

Critical Concepts 8.6A Non Fiction Lesson Plans

Skill Focus: CC.8.6A – Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Vocabulary Word Bank: analyze, author’s purpose, point of view, convey, conflicting, distinguish

February Lesson Objectives

- SWBAT determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a nonfiction text.
- SWBAT cite textual evidence that conveys the author’s perspective.
- SWBAT analyze how an author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or alternative viewpoints.
- SWBAT use academic vocabulary (analyze, author’s purpose, point of view, convey, conflicting, distinguish) in discussion and writing.

Non-Fiction Texts Suggestions for February (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)

- *Education Experts Disagree on Importance of School Class Size* – Kevin Simpson
- *The Problem We All Live With, The Truth About Rockwell’s Paintings* – Ken Layard Studios
- *Affirmative Action: 25 Years of Controversy* – Claire Andre, Manuel Velasquez, Tim Mazur
- *Schools Try to Draw the Line for Wired Kids* – Jennifer Radcliffe

Graphic Organizer: Citing Evidence Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 8.6A-2 (pages 121-124 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text: *Education Experts Disagree on Importance of School Class Size* – Kevin Simpson

Steps & Teacher Think-Aloud:

1. Identify Topic

- “Let’s start with the topic. I skim the first two paragraphs. The article is about *class size in schools* and whether smaller classes improve student learning. I’ll write that in the topic box: *school class size and its impact on learning.*”

2. Identify Author’s Point of View

- “Now I ask: What does the author seem to believe? I notice phrases like ‘*many teachers and parents believe smaller classes allow for more individualized attention*’ but also that the author highlights experts who argue the evidence is mixed. So

the author's POV isn't fully one-sided—it's *balanced*, showing both the promise and the limits of reducing class size."

3. Cite Textual Evidence Supporting POV

- "Look at this sentence: *'Advocates point to improved test scores in early grades where smaller classes are common.'* That shows support for the idea that smaller classes help. I'll copy that into the evidence box. Another line says, *'Some economists argue the gains are modest compared with the costs.'* That acknowledges the other side."

4. Author's Acknowledgement of Conflicting Evidence/Viewpoints

- "Notice how Simpson doesn't ignore the critics. He includes their viewpoint—economists and policymakers who say reducing class size is expensive and not always effective. I'll note that in the 'Acknowledgement' box."

5. Author's Response

- "Now the key question: *How does the author respond to conflicting viewpoints?* I see that Simpson explains both sides but ends by suggesting class size *is only one factor* among many in student success. That's a way of responding—he admits critics may be right about costs, but still shows why class size matters in context."

Sample Organizer (I Do):

- **Topic:** Impact of class size on learning outcomes
- **Author's POV:** Balanced—class size matters but is not the only factor in education success
- **Evidence Supporting POV:**
 - "Smaller classes allow for more individualized attention."
 - "Test scores improved in early grades with smaller classes."
- **Acknowledgement of Conflicting Viewpoints:**
 - "Economists argue gains are modest compared with high costs."
- **Author's Response:**
 - Author stresses class size is one of many factors—important but not the single solution.

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text: *The Problem We All Live With, The Truth About Rockwell's Paintings* – Ken Layard Studios

Steps & Teacher Think-Aloud (Guided):

- Read the first section as a class.
- Teacher Think-Aloud:
 - "The topic here is Norman Rockwell's painting of Ruby Bridges, a young Black girl integrating a New Orleans school."
 - "The author's point of view is that Rockwell's work was socially courageous, not just sentimental Americana."
 - "Conflicting evidence? Some critics said Rockwell's art was too political and risked his reputation."

- "How does the author respond? They argue that Rockwell's choice showed his growth as an artist who used his platform to challenge racism."

Sample Class Organizer (We Do):

- **Topic:** Norman Rockwell's painting of Ruby Bridges
- **Author's POV:** Rockwell's painting was socially courageous and important
- **Evidence Supporting POV:** "Challenged racism," "risked his career to make a statement"
- **Acknowledgement of Conflicting Viewpoints:** Some critics saw it as too political
- **Author's Response:** Argues Rockwell's choice gave the painting lasting cultural power

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text: *Affirmative Action: 25 Years of Controversy* – Andre, Velasquez, Mazur

Steps:

- Partners read selected excerpt.
- Fill in organizer together.
- Teacher circulates and prompts with questions:
 - "What is the main issue the author is writing about?"
 - "What words or phrases show the author's point of view?"
 - "Where does the author bring up opposing arguments?"
 - "How do they respond?"

Sample Partner Organizer Response:

- **Topic:** Affirmative Action in U.S. colleges and workplaces
- **Author's POV:** Supportive—sees it as necessary to counter systemic inequalities
- **Evidence Supporting POV:** "Levels the playing field," "expands opportunity for marginalized groups"
- **Acknowledgement of Conflicting Viewpoints:** Critics claim it creates reverse discrimination
- **Author's Response:** Acknowledges concerns but argues inequities persist without it

You Do Independently

Text: *Schools Try to Draw the Line for Wired Kids* – Jennifer Radcliffe

Steps:

- Students read excerpt independently.
- Students fill organizer.
- Teacher provides prompts:
 - "What is the author's stance on student device use in schools?"
 - "Where do they acknowledge parents' or students' concerns?"

- "What's their response?"

Sample Student Response (Independent):

- **Topic:** Schools balancing technology rules with parent/student needs
- **Author's POV:** Schools must limit devices but balance convenience
- **Evidence Supporting POV:** "Teachers report distractions," "parents rely on phones for safety and coordination"
- **Acknowledgement of Conflicting Viewpoints:** Parents argue phones are necessary for quick communication
- **Author's Response:** Suggests compromise policies (e.g., phones off in class but allowed before/after school)