

READING EXPRESS LESSON SAMPLER

Level G (Grade 7), Lesson 23—Reading Critically

The contents of this sampler will allow you to teach one complete lesson.

Lesson Structure

Flexible lessons can be adapted to available time frames.

- Teach a focused minilesson in as little as 10 to 20 minutes
- Provide a 30-, 60-, or 90-minute intensive skill-development block
- Split study over several days

Diagnostic Assessment

Pre and Post Tests

Four full-length tests covering all standards can be used for

- diagnosing performance gaps
- measuring progress
- assessing skill mastery

Unit Tests

Two tests per unit provide opportunities for testing following instruction as well as retesting if reteaching is necessary.

ExamView® Software

- create custom tests focused on specific standards
- format tests based on your state assessments
- administer tests in paper and pencil or electronic formats
- create performance reports by student, class, objective, and state standard

Introduce the Skill

ELL Resource—

skill-specific lessons and reproducibles to frontload vocabulary and build background knowledge for English Language Learners.

Explain—

offers a quick introduction to the standards-based skill.

Model the Skill

Expand—

a transparency minilesson is used to model each skill. The Teacher Guide supports the minilesson transparency with additional scripting for intervention and instruction on the featured skill.

Practice the Skill

Explore—

reproducible activities provide scaffolded student practice for each skill. The Teacher Guide includes suggestions for differentiated instruction. Student practice activities are offered as reproducibles and in consumable workbook format.

Assess the Skill

Exit Ticket—

an oral assessment of the featured skill in a reading conference setting. By using the suggested questions, evaluating the student work on the **Explore** activities, and using the Assessment Resource, teachers can make a formative assessment on the particular standard being studied.

Additional Practice

Re-Explore—

if students continue to perform below expectations, reproducible **Re-Explore** practice activities are available in the Grade-Level Kit.

Unit Apply—

Teacher Guide includes unit-level application ideas for practicing multiple skills in authentic classroom activities.

Grade 7 Standards

- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text.

Reading Critically

27

LESSON

Explain

Introduce **reading critically** by writing the following passage on the board or on an overhead transparency. Read the passage aloud to students and then discuss.

Everyone agrees that movies are too violent nowadays. Moviegoers should hide behind their seats rather than sit in them. Soon every movie theater in this country will be empty because of all the senseless violence in today's films.

Is this writer presenting a factual statement or an opinion? (an opinion) What evidence does this writer offer that "everyone agrees" movies are too violent? (The writer does not offer any evidence.) How could you prove that this statement is not true? (by finding someone who does not agree that movies are too violent)

How does the second sentence in this passage appeal to the reader's emotions? (It hints that moviegoers should be afraid of violent movies and hide behind their seats.) Why is the last sentence in this passage an exaggeration? (It is very unlikely that everyone will stop going to see movies.) What would you think about this statement if you found out that the writer was the head of an organization to boycott violent movies? (The writer is biased against violent movies and is not presenting a balanced point of view.)

So a passage can be examined to see if it contains opinions, exaggerations, or signs of bias. To read critically, evaluate what you read for supporting evidence, signs of bias, and arguments that are exaggerations or appeals to emotion.

English Language Learners

See ELL Resource, Level G, for approaches to addressing the following issues.

- Preteach the academic vocabulary and key words *reading critically, supporting evidence, bias, emotional arguments, and misleading/unsupported statements*
- Preteach difficult vocabulary
- Summarize difficult passages
- Practice reading critically

Expand (Overhead Transparency 27)

Use Overhead Transparency 27 as a group minilesson on **Reading Critically**. Begin by reviewing the discussion of reading critically in the Explain section.

What helped you see that the statement was the writer's opinion? (The writer offered no evidence for the view and made exaggerated claims.)

Why would it help to know that the writer was the head of an organization to boycott violent movies? (to see that the writer had reasons to be biased about this topic)

Read aloud the bullet points on the transparency. Then read aloud the transparency passage and the first sidebar.

What is the topic of this passage? (the price of natural gas)

What do you learn about the topic in the first sentence? (The price of natural gas has gone up recently.)

Read the second sidebar aloud and discuss the supporting details.

What evidence does the writer offer that the nation is rapidly running out of natural gas? (None; the writer simply claims it is obvious.)

27

LESSON

Reading Critically

Expand

- To **read critically**, a reader must evaluate an author's message to see if it is supported by evidence in the text.
- A reader should also evaluate the author's bias and use of exaggeration and emotional arguments.

Begin by identifying the topic of the article.

Recently, the price of natural gas in America has spiked upward. Obviously this means that we are rapidly running out of natural gas. Experts tell us that this is far from the truth and that proven reserves of natural gas remain substantial. They insist that new ways of recovering natural gas likely will add to these reserves. But everyone knows that the energy companies pay these experts for their "opinions." If we listen to the same old experts, our economy will crumble. Instead, our nation should focus on wind power and windmills, like those sold by my company, Tri-State Turbines.

Read closely to see if the writer's claims are supported by evidence.

Look for appeals to emotion or for signs of the writer's bias.

Remember: Always **read critically** when you approach an article that expresses a writer's opinion. Look for evidence that supports claims, emotional arguments, or signs of bias.

Why do you think the writer uses the word obviously here? (to make the reader believe that the statement is a fact)

How does the writer prove that “everyone knows” experts are paid for their opinions? (The writer does not offer proof.)

Read the third sidebar aloud to students and discuss the writer’s purpose in this passage.

When the writer claims that the economy might crumble, what is the writer doing? (trying to scare the reader)

What signs of bias do you see in this passage? (The writer owns a company that makes windmills, which might compete against other kinds of energy.)

Why is it important to see signs of emotional appeals or bias? (to decide whether the writer’s points are valid by considering how the argument is made)

Conclude the minilesson by reading the Remember statements at the bottom of the overhead.

Explore

(Lesson 27 in Student Practice Binder)

Complete Explore I as a group. Begin with a review of Academic Vocabulary and Heads Up. Use this first exercise as a bridge between instruction and independent practice and to informally evaluate understanding. Encourage students to explain their thinking. Then challenge students to complete the remaining exercise(s) individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Differentiated Instruction

Extra Support: Provide students the level of support needed to complete the remaining exercise(s). Some students may benefit from discussing additional examples of bias, exaggeration, and unsupported statements.

Extend: Ask the students to choose a movie review from a newspaper or magazine and read it critically. Have them list examples of unsupported statements, exaggeration, or bias.

APPLY

History: Have students find historical or current/recent examples of politicians appealing to people’s emotions in order to bring about change. Discuss whether the appeal was successful.

Exit Ticket

Use the following questions as well as student work on the Explore activities as formative assessment on **Reading Critically**. Discuss students’ answers. Offer them an opportunity to reflect on their understanding.

What do you do when you read critically? (Reading critically means evaluating a writer’s message to see if it is supported by evidence in the text.)

What are some ways that a writer might try to influence a reader? (The writer might use arguments that appeal to emotion or exaggerated statements.)

Pause and Evaluate

Reflect on students’ performances at this point. If they have demonstrated an understanding during instruction and discussion, independent practice, and the Exit Ticket conference, concentrate on implementing ideas such as those presented in Apply to transfer knowledge beyond this skill-specific lesson.

If you feel that students have not demonstrated an understanding, consider

- Reteaching the lesson using different text and examples.
- Reteaching a certain area of confusion.
- Proceeding to the Re-Explore activity for additional practice. Sidenotes are generally included to guide instruction and encourage metacognition on the part of the student.
- Adapting the lesson to fit other learning styles or modalities.
- Using current reading materials and fashioning lessons from the text.

Re-Explore

(Lesson 27 in Student Practice Binder)

Work with students needing more practice to complete the Re-Explore activity. Read the exercise for the student, but ask the student to determine the answers with as much support as needed. You may also pair students needing more practice with an adult or capable peer to complete the guided exercise on **Reading Critically**.

Answer Key

Explore (Lesson 27 in Student Practice Binder)

Exercise I: 1. Yes; 2. Yes; 3. No; 4. Yes; 5. d

Exercise II: 1. Safety concerns about Candyland Amusement Park; 2. Article A; 3. The park is called a “deathtrap”; the article hints that kids who go to the park need insurance; the rides are described as “rickety and hazardous”; the reader is asked to imagine being stuck atop the Space Elevator. 4. Last summer, an electrical problem caused the ride to shut down and stranded several people high in the air for more than three hours. 5. The writer once worked at the park and was fired for being late. 6. Article A would make the better news report because it reports facts, gives both sides of the dispute, and quotes people who are involved.

Exercise III: See chart at right.

Exercise IV: Answers will vary. See that students write two versions of an editorial, one with various flaws and one balanced.

Re-Explore (Lesson 27 in Student Practice Binder)

1. b; 2. a; 3. d; 4. c

| Read critically to find examples of— | Sentence or sentences from advertisement |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. bias | If not, you should watch my new video, <i>Why Video Games Are Bad for the World</i> . |
| 2. scare tactics | Have you checked your thumbs lately? No doubt they are red and sore from playing video games for hours. Also, do you stare at the television screen like a zombie whenever it is turned on? This is another sign of video game addiction. Do you want your mind to turn to mush? |
| 3. exaggeration | Some kids spend hundreds of hours each week clicking away at their video games. |
| 4. statement unsupported by facts | Most kids who play video games have never read a book in their lives. In fact, video games warp the mind so badly that players can barely read even if they wanted to. |

Objectives

- Preteach the academic vocabulary and key words *reading critically, supporting evidence, bias, emotional arguments, and misleading/unsupported statements*
- Preteach difficult vocabulary
- Summarize difficult passages
- Practice reading critically

Before the Lesson**Preview Vocabulary**

Explain, act out, and define the challenging vocabulary your students will encounter in this lesson. Then have students complete a vocabulary word card for each term. A reproducible vocabulary word card template can be found on page xx.

animated—drawn and moving. (Talk about animated movies.) *My favorite **animated** movies are the ones by Pixar. They make funny and realistic **animated** movies. What is your favorite **animated** movie?*

cartoon—story that is told through moving pictures. *When I was little, we watched **cartoons** on TV every Saturday morning. Do you watch **cartoons**? Which ones?*

city council—group of people who govern a city. *Most cities in the United States have a **city council** that is one part of the government. Do we have a **city council** in this town/city?*

deathtrap—very dangerous place. *I don't like most amusement park rides because they seem like **deathtraps** to me. Which ride seems like a **deathtrap** to you?*

diner—small, informal restaurant that usually serves breakfast all day. ***Diners** are sometimes in old train cars. What **diners** have you eaten in?*

endurance—power to keep going. *When I climbed a mountain, I had to have a lot of **endurance** to make it all the way to the top without stopping. What activities do you do that take **endurance**?*

former—from before. *Bill Clinton is a **former** president of the United States. Who is another **former** president?*

insurance—contract to pay for someone's loss, harm, or death. *People have car **insurance** to protect their cars and home **insurance** to protect their homes. What does life **insurance** do?*

lately—recently. ***Lately** the weather is getting warmer.*

mush—soft, warm cereal like oatmeal. *In the past, people ate oat or wheat **mush** for breakfast. Have you ever tried **mush**?*

productivity—power to make or do. *When you eat and sleep well, your **productivity** increases. What kinds of things can make your **productivity** decrease?*

track—sport of running, throwing, and jumping competitions. (Talk about a track team students know.) *Students on the **track** team usually pick one or two events that they are good at instead of doing all the running, throwing, and jumping competitions. What **track** event do you think you'd like best?*

ultra-chic—most fashionable. (Display a fashion magazine.) *The men and women in here show **ultra-chic** clothes. What are some **ultra-chic** clothing companies?*

windmills—machines that turn in the wind and change the wind energy into electricity. (Sketch or display a picture of a windmill.) ***Windmills** give us electricity without burning dangerous and expensive fuels. What is one problem with **windmill** power?*

Preteach Academic Vocabulary and Concepts (reading critically, supporting evidence, bias, emotional arguments, misleading/unsupported statements)

*When you read articles, it is important to read **critically** so you can make good decisions about the information the writer is giving you. Reading **critically** means reading and judging the writer's statements. When you read **critically**, you check that a writer's statements have **supporting evidence** or reliable examples. You watch for **misleading statements** or those that are presented as fact but are **unsupported**.*

(Read and, if possible, display a short editorial article from a teen magazine or a local newspaper. Choose one with bias and emotional arguments. Model asking and answering questions to read critically.)

*As I read this article, I look at each statement to see if the writer gives **supporting evidence**.*

(Read statements from the article and point out the supporting evidence or lack of it.)

Reading Critically *continued*

When you read critically, you also look for the writer's bias, or personal reasons for writing something. To discover the writer's bias, I ask myself: Why did this person write this article? Did he/she have a personal reason?

(Reread parts of the article that show the bias and talk about the bias of the article.)

*When you read critically, you also look for **emotional arguments**, or statements that show a lot of emotion and/or try to get the reader to show a lot of emotion. To find these statements, I ask myself: Are there any statements that show a lot of emotion? Are there any statements that make me feel a lot of emotion?*

(Reread the article and point out the emotional arguments.)

(To help students practice reading critically, divide them into multi-leveled small groups. Give each group an editorial article. Ask them to find examples of supporting evidence, bias, and emotional arguments. Have a class sharing in which groups read their article and point out what they found.)

Assess Understanding

(Complete the ELL Explore Reading Critically I activity with students. As students work with you, ask comprehension questions.) *Does the writer make exaggerated claims in his argument? Does the writer appeal to his readers' emotions? Does the writer offer facts and statistics to support his argument? Does the writer have a reason to be biased on this topic?*

(After you have completed ELL Explore Reading Critically I with students, have students try to complete ELL Explore Reading Critically II independently.)

Students should now be ready to participate in Explain and the Expand minilesson.

During the Lesson

Explore I

(Review the following vocabulary words: *ultra-chic*, *productivity*, *diner*. Summarize the passage with simple vocabulary.)

Have you noticed that there is now a Moonlight Coffee Shop on every street corner in America? These ultra-chic shops serve gallons of special coffees to fashion models, people who want to be poets, and

stylish people who are dressed in black. Normal people like you and me aren't welcome in these coffee-ground palaces, yet they are becoming more and more popular. I read somewhere that drinking Moonlight Coffee leads to painful headaches and loss of productivity. It's time to stop the spread of Moonlight shops before they push out every diner and doughnut shop in the nation. Since a Moonlight Coffee Shop moved in next door, the business at my own diner has been cut in half!

(Then complete Explore I together as a class. Ask comprehension questions.) *Does the writer make exaggerated claims in his argument? Does the writer appeal to his readers' emotions? Does the writer offer facts and statistics to support his argument? Does the writer have a reason to be biased on this topic?*

Explore II

(Review the following vocabulary words: *city council*, *deathtrap*, *insurance*. Summarize the passage with simple vocabulary.)

Article A

Citizens who want to close the Candyland Amusement Park spoke at today's City Council meeting. Speakers talked about their worries about one of the park's most popular rides, Space Elevator. Last summer, an electrical problem caused the ride to shut down, and several people were left high in the air for more than three hours. "Our fear," said Leila Sparks, the group's lead speaker, "is that Candyland's rides are not properly taken care of and are not safe." Mike Clopton, the owner of Candyland, told the council members that the problem with Space Elevator had been fixed. He promised to keep the highest safety standards at Candyland and told the council that no serious injuries had ever occurred at his park.

Reading Critically *continued*

Article B

The deathtrap called Candyland Amusement Park should be closed at once. Millions of kids go through the gates of the park every day in the summer and fall, and many of them probably don't have good insurance plans. That's a problem when the rides they line up for are as shaky and dangerous as the ones at Candyland. Like all bad business owners, Mike Clopton says all the right words, as if he were as worried about safety as he is about making money. Don't let him trick you, however. I worked for Mr. Clopton for five years until I was fired for being late two days in a row. Anyone can see that a ride like Space Elevator is going to have another accident. Can you imagine being left up at the top of that thing, swinging in the wind, for three hours?

(Complete Explore II, allowing appropriate support for students. Depending on students' understanding, complete the activity together with students, pair up students, or have students try the activity independently.)

Explore III

(Review the following vocabulary words: *lately*, *animated*, *cartoon*, *mush*. Summarize the passage with simple vocabulary.)

Have you checked your thumbs lately? No doubt they are red and sore from playing video games for hours. Also, do you stare at the television screen whenever it is turned on? This is another sign of video game addiction. Some kids spend hundreds of hours each week playing their video games. Most kids who play video games have never read a book in their life. In fact, video games ruin the mind so badly that players can barely read even if they want to. Instead, they try to figure out how to help some animated character escape from a prison, or how to drive past a cartoon version of Shaquille O'Neal. Do you want your mind to turn to mush? If not, you should watch my new video, "Why Video Games Are Bad for the World." When you're done, you'll want to turn off the television, run outside, and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

(Complete Explore III, allowing appropriate support for students. Depending on students' understanding, complete the activity together with students, pair up students, or have students try the activity independently.)

Explore IV

(Before asking students to write the articles, model writing them. Allow beginning students to use your sentences as frames. Encourage intermediate and more advanced students to write in their own words.)

Re-Explore

(Review the following vocabulary words: *endurance*, *former*, *track*. Summarize the sentences with simple vocabulary.)

- 1. Every athlete in the world agrees that the Summer Olympics, which happen once every four years, are the most difficult athletic competitions in the world.*
- 2. Any sports fan who doesn't cheer for his or her country's Olympic athletes doesn't love his or her country!*
- 3. The Olympic marathon, which is a race that is more than 26 miles long, tests an athlete's powers of endurance.*
- 4. As a former coach for the U.S. women's Olympic track team, I know which teams work hardest and should have the most success.*

(Have students try the activity independently.)

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LESSON

Reading Critically

I. Directions

1. Read the passage below.
2. Then answer the questions.

Year-Round Schooling

Students who go to school all year long get hundreds of benefits. Studies have shown that students who go to school all year long with short breaks learn more than students who have long breaks during the year. Do you want the students of this country to fall behind the rest of the world? If that happens, then this country's economy will fail. We will become a poor, uneducated nation. If you want to see smart, happy students, then send your student to my Long School. You and your student will love the school more than anything else in the world.

1. What is the topic in this article?

2. What emotional arguments does the article include?

3. What signs of bias are there in the article?

4. Would this article make a good news report about this topic? Why?

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LESSON

Reading Critically

II. Directions

1. Read the column below.
2. Then answer the questions that follow.

School Uniforms

Are you tired of spending millions of dollars on clothing? Are you sick of trying to find the most fashionable outfit to wear to school? Do students in your school form dangerous groups by the clothes they wear? We have the solution for you! School uniforms are the best solution for all schools—private and public. They are so cheap, and you only need one or two—not hundreds of different outfits. New uniforms from companies such as my Schooliforms are very comfortable and fashionable. Also, students will not be able to form dangerous groups. You will be rich, comfortable, and safe going to school.

| Questions | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does the writer make exaggerated claims in the argument? | | |
| 2. Does the writer appeal to readers' emotions? | | |
| 3. Does the writer offer facts and statistics to support the argument? | | |
| 4. Does the writer have a reason to be biased on this topic? | | |

5. Which of the following is the main reason for the writer's bias?
 - a. ___ The writer used to wear school uniforms and loved them.
 - b. ___ The writer used to wear school uniforms and hated them.
 - c. ___ The writer owns a company that sells school uniforms.
 - d. ___ The writer has children in the public school system.

- To **read critically**, a reader must evaluate an author's message to see if it is supported by evidence in the text.
- A reader should also evaluate the author's bias and use of exaggeration and emotional arguments.

Begin by identifying the topic of the article.

Recently, **the price of natural gas** in America has spiked upward. Obviously this means that we are rapidly running out of natural gas. Experts tell us that this is far from the truth and that proven reserves of natural gas remain substantial. They insist that new ways of recovering natural gas likely will add to these reserves. But everyone knows that the energy companies pay these experts for their "opinions." If we listen to the same old experts, our economy will crumble. Instead, our nation should focus on wind power and windmills, like those sold by my company, Tri-State Turbines.

Read closely to see if the writer's claims are supported by evidence.

Look for appeals to emotion or for signs of the writer's bias.

Remember: Always **read critically** when you approach an article that expresses a writer's opinion. Look for evidence that supports claims, emotional arguments, or signs of bias.

- Reading critically by evaluating an author’s message for supporting evidence, bias, and emotional arguments
- Recognizing how authors use misleading or unsupported statements to sway readers
- Writing to evaluate an article that expresses an opinion
- Using a graphic organizer

27 Reading Critically

LESSON

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

To **read critically**, a reader must evaluate an author’s message to see if it is supported by evidence in the text. A reader should also evaluate an author’s bias and use of emotional arguments.

HEADS UP

When you read an article that expresses a writer’s opinions, look for flaws in the argument. See if the writer has a particular reason to be biased on the subject. See if the writer provides facts to back up his or her opinions. Look for signs that the writer is trying to scare or anger the reader instead of making a logical argument.

I Read an Editorial Critically

Read the column below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Coffee Conspiracy

Have you noticed lately that there is now a Moonlight Coffee shop on every street corner in America? These ultra-chic establishments serve gallons of designer coffees to fashion models, would-be poets, and style mavens dressed in black. Normal people like you and me aren’t welcome in these coffee-ground palaces, yet they are spreading like wildfire. I read somewhere that drinking Moonlight Coffee leads to painful headaches and loss of productivity. It’s time to stop the Moonlight onslaught before it crowds out every diner and doughnut shop in the nation. Since a Moonlight Coffee shop moved in next door, the business at my own diner has been cut in half!

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does the writer make exaggerated claims in his argument? | | |
| 2. Does the writer appeal to his readers’ emotions? | | |
| 3. Does the writer offer facts and statistics to support his argument? | | |
| 4. Does the writer have a reason to be biased on this topic? | | |

continued →

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LESSON

Reading Critically

I Read an Editorial Critically *continued*

5. Which of the following is the main reason for the writer's bias?
- The writer used to work at a Moonlight Coffee shop, but he was fired.
 - The writer has had health problems from drinking Moonlight Coffee.
 - The writer lives across the street from a Moonlight Coffee shop and is bothered by the noise.
 - The writer owns a diner that has to compete with a new Moonlight Coffee shop next door.

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LESSON

Reading Critically

II Read Critically to Compare Articles

Read the passages below. Then answer the questions.

Article A

Citizens who want to close the Candyland Amusement Park made their case at today's city council meeting. Speakers voiced their concern about one of the park's most popular rides, Space Elevator. Last summer, an electrical problem caused the ride to shut down and stranded several people high in the air for more than three hours. "Our fear," said Leila Sparks, the group's spokesperson, "is that Candyland's rides are not properly maintained and are in fact unsafe." Mike Clopton, the owner of Candyland, assured the council members that the problem with Space Elevator had been fixed. He promised to maintain the highest safety standards at Candyland and reminded the council that no serious injuries had ever occurred at his park.

Article B

The deathtrap called Candyland Amusement Park should be shut down at once. Millions of kids pass through the gates of the park every day in the summer and fall, and many of them probably don't have good insurance plans. That's a problem when the rides they line up for are as rickety and hazardous as the ones at Candyland. Like all crooked business owners, Mike Clopton mouths all the right words, as if he were as worried about safety as he is about profits. Don't let him fool you, however. I worked for Mr. Clopton for five years until I was fired for being late two days in a row. Anyone can see that a ride like Space Elevator is an accident waiting to happen. Can you imagine being stuck up at the top of that thing, swaying in the wind, for three hours?

1. What is the topic in these articles?

continued →

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LESSON

Reading Critically

II Read Critically to Compare Articles *continued*

2. Which of these articles provides a more balanced approach?

3. What emotional arguments does Article B include?

4. Which sentence in Article A gives a factual example of a problem at the park?

5. What signs of bias are there in Article B?

6. Which of these articles would make the better news report about this situation?
Why?

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LESSON

Reading Critically

III Use a Chart to Evaluate an Advertisement

Read the advertisement below. Then fill in the chart.

Have you checked your thumbs lately? No doubt they are red and sore from playing video games for hours. Also, do you stare at the television screen like a zombie whenever it is turned on? This is another sign of video game addiction. Some kids spend hundreds of hours each week clicking away at their video games. Most kids who play video games have never read a book in their lives. In fact, video games warp the mind so badly that players can barely read even if they wanted to. Instead, they try to figure out how to help some animated character escape from a medieval dungeon, or how to drive past a cartoon version of Shaquille O'Neal. Do you want your mind to turn to mush? If not, you should watch my new video, *Why Video Games Are Bad for the World*. When you're done, you'll want to turn off the television, run outside, and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

| Read critically to find examples of— | Sentence or sentences from advertisement |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. bias | |
| 2. scare tactics | |
| 3. exaggeration | |
| 4. statement unsupported by facts | |

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LESSON

Reading Critically

IV Write Two Versions of an Editorial

Write two versions of an editorial about recycling. In the first, include signs of bias, exaggerations, unsupported claims, and scare tactics. In the other, use a balanced approach with reasonable claims and supporting facts.

Version 1

Version 2

27

LESSON

Reading Critically

Read Critically to Find Flaws in an Article

The sentences below come from an article about the Olympics. Read critically to decide if each sentence shows a balanced approach or is flawed in some way.

1. Every athlete in the world agrees that the Summer Olympics, which are held once every four years, are the most difficult athletic competitions in the world.

- a. appeals to emotion
- b. unsupported by facts
- c. signs of bias
- d. factual

How does the writer know what every athlete in the world thinks?

2. Any sports fan who refuses to root for his or her country's Olympic athletes lacks patriotism!

- a. appeals to emotion
- b. unsupported by facts
- c. signs of bias
- d. factual

How does the writer want the reader to feel when reading this sentence?

3. The Olympic marathon, which is a race that covers more than 26 miles, tests an athlete's powers of endurance.

- a. appeals to emotion
- b. unsupported by facts
- c. signs of bias
- d. factual

4. As a former coach for the U.S. women's Olympic track team, I know which teams work hardest and deserve the most success.

- a. appeals to emotion
- b. unsupported by facts
- c. signs of bias
- d. factual

Unit Apply

These application ideas offer students an opportunity to practice multiple unit skills in authentic classroom activities. Each activity covers two or more skills. The skills covered in Unit 4, Reading Comprehension include:

- author’s purpose
- reader’s purpose
- main idea and supporting details
- inferences and conclusions
- predictions
- reading critically
- fact and opinion
- connecting text to text/self/world
- propaganda

Current Events: Have students choose an editorial from the newspaper. After students have read the editorial, have them write a sentence describing the author’s purpose for writing it and the reader’s purpose for reading it. Then have students read through the article again, this time writing a **F** beside a fact that the author presents and an **O** by statements that represent the author’s opinion. Students should then make a list of statements that represent signs of bias, exaggeration, appeals to emotion, or bandwagon appeal.

author’s purpose, reader’s purpose, reading critically, fact and opinion, propaganda

Literature: Choose a passage from a short story or novel students are reading. Have students use sticky notes to identify inferences in the text; make predictions about what will happen next; and connect the text to themselves, another text, or the world. They should complete at least 8 sticky notes throughout the chosen passage.

inferences and conclusions, predictions, connecting text to text/self/world

Science: Choose a science experiment for students to read. Have students create a graphic organizer with the following categories: author’s purpose, reader’s purpose, predictions, and connections. Then have students fill out the graphic organizer. Predictions should include what they think would happen if they performed the experiment. Connections can include how aspects of the experiment relate to texts they have read, personal experiences, or something they know about the world.

author’s purpose, reader’s purpose, predictions, connecting text to text/self/world

Mass Media: Have students view several commercials and print advertisements. Discuss how advertisements rely on propaganda techniques to sell products or services. Then have each student choose one advertisement to critique. Ask the student to create a poster about the ad that shows what types of propaganda techniques—or bias, exaggeration, or appeals to emotion—the ad uses. The poster should also include the student’s reaction to the ad. The students should also state if they have ever tried the product or service before and if it lived up to the image presented in the ad.

reading critically, connecting text to text/self/world, propaganda

Social Studies: Have students choose a passage from a social studies text. Ask students to create an outline of the passage. The main idea should be written beside Roman numeral I, and subsequent details about the main idea should be listed in capital letters (or numbers) underneath the main idea. Then ask students to make an inference or draw a conclusion about what they have read.

main idea and supporting details, inferences and conclusions

Unit 4 ▪ Reading Comprehension

Directions: Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The “greenhouse effect” is a term used to describe the warming of the Earth due to increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is a gas that is produced every time fuel such as coal, oil, or natural gas is burned. This carbon dioxide increases the heat of the atmosphere and thus warms the planet.

According to some scientists, the greenhouse effect is imaginary. Others say it may even be beneficial. These scientists clearly do not understand the research that has been done. The greenhouse effect is the most serious problem that our planet has ever faced.

First of all, the level of the ocean could rise because ocean water expands as it grows warmer. Melting polar icecaps could also contribute to an increase in the level of the ocean. People living on coastlines might lose their homes, and cities might be completely submerged. This would be a terrible tragedy!

Parts of the world that are already hot might become unbearably so. Some scientists predict that the city of Dallas, Texas, which currently experiences temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit about nineteen days a year, might experience those temperatures seventy-eight days a year! Think about it. Hot weather doesn’t just mean that people feel uncomfortable. It means a huge increase in the use of air conditioning, which uses energy, costs money, and creates pollution. It can make some people—especially elderly people and infants—very ill. It can kill crops.

Some parts of the world might become much drier. There are already parts of Africa that suffer from droughts. Other parts of the world might become wetter. Too much rain in some regions could kill the crops traditionally grown there and lead to hunger.

What can be done to limit the greenhouse effect? Many scientists suggest that people need to learn to conserve fuel, since burning fuel is one of the main causes of the greenhouse effect. Governments can protect forests, since trees can help reduce the greenhouse effect. Chemicals that increase the greenhouse effect can be banned or strictly controlled. Nations must work together to prevent a global disaster while at the same time ordinary citizens must do their part.

1. Which statement supports the author’s purpose for writing this passage?
- Ⓐ The author takes an objective and unbiased perspective of the issue.
 - Ⓑ The author wants readers to see the funny side of the issue.
 - Ⓒ The author encourages readers to agree with one side of the issue.
 - Ⓓ The author gives directions for how to end global warming.

2. Why did the author write this passage?
- (a) to inform
 - (b) to entertain
 - (c) to persuade
 - (d) to instruct
3. Which best describes the reader's purpose for reading this passage?
- (a) to be entertained
 - (b) to get information
 - (c) to get instructions
 - (d) to get opinions
4. In what situation below would this passage NOT be appropriate for the reader to use?
- (a) if the reader wanted to know what could be done to limit the greenhouse effect
 - (b) if the reader wanted to understand why some people do not believe in the greenhouse effect
 - (c) if the reader wanted to understand the term "Greenhouse Effect"
 - (d) if the reader wanted to understand possible environmental changes due to global warming
5. What is the main idea of this passage?
- (a) The greenhouse effect is an imaginary problem.
 - (b) The greenhouse effect is a serious threat.
 - (c) The greenhouse effect benefits Earth.
 - (d) The greenhouse effect will cause droughts.
6. Which detail from the passage does NOT support the main idea?
- (a) These scientists clearly do not understand the research that has been done.
 - (b) . . . the level of the ocean could rise because ocean water expands as it grows warmer.
 - (c) Parts of the world that are already hot might become unbearably so.
 - (d) Some parts of the world might become much drier.
7. What inference can you make about global warming from reading this passage?
- (a) Global warming does not really exist.
 - (b) The effects of global warming will decrease as the years go by.
 - (c) The damage already done by global warming cannot be undone.
 - (d) Global warming has been a problem since the Earth was created.
8. Suppose after reading this passage, you read about hybrid cars which produce less pollution because they run on both gas and electricity. You could conclude that—
- (a) no one will buy hybrid cars.
 - (b) hybrid cars could help reduce the greenhouse effect.
 - (c) hybrid cars will be too expensive for anyone to afford.
 - (d) it is too late for hybrid cars to make a difference in the greenhouse effect.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Persians, who lived in what is present-day Iran, were among the first people outside China to see the lustrous fabric known as silk. Around 200 B.C., Persian traders started traveling regularly to China to purchase silk, jade, and other precious goods. They carried these treasures westward in camel caravans to Damascus, which was one of the ancient world's best marketplaces. There, other traders bought the silk and continued the journey westward, eventually reaching the markets of the Roman Empire.

The trade route between China and Europe came to be known as the Silk Road. It was not a single route, but rather a complex, ever-changing network of camel paths and horse trails that traversed some of the world's highest mountains, hottest deserts, and most inhospitable landscapes. The entire route was about 5,000 miles long. It joined eastern China (what is now the city of Xi'an) with the Mediterranean Sea.

The majority of traders did not travel the entire length of the Silk Road; those traveling east and those traveling west met in the middle. The midpoint of the journey was Central Asia, in what is now the independent republic of Uzbekistan. The ancient cities of Bukhara and Samarkand were centers of commerce along the ancient Silk Road.

There traders met to exchange goods, rest, and buy supplies for the long journey home. Traders from the east brought silk, paper, spices, jade, and other goods the western world prized but did not have the technology or resources to produce. Traders from Europe and the Middle East brought their own prized commodities, which included grapes, pomegranates, and Mediterranean colored glass.

For the traders, a journey along the Silk Road was a long, arduous, and dangerous undertaking. The journey often took more than two years to complete. Travelers faced numerous dangers along the way. They had to cross vast scorching deserts and scale forbidding mountains without the aid of modern navigational aids, reliable maps, or roads. Bandits posed an ongoing threat to the caravans as well.

Over time, small towns and cities developed along the Silk Road. They offered travelers food, water, rest, and shelter, but there were often many miles between them. By about 800 A.D., travel along the Silk Road started to decline.

9. What is the best prediction as to why travel on the Silk Road declined?
- (a) Travelers grew tired of the dangers of the road that threatened them on their journeys.
 - (b) The road became too crowded with merchants.
 - (c) Sea routes were established between Europe and China that made travel faster.
 - (d) The road was no longer needed, as trade between Europe and China stopped.

10. Based upon the last paragraph, what is the best prediction of what the towns and cities of the Silk Road are like today?
- Ⓐ They are thriving centers of commerce.
 - Ⓑ They have many silk factories to employ the local population.
 - Ⓒ The large towns have grown out to reach the small villages.
 - Ⓓ Most of the towns and cities have few people or no longer exist.
11. Which statement from the first paragraph is an opinion?
- Ⓐ The Persians, who lived in what is present-day Iran, were among the first people outside China to see the lustrous fabric known as silk.
 - Ⓑ Around 200 B.C., Persian traders started traveling regularly to China to purchase silk, jade, and other precious goods.
 - Ⓒ They carried these treasures westward in camel caravans to Damascus, which was one of the ancient world's best marketplaces.
 - Ⓓ There, other traders bought the silk and continued the journey westward, eventually reaching the markets of the Roman Empire.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

At one time, coyotes were found only in the southwestern United States and in Mexico. In the 1800s, these wild animals began to expand their territory across North America. Today they live in all states except Hawaii. People have spotted them on golf courses and in parks. Coyotes have even invaded backyards in suburban developments and parking lots of busy shopping malls. There are several reasons for coyotes' ability to survive in both wild and urban areas.

Because coyotes are smart, they are able to adapt to new places as long as food and shelter are available. Their varied diet includes small mammals such as mice, squirrels, and raccoons. They also eat fruits, vegetables, and insects. When food is not available in an area, they scavenge for garbage. In most areas, coyotes require only a hidden, protected place for shelter.

Another reason coyotes have survived is that they have very keen senses of smell, hearing, and sight. These senses allow them to easily find new sources of food and to recognize when an enemy is near. Since coyotes can run at speeds of over 40 miles per hour, they can easily escape danger.

Finally, coyotes survive because they multiply quickly. Litters are born in late winter or early spring and usually average from four to seven pups. Where food is plentiful, the litters may be eight or nine pups. Since a new litter is born each year, coyotes can triple their numbers in a year.

Humans often feel threatened by coyotes and their eerie nighttime howling. Yet efforts to trap, poison, or relocate the wily animals are usually unsuccessful. Trapping is difficult, poison is dangerous to other living things, and relocating coyotes just moves the problem from one place to another. The best solution seems to be trying to coexist with them. Coexistence, however, requires some vigilance. Where coyotes roam, cats and small dogs should be kept indoors or in protected areas outdoors. Garbage should be put in containers, and food should not be left outside. With these efforts, it is possible for humans and coyotes to share the land.

12. What is a fact the author includes that supports his or her viewpoint?
- (a) Coyotes eat small mammals such as mice, squirrels, and raccoons.
 - (b) Coyotes have keen senses of smell, hearing, and sight.
 - (c) Relocating coyotes just moves the problem from one place to the next.
 - (d) Humans often feel threatened by coyotes.

13. Which of the following group of people would mostly likely object to the solution offered in this passage?
- Ⓐ a group formed to save the coyotes
 - Ⓑ Garbage collectors
 - Ⓒ Owners of small dogs and cats
 - Ⓓ Professional exterminators
14. Which statement from the passage is the author's opinion?
- Ⓐ The best solution seems to be trying to coexist with them.
 - Ⓑ Litters are born in late winter or early spring and usually average from four to seven pups.
 - Ⓒ They also eat fruits, vegetables, and insects.
 - Ⓓ They have even been sighted in parking lots of busy shopping malls.
15. After reading this passage a reader recalls other things he's read about coyotes. Which of the following would best help the reader understand this passage?
- Ⓐ a folk tale about a talking coyote
 - Ⓑ a cartoon about a coyote chasing a roadrunner
 - Ⓒ a newspaper article about how the growth of cities is affecting the habitats of coyotes
 - Ⓓ a book about a coyote abandoned by its mother
16. A reader finishes reading this passage and shares a story about seeing a coyote in her backyard one late summer night. This is an example of connecting the text to—
- Ⓐ another reading.
 - Ⓑ personal experience.
 - Ⓒ knowledge of the world.
 - Ⓓ classroom experiences.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

Act now and join the thousands of people who have benefited from the experts at Jean Paul's Modeling School. Sessions are a steal, starting at only \$200 per hour! The professionals at Jean Paul can turn any unpolished amateur into a professional model in just 3 months. Just think, three months from now you could be living the glamorous life of the rich and famous in New York, Los Angeles, Rome, London! Call today for your free consultation!

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17. What phrase from the passage is an example of the bandwagon technique in propaganda?
- Ⓐ Act now
 - Ⓑ join the thousands
 - Ⓒ Sessions are a steal
 - Ⓓ professional model
18. What phrase from the passage is an example of exaggeration?
- Ⓐ starting at only \$200 per hour
 - Ⓑ can turn any unpolished amateur into a professional model in just 3 months
 - Ⓒ three months from now you could be living the glamorous life
 - Ⓓ Call today