



MISSISSIPPI

EXEMPLAR

Units & Lessons

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 7

Lesson 10: Claims and Counterclaims

Focus Standard(s): W.7.1, W.7.1a, W.7.1b

Additional Standard(s): RL.7.6, L.7.1b

Estimated Time: 3-4 days

Texts: *Touching Spirit Bear*, Chapters 13 and 14; [Our Opinion: Restorative Justice Produces Transformations](#) from News Tribune

Resources and Materials:


- [Anchor Chart](#)
- Audio: [Touching Spirit Bear Chapters 13 - 15](#)
- LearnZillion's video of ["Revise by Varying Sentence Patterns"](#)
- Student Copies of Alternate Mentor Text: (Pages 213-215) "We Need the League" [In Common: Effective Writing for All Students Collection of All Argument/Opinion Samples, K--12](#)
- Student Copies of Mentor Text: [Our Opinion: Restorative Justice Produces Transformations](#)
- Video: [Circle Justice at Work](#)
- Video: [Parts of an Argument](#)

Lesson Target(s):

- Provide an introductory claim statement about a topic, idea, or issue under study.
- Write a statement of the alternative or opposing claim(s) in a way that helps to strengthen your argument.

Guiding Question(s):

- What should happen to Cole?

Vocabulary	
<p>Academic Vocabulary: Add to word wall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim • Counterclaim • Evidence 	<p>Instructional Strategies for Academic Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures <input type="checkbox"/> Model how to use the words in writing/discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Read and discuss the meaning of word in multiple contexts <input type="checkbox"/> Students create pictures/symbols to represent words <input type="checkbox"/> Students write/discuss using the words <input type="checkbox"/> Students act out the words or attach movements to the words
<p>In-ConTEXT Vocabulary: Have students search through the text(s) for words that are unfamiliar to them. If it is a word that has clear context clues, teach students a strategy to determine the meaning of the word from the context clues. See the strategies listed in the “Strategies for Teaching How to Determine Meaning from Context Clues” section.</p>	<p>Strategies for Teaching How to Determine Meaning from Context Clues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Model the CPR context clue strategy. <input type="checkbox"/> Use an Anchor Chart to model how to use context clues to determine the meaning of words.
<p>Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary: Add to word wall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotonous • Prosecution • Relinquish • Trauma • Vengeance 	<p>Instructional Strategies for Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures <input type="checkbox"/> Model how to use the words in writing/discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Read and discuss the meaning of word in multiple contexts <input type="checkbox"/> Students create pictures/symbols to represent words <input type="checkbox"/> Students write/discuss using the words <input type="checkbox"/> Students act out the words or attach movements to the words
Symbol	Type of Text and Interpretation of Symbol
	Instructional support and/or extension suggestions for students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade level and/or for students who and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level
✓	Assessment (Pre-assessment, Formative, Self, or Summative)

Instructional Plan

Understanding Lesson Purpose and Student Outcomes:

Students explore claim and counterclaim, inclusive of supportive text based evidence, after preparation via highlighting key details, reading a mentor text, and discussing information gathered. Students sift through all their writings and accumulated work in this unit prior to writing their own claim and counterclaim. Students draft an argument, then revise it after receiving feedback to make it quality work.

Remind students of their performance task:

You have read Part 1 (Chapters 1-16) of Ben Mikaelson’s novel *Touching Spirit Bear* and informational texts concerning the different interpretations people have of justice as well as healing as a goal of justice. Pretend you are a member of Cole’s Healing Circle who is deciding his fate. Thinking through the point of view of one of Cole’s Healing Circle members, write a formal response to the other members of the Healing Circle about which path you feel will lead to justice: the criminal justice system (and jail) or Native American circle justice (and banishments for a time). Use evidence from both the story and the informational texts to support your argument. Be sure to use various details to develop a clear point of view on the topic.

Anticipatory Set/Introduction to the Lesson: Video Clips (10 minutes)

Show video [Circle Justice at Work](#). Lead a discussion focusing on student opinions of circle justice.

Activity 1: Mini Lesson on Claim and Counterclaim (10 minutes)

Present a mini-lesson on claim and counterclaim. Have students think of real life examples of claim and counterclaim.

Note: For a description of claims and counter claims, watch the video [Parts of an Argument](#).

Activity 2: Argument for Restorative Justice (30 minutes)

Divide students into partners to read the mentor text. Distribute copies of the mentor text, [Our Opinion: Restorative Justice Produces Transformations](#) from News Tribune.

Note: As an alternative to the model text above, consider using Alternate Mentor Text: (Pages 213-215)“We Need the League” [In Common: Effective Writing for All Students Collection of All Argument/Opinion Samples, K---12](#) as the model text because it provides a sample (with annotations) of a student-written argument from the point of view of another person/character, which correlates

with the requirements of this task.

Guide students to highlight the text in color. Tell them to highlight the claim and three to five pieces of supporting evidence in one color, the counterclaim in another color, and evidence refuting the counterclaim in a third color. Lead a discussion about how the highlighted evidence made for a stronger argument.

Have students compare the information they gathered throughout the unit on their graphic organizers to the mentor text. Have them identify the parts of the arguments they have already written.

Activity 3: Touching Spirit Bear Audio Read (Chapters 13 and 14): What Should Happen to Cole? (20 minutes)

Present the guiding question: What should happen to Cole?

Have students listen to the audio of [Touching Spirit Bear Chapters 13 - 15](#). Have students draw thumbnail-sketches or act out the events in this part of the text to help them build comprehension of this section.

Provide time for students to journal their opinions based on the guiding question. Be sure students understand that they are not making a prediction of what WILL happen to Cole, but rather they are beginning to develop a claim on what should happen to Cole.

After giving students time to journal and discuss their writing, introduce the performance assessment and explain the checklist.

Activity 4: Drafting the Argument (45-60 minutes)

Tell students to access and use the information they have already written from their **Handout 1.5: Ideas to Remember for the Performance Task**, graphic organizers, journals, and reflections, as well as informational texts students have already annotated from previous lessons and the anchor text. Provide time for students to begin to draft their arguments independently. Assist as needed, but as this is a performance assessment, have students work primarily on their own.

Cycle the writing through the writing process. Provide timely feedback and allow for revisions if time permits. Have students assess and revise their own writing or work with a partner to assess and revise using the checklist.

Note: Be sure students know the following:

- ✓ Claims are introduced to present the writer’s opinion or position on a topic, idea or issue.
- ✓ A counterclaim is an alternative or opposing claim; the opposite side of the writer’s claim.
- ✓ Some claims attempt to convince the reader that the position the writer takes is correct.

- ✓ A writer presents an argument (point, reason, detail) or several arguments (points, reasons, details) to provide support for his claim.
- ✓ Evidence is introduced to provide support for the writer's claim.

Have students annotate their own texts much like the student sample in Alternate Mentor Text: (Pages 213-215) "We Need the League" [*In Common: Effective Writing for All Students Collection of All Argument/Opinion Samples, K--12*](#).

Have individual conferences with students on an ongoing basis during this lesson to assist students in improving their final product. The conferences should include their discussions of their annotations. Provide feedback and instruction as needed.

Activity 5: L.7.1b Practice

Remind students the discussions about how the author in the anchor text uses varying simple, compound, complex, and compound complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas. Look at some additional sentences in the recently-read sections of the anchor text or in other texts to discuss how the author continues to do this.

If necessary, have students view LearnZillion's video "[Revise by Varying Sentence Patterns](#)" again. Have them return to their writing in Activity 4 to revise their writing, being sure to choose varying simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.

- ✓ Check for mastery of standard in their writing. Provide feedback to correct misconceptions and validate understandings.

Activity 6: Individualized Conventions of Standard English Revision Mini-Lesson

Based on your ongoing viewing of students' written products, determine specific areas of need for errors in Standard English or general improvements (such as adding a colon) to their conventions, provide feedback on the most pressing area of need, and provide students with the opportunity (perhaps through videos on the internet) to view a tutorial to help them understand the convention concepts and skills they need to improve upon.

Tell students that they will view a tutorial about a particular skill so that they can demonstrate command of a specific Standard English grammar, capitalization, punctuation, or spelling skill and concept they need to improve upon. Tell students that if the tutorial is not helping, they will need to ask for assistance.

Note: Look for common areas of need amongst students writing and group students based on areas of need.

Have students write a short summary of what they learned with examples. Students should then apply what they have learned to their research paper. Have students attach their summary to their revised writing and submit for a grade, if desired.

- ✓ Check to see if students have demonstrated command of the specific Standard English grammar, capitalization, punctuation, or spelling skills and concepts they focused on during their revisions.

Reflection and Closing:

Have students write a final reflection about how they can use their understanding of point of view to help them in real life. They could write a letter to their future selves explaining what they want to be sure to remember about point of view in the near future or as an adult.

For training or questions regarding this unit,
please contact one of the following:

Wendy Clemons
Professional Development Director
Wclemons@mdek12.org

Dana R. Danis, ELA Content Specialist,
English Language Arts
ddanis@mdek12.org

Kristina Livingston
Professional Development Coordinator, Lead
klivingston@mdek12.org