nation has benefited in countless ways from the talents and contributions of these immigrants." 2. "Without the mixture of cultures and traditions, America would not have the rich diversity it enjoys today."

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text: *Eulogy for John F. Kennedy*

Steps:

1. Students read the speech in pairs.
2. Teacher Think-Aloud (starter):
"When the speaker says Kennedy's life was cut short, that's explicit. But if I ask, *why is this emphasized?* it helps me infer that the eulogy is framing him as a symbol of sacrifice. Now, I could choose several lines of evidence, but I should pause and weigh them. 'He

gave the world his love of freedom and paid for it with his life’ is powerful because it pairs his death with his belief in liberty. That makes it stronger than just saying he died—it tells us what his death meant. Another line, *‘He believed that liberty was the right of every human being,’* adds weight because it connects his personal values to a universal cause. Together, these strongest pieces help us see Kennedy as more than a man—he’s remembered as an idea. When you and your partner pick your evidence, ask yourselves: does this piece show only a fact, or does it reveal meaning?”

- Students complete the graphic organizer together.

Sample Possible Response:

Question	Response
What does the text say explicitly?	1. Kennedy’s life was cut short. 2. He is honored as a leader who valued freedom.
What inference can be drawn?	Kennedy is remembered as a symbol of freedom and hope.
What textual evidence most strongly supports each explicit idea?	1. “He gave the world his love of freedom and paid for it with his life.” 2. “He believed that liberty was the right of every human being, and he stood by that belief until the end.”

You Do Independently

Text: *Elizabeth I’s Farewell Speech*

Task: Students complete CC 8.1A-1 independently.

Teacher Think-Aloud (preview):

“Elizabeth I says she worked for her people’s well-being. That’s explicit, but what does it reveal beneath the surface? I infer that she’s trying to secure how history will remember her. Now, when I look at the evidence, I see two possible lines: *‘There will never queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country...’* and *‘I never thought to prefer my private profit before the public good.’* Both support her loyalty, but which is stronger? The first one shows her devotion, but the second reveals her sacrifice—she gave up personal profit for public service. That’s the kind of evidence that goes beyond describing—it persuades her audience of her character. For 8th

grade, I want you to start asking: which evidence not only proves the explicit statement but also shows the author's deeper intention?"

Sample Expected Response:

Question	Response
What does the text say explicitly?	1. Elizabeth I worked for the well-being of her people. 2. She gave her life and loyalty in service to her country.
What inference can be drawn?	She wanted her legacy remembered as loyal and selfless service.
What textual evidence most strongly supports each explicit idea?	1. "There will never queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country, care to my subjects... than myself." 2. "I never thought to prefer my private profit before the public good."

Turning Graphic Organizers into Writing Responses

Each of the sample responses models turning our graphic organizers into complete paragraph responses

1. **Analysis sentence** (**explicit** + **inference** blended)
2. **Text evidence** (direct quote)
3. **Explanation of how evidence supports the analysis**
4. **Closing insight**

I Do (Teacher Model – Claiming Health: Front-of-Package Labeling of Children’s Food)

The text explicitly states that many popular children’s foods are marketed as healthy by using front-of-package claims, and from this I can infer that food companies are trying to make unhealthy foods appear more nutritious than they really are. The author supports this with evidence, explaining that packages highlight phrases like “whole grain” or “contains vitamins” even when the food is loaded with sugar and fat. This shows how marketing can be misleading to parents and children who want to make healthy choices.

We Do Model Paragraph (The National Industrial Recovery Act)

The text explicitly states that the National Industrial Recovery Act was created to stimulate economic recovery during the Great Depression, and from this I can infer that the government believed stronger regulations were necessary because businesses could not fix the economy alone. The article explains, “It authorized the President to regulate industry and permitted industries to draft codes of fair competition.” This evidence shows that leaders thought government involvement was the key to stabilizing the economy. By combining what the text says directly with reasoning, we can understand both the stated purpose of the Act and the belief behind it.

You Do with Partner Model Paragraph (Teens on Twitter: They’re Migrating Sometime for Privacy by Martha Irvine)

The article explicitly says that some teenagers are leaving Twitter to avoid the eyes of parents and teachers, which suggests that teens value their privacy and prefer social media spaces where they feel less supervised. The author supports this by noting, “Many teens are shifting to apps like Instagram and Snapchat, where they feel they have more privacy.” This shows that young people are making choices about technology not only based on popularity but also on how safe and independent they feel. The explicit statement and the supporting evidence together reveal that privacy is a major reason why teens choose certain online platforms.

You Do Independently Model Paragraph (Fashion Bullies Attack – In Middle School by Vanessa O’Connell)

The text explicitly states that middle school students are often teased because of the clothes they wear, and this implies that fashion acts as a way to create social status and can lead to bullying or exclusion. For example, the article explains, *"Students report being labeled 'out of style' or 'cheap' if they don't wear certain brands."* This evidence shows that students use clothing as a way to rank and judge each other, which can hurt those who cannot or choose not to wear certain labels. By connecting the explicit information with an inference, we see that fashion is more than style—it can be a source of peer pressure and conflict in schools.