

Critical Concepts 8.8A Non Fiction Lesson Plans

Skill Focus CC.8.8A – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text. Assess whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient, and recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Vocabulary Word Bank:

Argument, Assess, Claim, Delineate, Evaluate, Irrelevant, Relevant, Sufficient

April Lesson Objectives

- **SWBAT** identify an author's overall argument in a nonfiction text.
- **SWBAT** delineate three specific claims that support the author's argument.
- **SWBAT** assess whether reasoning and evidence are relevant and sufficient.
- **SWBAT** recognize irrelevant evidence and evaluate its impact.
- **SWBAT** use academic vocabulary (argument, assess, claim, delineate, evaluate, irrelevant, relevant, sufficient) 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)

- *Why Kids Need Recess and Exercise* – Denene Millner
- *A Challenge to American Sportsmanship and Emotional Situation* – Eleanor Roosevelt
- *My Objection to Homeschooling and Five Arguments Against It* – Barbara Hammond
- *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 8.8A1 – 3 (pages 145-156 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text: *Why Kids Need Recess and Exercise* – Denene Millner

Steps & Think-Alouds:

1. Display organizer on Smartboard.
2. Read the opening section aloud.
3. Model identifying argument:
 - "The author argues that recess is essential for children's health and learning."
4. Trace Claim 1:

- “The first claim is that recess improves academic performance. Evidence: ‘Studies show that short breaks for physical activity increase focus in the classroom.’ This is relevant because it directly links exercise to learning.”
- “Irrelevant evidence: The author mentions that children ‘like to run around with friends.’ While true, that doesn’t prove the academic point.”
- “Evaluation: The relevant study is strong evidence; the irrelevant piece weakens the argument slightly.”

Sample Organizer (I Do):

- Author’s Argument: Children need recess for health and academic reasons.
- Claim 1: Recess improves academic performance.
 - Evidence: “Studies show breaks increase focus.”
 - Irrelevant Evidence: “Children like to run around with friends.”
 - Evaluation: Relevant evidence is sufficient; irrelevant evidence weakens claim.
- Claim 2: Recess supports physical health. Evidence: “Daily exercise reduces obesity risk.” Evaluation: Strong, relevant.
- Claim 3: Recess builds social skills. Evidence: “Children learn teamwork through games.” Evaluation: Relevant, but more studies could strengthen support.

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text: *My Objection to Homeschooling and Five Arguments Against It*

Teacher Think-Aloud:

“Now let’s look at Barbara Hammond’s essay, *My Objection to Homeschooling and Five Arguments Against It*. Hammond clearly presents her claim: she believes homeschooling is harmful for children’s social and academic growth. Notice how she organizes her essay – she lists five distinct arguments against homeschooling. This structure makes her reasoning very clear and easy to follow. For example, one of her points is that homeschooling limits children’s exposure to diversity. She supports this with reasoning about how schools prepare students for real-world interactions. The evidence she uses includes comparisons between homeschooled students and those in traditional schools.

Now let’s compare this with Jin Sun-K Wellesley’s essay, *Advantages and Disadvantages of Advanced Technology*. Wellesley presents a balanced argument instead of only one side. Their structure alternates between advantages and disadvantages, which shows that the author’s purpose is not just to persuade, but also to inform. For instance, when Wellesley explains that technology improves efficiency in communication, they balance it by acknowledging drawbacks such as decreased face-to-face interaction.

So, Hammond is persuasive and one-sided in her claim, while Wellesley is balanced and explanatory in tone. Both authors use reasoning, but the way they select and organize evidence creates different impacts on readers.”

Guided Practice:

- Students underline Hammond’s claim in their copy of the essay and highlight one of her strongest pieces of evidence.

- Students underline Wellesley's claim and highlight one example where Wellesley presents both an advantage and disadvantage.
- As a class, fill in part of the graphic organizer comparing author's claim, reasoning, and evidence style.

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text: *A Challenge to American Sportsmanship and Emotional Situation* – Eleanor Roosevelt

Steps:

- Partners read excerpt together.
- Identify overall argument: Roosevelt argues that Americans must uphold fairness and character in global relations.
- Partners delineate 3 claims, evaluate evidence.

Sample Partner Organizer:

- Author's Argument: Americans must model fairness in sportsmanship and politics.
- Claim 1: Sportsmanship reflects national character. Evidence: "How we play shows who we are." Evaluation: Relevant but general.
- Claim 2: International relations need fairness. Evidence: "Nations judge us by conduct." Evaluation: Strong and relevant.
- Claim 3: Integrity matters more than victory. Evidence: "Winning at all costs undermines respect." Evaluation: Relevant, reasoning clear.

You Do Independently

Text: *Advantages and Disadvantages of Advanced Technology*

Task for Students:

Now, students will evaluate both authors on their own and complete the graphic organizer. Then they will write a short response.

Independent Prompt:

- What is Hammond's claim, and how does she support it?
- What is Wellesley's claim, and how does the structure of their essay shape the reasoning and evidence?
- Which author do you think is more effective in making their point? Why?