Grade 7 Playlist: Citing Evidence

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1:

- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Welcome

"The sunlight seeped through the towering trees onto the ground below. A chorus of birds could be heard chirping in the branches above." This sounds like the description of a story's setting, right? Yet the author does not clarify where the story is set. Does this story take place on a beach? Not many beaches have enough trees to block the sun. What about in a big city? Unless it is in Central Park in New York, it is not likely. Perhaps it takes place in a forest? A forest is likely to have plenty of towering trees and birds chirping above. Because the author does not clearly state where the story is set, the reader must make an inference based on evidence.

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- cite textual evidence to support analysis of inferences drawn from a literary text.

Review

Key Terms

- An **inference** is an idea drawn from analyzing information about the literary elements in a text.

- When a reader **cites** evidence in a story, he or she quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes the explicit and implicit textual evidence that the author gives in the story.

- An **analysis** of a text is a close and detailed examination. When analyzing a literary text, the reader carefully examines the setting, characters, and events and their connections to one another and the story overall.

- The information and ideas, or **textual evidence**, that the author provides about the setting, characters, and events are either:

  ◦ **Explicit,** meaning that the author clearly states the information and ideas in a way that is easy to understand and that cannot be misinterpreted; or

  ◦ **Implicit,** meaning that the author does not clearly state them, and the reader must identify and understand them by thinking more about the information and ideas

Watch!

To understand how authors use textual evidence better, watch this video:

- https://www.opened.com/video/textual-evidence/1553910

Exploring the Standard

The information and ideas given in a literary text serve a purpose. They help the reader form ideas about the characters, setting, or plot. Sometimes, a reader must form ideas that are not clearly stated by the author. In order to support the inference, a reader must cite textual evidence. Sometimes an inference is clearly supported by explicit evidence in the story. For example, if an author describes a setting as "a moonlit patio," it can be inferred that the story takes place outdoors and at night. The description "moonlit" supports the idea that the story takes place at night. The word "patio" supports the idea that the story takes place outdoors, on a patio. Often times, however, a more in-depth analysis is necessary to make inferences and to provide evidence to support the inferences.

Watch!

Watch this video about using text to support analysis of explicit information and inferences:

- https://www.opened.com/video/common-core-literature-standard-1-cite-strong-and-thorough/1553909b

A Closer Look: Making Inferences

While reading a story, a reader may make inferences without realizing it. An element in a text may generate a response in the reader that may immediately cause him or her to draw conclusions about a character's motivations or about future events in the story. It is important for readers to be aware of their automatic responses in order to look for evidence to support these kinds of inferences. Being aware of these guesses about a text—and waiting to see if those guesses come true—is one way to practice making inferences as one reads.

It is equally important to ask questions about the text and to keep those questions in mind while reading. For example, readers may ask themselves: Why does a character act a certain way? Why is there tension between these two characters? Why hasn't the author given any background information about a new character or a new setting? As the story progresses, the reader will find answers to these questions and others, and will be able to make the connections that allows him or her to make inferences about the text.

Watch!

For examples on how to ask questions while reading, watch this video:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4btc8xwGGg

Teaching Notes: Citing Evidence

The goal of RL.7.1 is for students to be able to **cite textual evidence** to support **inferences** drawn from a **literary** text. To do so requires the ability to analyze a text, examining what the author says (and does not say) about the characters, events, setting, and other elements of the story. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Have students take turns coming to the front of the room in pairs. Each pair will have a conversation in which they discuss family members, neighbors, or other people they know. Then, ask the class to draw inferences about the people discussed and the speakers' feelings about them.

2. Present a short story and a poem to the class. Read each aloud and ask students to draw inferences about the respective speakers' points of view. Then, ask students to identify how inferences are treated differently in short fiction and in poetry.

Writing Prompts

1. Instruct students to read the brief poem "This Is Just To Say" by William Carlos Williams.

   - **"This Is Just to Say":** http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/just-say

   Have students write a two- to three-paragraph analysis of it. What is Williams trying to say with this poem, and what is the poet's implied message? Can it be interpreted in more than one way? How does the scant amount of text support a complex message?

2. After the students have read and analyzed "This Is Just to Say," instruct them to write their own poem with an implicit message. The poem should include strong and ample evidence to support the inference.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.7.1:

"The Art and Science of Teaching/Teaching Inference": This article outlines techniques for helping students understand inferences in writing.

   - http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr10/vol67/num07/Teaching-Inference.aspx

"Effective Teaching of Inference Skills for Reading": This very extensive resource explores the topic of inference and how students learn and process inferences.

   - http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED501868.pdf