

# CONNECTION OF IDEAS

described by Donalyn Miller

**Build understanding of nonfiction texts by verifying points and making connections between topics and ideas**

## **IDOE Literacy Framework Guiding Principles of Literacy Instruction:**

- Literacy propels independent thinking, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and new literacies.
- Standards-based and disciplinary literacy instruction accelerate student gains.
- Literacy is a fundamental part of instruction in all disciplines.
- Teachers as adaptive experts have the most impact on student learning.
- Evidence-based instructional approaches transform an emergent reader into a skilled reader and a lifelong learner.
- Administrators are change agents and have the power to create and to support a culture of literacy.

The Indiana standards emphasize the importance of nonfiction reading skills with the expected learning outcome that all students develop reading proficiency on a continuum of growing skill and independence. As readers develop, they are expected to navigate increasingly complex text, apply several comprehension strategies in tandem, and read independently for longer periods.

While reading nonfiction text, readers should be able to understand and connect information and use nonfiction text structures and features to locate and comprehend information. Critical literacy demands that young readers develop the ability to identify and evaluate information for accuracy, credibility, and bias; and compare and evaluate information from multiple sources, including print text and other media. Proficient nonfiction readers understand the relationships between facts and supporting information and recognize the differences between facts and opinions in a text.

In Grades K-2, readers are expected to describe how an author uses reasons to support facts in a text. In Grades 3-5, readers must also distinguish between facts and opinions in a text and identify an author's specific claims and supporting information. In Grades 6-8, readers are expected to trace and evaluate an author's argument and claims and assess these claims for valid reasoning with supporting evidence.

**KINDERGARTEN****With support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text. (K.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Students will benefit from frequent opportunities to interact with nonfiction text through read-alouds, picture walks, and other literature-based experiences.

**Considerations for Lessons and Assessment**

This video shows teachers how to use nonfiction text about engaging topics like animals to guide students' understanding of how authors use reasons to support points in the text. Students can show their understanding by sorting or labeling reasons and supporting points in text using big books, print or online text, or sentence strips with support. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating statements about animals (or other topics) and researching information to support them. This independent practice provides opportunities for summative assessment.

**GRADE 1****Identify the reasons the author gives to support points in a text. (1.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Prior to first grade, students are expected to identify reasons that an author uses to support points in a text with scaffolded support. The first-grade standard expects students to identify supporting points with more independence.

**Considerations for Lessons and Assessment**

This video shows teachers how to use nonfiction text about engaging topics like animals to guide students' understanding of how authors use reasons to support points in the text. Students can show their understanding by sorting or labeling reasons and supporting points in text using big books, print or online text, or sentence strips. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating statements about animals (or other topics) and researching information to support them. This independent practice provides opportunities for summative assessment.

**GRADE 2****Describe how an author uses facts to support specific points in a text. (2.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Prior to second grade, students are expected to identify reasons that an author uses to support points in a text. The second-grade standard extends this knowledge by focusing on factual information and the supporting reasons authors include.

**Considerations for Lessons and Assessment**

This video shows teachers how to use factual statements from nonfiction books about animals to guide students' understanding of how authors use facts to support points in the text. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating statements about animals (or other topics) and researching facts to support them. This independent practice provides opportunities for summative assessment.

**GRADE 3****Distinguish between fact and opinion; explain how an author uses reasons and facts to support specific points in a text. (3.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Prior to third grade, students are expected to identify reasons that an author uses to support facts in a text. The third-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to tell the difference between facts and opinions in a text, as well as the reasons and facts authors include to support their ideas.

**Considerations for Lessons and Assessment**

This video shows teachers how to use nonfiction books about animals to illustrate the differences between facts and opinions in a text, and guide students' understanding of how authors use facts and reasons to support key points. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating statements about animals (or other topics) and researching facts to support them. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

**GRADE 4****Distinguish between fact and opinion; explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support a statement or position (claim) in a text. (4.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Prior to fourth grade, students are expected to identify reasons that an author uses to support facts and reasons (ideas) in a text and distinguish between facts and opinions. The fourth-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to identify specific claims (positions) and statements in a text and understand how the author uses reasons and evidence to support a claim.

**Considerations for Lessons and Assessment**

This video shows teachers how to use nonfiction books about nature and animals to illustrate how authors make claims in a text, and use reasons and facts to support their claims and statements. Through brainstorming, inquiry and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating claims about nature, animals (or other topics) and researching facts to support their claims and statements. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

**GRADE 5****Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support claims in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which claims. (5.RN.4.1)****Unpacking the Standard**

Prior to fifth grade, students are expected to identify an author's claims, how an author uses them to support facts and reasons (ideas) in a text, and distinguish between facts and opinions. The fifth-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to identify specific claims (positions) and statements in a text and understand which reasons and evidence support specific claims.

### Considerations for Lessons and Assessment

This video shows teachers how to use nonfiction books about nature and animals to illustrate how authors make claims in a text, and use reasons and facts to support their claims and statements—focusing on how specific reasons and evidence support specific claims. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating claims about nature, animals (or other topics) and researching facts to support their claims and statements. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

## GRADE 6

### Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that the author supports with reasons and evidence from claims that are not supported. (6.RN.4.1)

#### Unpacking the Standard

Prior to sixth grade, students are expected to identify specific claims and statements in a text and understand which reasons and evidence support specific claims. The sixth-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text and determine whether the author supports their claims with evidence or not.

### Considerations for Lessons and Assessment

This video shows teachers how to use a T-chart to record a nonfiction author's claims and supporting evidence—focusing on how specific reasons and evidence support specific claims and identifying when claims are not supported with evidence. Students can use a T-chart to organize and trace claims and evidence in the nonfiction text they read and write. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating claims and researching facts to support their claims or revising their writing to provide evidence for unsupported claims. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

## GRADE 7

### 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, noting instances of bias and stereotyping. (7.RN.4.1)

#### Unpacking the Standard

Prior to seventh grade, students are expected to identify the argument and specific claims in a text and determine whether an author has supported their claims with evidence. The seventh-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to evaluate if an author's reasoning is effective in supporting their claims, including identifying biases and stereotyping.

### Considerations for Lessons and Assessment

This video shows teachers how to use a T-chart to record a nonfiction author's claims and supporting evidence—focusing on how specific reasons and evidence support specific claims. Building on the sixth-grade standard, in addition to determining whether specific claims are supported with evidence or not, students are expected to evaluate whether biases and stereotypes influence an author's reasoning. Students can use a T-chart to organize and trace claims and evidence in the nonfiction text they read and write. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating claims and researching facts to support their claims or revising their writing to remove biases and stereotypes influencing their reasoning. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

## GRADE 8

**Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced. (8.RN.4.1)**

### Unpacking the Standard

Prior to eighth grade, students are expected to identify and evaluate an author’s argument and specific claims in a text, determining how claims are supported with evidence, and whether bias and stereotyping influence an author’s claims. The eighth-grade standard extends this knowledge by expecting students to determine the effectiveness of an author’s reasoning and identify when evidence is relevant or not.

### Considerations for Lessons and Assessment

This video shows teachers how to use a T-chart to record a nonfiction author’s claims and supporting evidence—focusing on how specific reasons and evidence support specific claims. Building on the sixth- and seventh-grade standards, in addition to determining whether specific claims are supported with evidence or not, and evaluating whether biases and stereotypes influence an author’s reasoning, students can use this organizer to identify and evaluate whether the evidence an author provides is relevant to their claims or not. Students can use a T-chart to organize and trace claims and evidence in the nonfiction text they read and write. Through brainstorming, inquiry, and writing, students can practice and extend their learning by generating claims and researching facts to support their claims or revising their writing to strengthen their claims and reasoning. This independent practice provides additional instruction and assessment opportunities.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### For Students

National Center for Families Learning. (n.d.). *Wonderopolis: Where the wonders of learning never cease*. <https://wonderopolis.org/>  
 Rex, M. (2020). *Fact vs. opinion vs. robots*. Nancy Paulsen Books  
 Thompson, L. & Paquette, L.T. (2018). *Two truths and a lie: It’s alive!* Walden Pond Press  
 Various titles/topics/age ranges. *National Geographic Kids*. National Geographic Society.

### For Educators

Annenberg Learner. (2004). *Teaching persuasive writing*. <https://www.learner.org/series/write-in-the-middle-a-workshop-for-middle-school-teachers/workshop-4-teaching-persuasive-writing/>  
 Cummins, S. (2018). *Nurturing informed thinking: Reading, talking, and writing across content-area sources*. Heinemann.  
 Harvey, S. & Daniels, H. (2015). *Comprehension & collaboration: Inquiry circles for curiosity, engagement, and understanding*. Heinemann  
 International Debate Education Association. (n.d.). *Debatebase* [data set]. <https://idebate.org/debatebase>  
 LaGarde, J. & Hudgins, D. (2018). *Fact vs. fiction: Teaching critical thinking skills in the age of fake news*. International Society for Technology in Education.  
 Newsela.(n.d.). <https://newsela.com/>  
 PBS Learning Media. (n.d.). *The buzz about fact and opinion*. <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/vt107.la.rv.text.lpfactop/the-buzz-about-fact-and-opinion/>  
 Partnership for Inquiry Learning. (n.d.). <http://partnershipforinquirylearning.org>

*This document and accompanying videos may be shared in their original form for educational purposes only. No modifications or reproductions permitted without consent of Partnership for Inquiry Learning and the authors.*