

Lesson 1: Reading Opinion Texts: Determining an Author's Opinion



CCS Standards

- **RI.4.8:** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can determine an author's opinion in a text. (RI.4.8)
- I can explain how an author supports an opinion with reasons and evidence. (RI.4.8)

Ongoing Assessment

- Annotated William Barton's letter (RI.4.8)

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Entrance Ticket: Identifying Opinion from *Divided Loyalties* (10 minutes)
- B. Reviewing Performance Task and Learning Targets (10 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Reading Aloud and Determining the Gist: William Barton's Letter (15 minutes)
- B. Determining Reasons and Evidence: William Barton's Letter (20 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

- A. Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers (5 minutes)

4. Homework

- A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- This lesson launches students into their performance task by having them read an opinion letter written from the perspective of the main character, William Barton, from the play *Divided Loyalties* (read in Unit 2). Students learn how authors support their points through reasons and evidence by reading these texts and then rereading them as mentor texts later in the unit as they work to craft their own opinion pieces for their performance task, an American Revolution broadside (RI.4.8).
- In Opening B, students review the module guiding questions and performance task prompt to help focus their work (see Performance Task Overview).

- In this lesson, students focus on working to become effective learners and ethical people by collaborating with partners and showing respect as they share opinions.
- Students practice their fluency by following along and reading silently as the teacher reads William Barton’s letter in Work Time A.
- The research reading that students complete for homework helps build both their Vocabulary and knowledge pertaining to the American Revolution. By participating in this volume of reading over time, students will develop a wide base of knowledge about the world and the words that help describe and make sense of it.

How it builds on previous work:

- This lesson opens with students rereading an excerpt from *Divided Loyalties*, read in Unit 2. William Barton’s letter is based on characters and events from this text.

Areas in which students may need additional support:

- Students may require additional support reading William Barton’s letter and determining William’s opinion, reasons, and evidence.

Assessment guidance:

- Review students’ annotations to ensure they understand that the gist is what the text is mostly about, to review the strategies they use to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, and to ensure they understand how to identify reasons and evidence that supports an opinion.

Down the road:

- In the next lesson, students will read Robert Barton’s letter, a letter written in response to William’s, and identify Robert’s opinion and reasons supporting it.

In advance:

- Post: Learning targets and applicable anchor charts (see Materials list).

Technology & Multimedia

- Continue to use the technology tools recommended throughout Modules 1–2 to create anchor charts to share with families, to record students as they participate in discussions and protocols to review with students later and to share with families, and for students to listen to and annotate text, record ideas on note-catchers, and word-process writing.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standard 4.I.B.7

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with the opportunity to connect their learning so far in the module to the work they will do in this unit and in the performance task, and to analyze an opinion text in preparation for writing their own opinion piece later in the unit.
- ELLs may find it challenging to determine the opinion, and reasons and evidence for the opinion, in William’s letter. Model and think aloud the process for students as needed and assure them that they will have more opportunities to practice this work in future lessons. See levels of support, below, and the Meeting Students’ Needs column for specific suggestions.

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- During the Mini Language Dive, challenge students to generate questions about the sentence before asking the prepared questions.

For heavier support:

- During Work Time B, consider creating a three-column Opinions/Reasons/Evidence chart. Title the first column “Opinion,” the second “Reasons,” and the third “Evidence.” Write the sentence starters “I believe ...,” “He believes ...,” and “We believe ...” under the Opinion heading, the linking word “because ...” under the Reasons heading, and the linking phrases “For example, ...” and “For instance, ...” under the Evidence heading. As students analyze William’s letter, add information from the discussion to the appropriate column of the chart. Continue to add to this chart throughout the unit as students analyze other opinion texts and prepare to write their own.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** Similar to Unit 2, this lesson offers a variety of visual anchors to cue students’ thinking. Continue to support students by creating additional or individual anchor charts for reference and charting student responses during whole class discussions to aid with comprehension.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** Facilitate student management of information and resources in this lesson by allowing them to identify unknown words and record them in their Vocabulary log. Also consider offering scaffolds when reading for gist (e.g., sticky notes with words pertaining to the gist of the story already printed on them or offering multiple choices for the gist and having students circle their response).
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** Invite students to reflect on their learning from previous lessons with *Divided Loyalties* to support students in understanding the value and relevance of the activities in this lesson. Continue to provide prompts and sentence frames for those students who require them.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- perspectives, influenced, opinion, reason, evidence (L)
- Patriot, determined, words, treated, Parliament, respect (T)

Materials

- ✓ Entrance Ticket: Opinions in *Divided Loyalties* (one per student)
- ✓ *Divided Loyalties* (from Unit 2, Lesson 1; one per student)
- ✓ Guiding Questions anchor chart (from Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers (one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Performance Task anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Academic Word Wall (begun in Module 1; added to during the Opening)
- ✓ William Barton’s letter (one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart (begun in Module 1)
- ✓ Vocabulary logs (from Module 1)
- ✓ Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart (begun in Module 1)
- ✓ Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (begun in Module 1)

Opening

A. Entrance Ticket: Identifying Opinion from *Divided Loyalties* (10 minutes)

- Give students specific, positive feedback on completing the End of Unit 2 Assessment and building expertise on the American Revolution. Tell students that as they begin this final unit of the module, they will have an opportunity to share their expertise through opinion writing. Tell students that over the next few lessons, they will explore some examples of opinion writing. Today, they use an excerpt from *Divided Loyalties* to identify an opinion in writing. They will identify Mary Barton’s opinion of William fighting in the Patriot army.
- Distribute the **Entrance Ticket: Opinions in *Divided Loyalties***.
- Invite students to take out their copy of *Divided Loyalties* and turn to page 38.
- Display page 38 and invite students to chorally read pages 38–39 aloud with you, beginning with “Mary: Abigail, where is your brother?” and stopping at the end of page 39.
- Invite students to reread the excerpt independently and then complete the entrance ticket.
- Collect students’ entrance tickets to be used as an informal pre-assessment of their understanding of opinion writing.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: (Checking Comprehension of Concepts) Check comprehension of the concept of opinion by inviting students to discuss their *opinion* about something familiar. Ask:

“What is your opinion about homework, and why?” Invite them to share their opinion with an elbow partner and provide the following sentence frame for support: “I believe that homework is _____ because _____.”

- For students who may need additional support with organizing their thinking: Consider offering sentence frames in advance on the entrance ticket as scaffolding for student expression. (MMAE)

Opening

B. Reviewing Performance Task and Learning Targets (10 minutes)

- Direct students' attention to the **Guiding Questions anchor chart**. Invite them to chorally read each question aloud with you.
- Invite students to focus on the question:
 - “How does a person’s perspective influence her or his opinion?”
- Share that in this unit, they will continue to consider the *perspectives* colonists had during the American Revolution and how these perspectives *influenced* their *opinion* on the war.
- Display and distribute **Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers** and read the definition of opinion aloud.
- Draw students' attention to the **Performance Task anchor chart** and read the prompt aloud. Remind them that they are working toward participating in a discussion in which they share their opinion of the American Revolution, giving reasons and evidence supporting their opinion.
- Tell students that before they can participate in this discussion, they need to learn more about how to respectfully state an opinion and support it with strong reasons and evidence.
- Direct students' attention to the learning targets and read them aloud:
 - “I can determine an author’s opinion in a text.”
 - “I can explain how an author supports an opinion with reasons and evidence.”
- Turn and Talk:
 - “What do you think you will be doing in this lesson, based on these learning targets?” (analyzing a text for how the author supports an opinion)***
 - “How do these learning targets link to the performance task?” (For the performance task, we will tell our opinion and support it during the discussion, and this lesson is clearly leading toward that.)***
- Add any new Vocabulary to the **Academic Word Wall**. Invite students to add translations of the words in their home languages in a different color next to the target Vocabulary.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: (Discussing Multiple Meanings) Focus students' attention on the first learning target and underline the word *letter*. Ask:

“What kind of word is letter? What does the word letter mean?” (a noun; responses will vary.)

Point out that the *word* letter means a letter of the alphabet, but it also means a written form of communication from one person to another that is often sent in the mail. Explain that in the learning target, *letter* means a written form of communication. Invite students to share the word for both meanings of *letter* in their home languages.

- For students who need additional support with receptive language and comprehension: As students share what they think they will be doing in this lesson and how the learning targets link to the performance task, jot down, say aloud, sketch, and display responses to provide visual reinforcement. (MMR)

Work Time

A. Reading Aloud and Determining the Gist: William Barton's Letter (15 minutes)

- Distribute and display **William Barton's letter**. Invite students to follow along, reading silently in their heads as you read aloud the text.
- Turn and Talk:

“What is the text about?” (It is a letter from William to his father.)
- Share that today they will read this text for the gist and then reread it more closely, looking at how the author supports his opinion.
- Follow the same routine from Work Time B of Unit 1, Lesson 1 to guide students through reading and determining the gist of this text. Note: Students will not reflect on the text or determine the meaning of unfamiliar Vocabulary.
- Remind students to use the following:
 - **Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart**
 - **Vocabulary logs**
 - **Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart**
 - **Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart**

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support determining the gist: Consider highlighting or underlining key phrases in their individual copy of William Barton's letter in advance. (MMR)
- For ELLs: (Mini Language Dive) "Father, I know my words will be hard for you to hear, **but I feel I have no choice** but to join the fight for independence from Great Britain."
 - Deconstruct: Discuss the sentence and each chunk. Language goals for focus structure:
 - *But* signals contrast between this chunk and the previous chunk. Students can discuss additional coordinating conjunctions that would make sense in this chunk. Note the different function of *but* in this chunk and the subsequent chunk. (coordinating conjunction)
 - *I*: "Who?"/ Meaning: *I* refers to William. This chunk is about William. (personal pronoun)
 - *feel I have no choice*: "What?"/Meaning: William describes how he feels. Students can exchange the word *no* with *a* and discuss how it changes the meaning of the chunk. Place the word *that* after *feel* and invite students to discuss whether the meaning of the chunk changes. (verb phrase)
 - Practice: "How can you say this chunk in your own words?"
 - Reconstruct: Reread the sentence. Ask:
 - “**Now what do you think the sentence means?**”
 - “**How does your understanding of this sentence add to your understanding of the text and the guiding question?**”
 - Practice: I know _____, but I _____ . Ask:
 - “**Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? How?**”

Work Time

B. Determining Reasons and Evidence: William Barton's Letter (20 minutes)

- Direct students' attention back to the first paragraph of William Barton's letter. Ask them to reread this paragraph with a partner and locate the sentence that most clearly states William's opinion. If necessary, remind them to refer to the Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers handout. Focus students on the Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart, specifically collaboration. Remind students that because they will work in pairs, they will need to collaborate.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “**Which sentence in this paragraph most clearly states William's opinion?**” (“**Father, I know my words will be hard for you to hear, but I feel I have no choice but to join the fight for independence from Great Britain.**”)
- If productive, cue students to provide reasoning:
 - “**Why do you think that?**” (Responses will vary.)

- Invite students to underline and label this sentence with the word *opinion* on their letters.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“How do you know this statement is an opinion?” (It says what William thinks and believes about the American Revolution; someone could disagree or have a different point of view.)
- Direct students’ attention to the Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers handout. Remind them that in informational writing, authors use reasons and evidence to support a point about a topic. Point out to students that this is true for opinion writing as well; authors use reasons and evidence to support a point they want to make, which is their opinion on a topic.
- Share that a *reason* is an explanation for why an author thinks something is true. It is why someone believes what he or she believes. Focus students on the following point on the handout:
 - “Authors support their *opinions* (WHAT they believe) with *reasons* (WHY they believe).”
- Direct students’ attention to the second paragraph of William Barton’s letter. Ask students to reread this paragraph with a partner and locate the sentence that most clearly states a reason for William’s opinion, or why William believes the colonies should be independent from Great Britain. If necessary, remind them to refer to the Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers handout.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“Which sentence in this paragraph most clearly states a reason for William’s opinion?” (“You say that we are British subjects, but we are not treated like we are part of Great Britain.”)
- Invite students to underline and label this sentence with the word *reason* on their letters.
- Share that authors support their reasons with *evidence*, or facts and details based on research or observations.
- Direct students’ attention back to the second paragraph of William Barton’s letter. Ask them to reread this paragraph with a partner and locate evidence William gives for his reason, or facts and details explaining how the colonists are not treated like British subjects.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“What evidence does William give to support his reason?” (“We are forced to pay high taxes on everything. We have to buy stamps for newspapers, paper, even playing cards! Yet, despite this, we have no say in government decisions. The king sends his own governors to rule us, and we have no representatives in the British Parliament.”)
- Invite students to label this part of the paragraph with the word *evidence* on their letters.
- Invite students to read the third paragraph of William Barton’s letter with a partner, identifying another reason for William’s opinion and evidence he gives to support his reason.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“Which sentence in this paragraph most clearly states a reason for William’s opinion?” (“Even our safety is threatened.”)

“What evidence does William give to support his reason?” (“The British soldiers have been sent here to control, not protect, us. British soldiers watch our every move and have

even killed innocent people. There is no choice but to fight for our freedom! General Washington is a great leader, and I know he will lead our army to victory. War is not safe, but neither are our streets!”)

- Focus students on the Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart, specifically respect. Point out that throughout his letter, William showed respect even though he had a different opinion from his father.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with oral language and processing: Allow ample wait time as students respond during the discussion. (MMAE, MME)
- For ELLs: (Modeling and Thinking Aloud: Identifying Opinion) Model and think aloud the process for identifying William's opinion, one reason, and one example of evidence stated in the letter. (Example: "I know that the last sentence in the first paragraph is William's opinion because he says he knows his words will be hard for his father to hear—he knows his father will disagree with his opinion.")
- For ELLs: (Opinions/Reasons/Evidence Chart: Adding Examples) Consider displaying the Opinions/Reasons/Evidence chart (see "for heavier support"). As students identify sentences that clearly state William's opinion, reasons, and evidence to support his reasons, add this information to the appropriate column on the chart. Include William's name to the left of the first column to show that the examples are from his letter and explain that the class will add to and refer to this chart throughout the unit as they read more opinion texts.
- For ELLs: (Opinions/Reasons/Evidence Chart: Connecting Ideas) Invite students to turn to an elbow partner and describe William's opinion by connecting the ideas listed in each column of the chart. Encourage students to use the sentence starters and linking words and phrases listed under the headings of each column to connect the ideas. (Example: "He believes that he has no choice but to support the fight for independence because he does not think the colonies are treated like they are part of Great Britain. For instance, the colonies have no representatives in the British Parliament.")

Closing and Assessment

A. Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers (5 minutes)

- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“What do you now know about how authors use reasons and evidence in opinion writing?” (Responses will vary.)
- Focus students on the following criteria on the Exploring Opinions as Readers and Writers handout:
 - “Opinions are supported by:”
 - “Reasons: WHY an author has a particular opinion.”
 - “WITH”
 - “Evidence: HOW authors support their reasons with facts or details (based on research and/or observations).”

- Point out that the facts or details used by authors can be from research or observation.
- Use a checking for understanding technique (e.g., Red Light, Green Light or Thumb-O-Meter) for students to self-assess against the learning targets.
- Repeat, inviting students to self-assess against how well they collaborated and showed respect in this lesson.

Meeting Students' Needs

- When using a total participation technique, minimize discomfort or perceived threats and distractions by alerting individual students that you are going to call on them next. (MME)
- For ELLs: (Revisiting Learning Targets) Revisit the learning targets introduced in Opening A. Ask students to give specific examples of how they worked toward achieving them in this lesson. Invite students to rephrase the targets and tell them that they will have the chance to do similar work in the next lesson.

Homework

A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.

Meeting Students' Needs

- Modify the amount or complexity of reading that struggling learners complete for homework. Provide sentence frames for their responses or allow them to share their learning in other ways, such as drawing or discussing what they've learned with their family, a partner, or the teacher.
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: (Oral Response) Students may benefit from discussing and responding to their prompt orally, either with a partner or family member or by recording their response. (MMAE)