Clues, claims, and what we cannot know

Language and literacy, grade 4 - by GPT-6.1 Terra - status: written (unreviewed)

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Grade 4 Language and Literacy: Clues, Claims, and What We Cannot Know

Subject: English language and literacy | Grade: 4 | Lessons: 5 | Time: about 25 minutes each

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> **Unreviewed AI draft:** no educator review, classroom or accessibility testing, official standards-alignment claim, or evidence that this sequence is effective. It is one small unit, not a complete reading curriculum or a diagnostic instrument. An educator should adapt it to their students.

Language and literacy progression

Big idea

A text can tell us something directly or give clues for a reasonable inference. We can point to clues, consider alternatives, and say when we cannot know.

What students should be able to do

1. Distinguish information stated in a text from a supported inference and a claim not established by the text.
2. Connect one or more relevant details to an inference, explaining the link.
3. Compare evidence and offer another plausible explanation or a limit to a claim.
4. Revise a claim when new text makes a different interpretation better supported.

What students should already know

Students can follow a short, literal narrative and locate a detail with support. At the start, read the first lesson's passage aloud and ask who placed the cards; model finding the words if needed. This is a teaching check, not a diagnosis. Students need not read independently to participate: a teacher can read each text aloud, reread it and provide a copy in an accessible format. Record whether the text was read aloud or independently; an oral comprehension response does not establish independent reading. Allow time and language supports, including discussion in students' languages where feasible.

Lesson list

1. Stated, inferred, or not established: sort claims and find clues.
2. Two clues together: explain how evidence supports an inference.
3. Choose relevant evidence: compare a strong and a weak detail.
4. More than one possibility: revise with new information.
5. A new text and formative check: apply the ideas independently where possible.

Materials

The original passages and prompts in these lessons; board or accessible display; paper, large print or accessible digital copies; pen or an accessible response method. The teacher may read

and repeat all passages and questions. Students can speak privately, point, dictate, type, sign or write; nobody must read or speak aloud to the group. No internet or images are needed for the activities.

Assessment

Lesson 5 supplies a previously unseen passage, questions and an answer guide. Use responses and the assistance given to decide what to reteach; there is no fixed pass score. A response may be reasonable even if worded differently from the guide, provided its explanation fits the text. Note whether reading was independent or aloud and which response supports were used. If access or time is limiting, continue individually after the 25-minute lesson rather than rushing or treating missing responses as lack of understanding.

Sources

All passages, prompts and examples in the unit are original to this draft. The IES What Works Clearinghouse guide, Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9, is a general resource on reading interventions for those grades. It does not validate this unit, its texts, or its sequence. No source passage is copied.

Known gaps and cautions

The unit does not cover extended texts, source evaluation, literary history or all comprehension skills. Time and support may need to vary. Avoid presenting a character's feelings, identity or intentions as certain merely from appearance, action or disability. Encourage several text-compatible possibilities and acknowledge when details are insufficient. None of the materials has been reviewed by an educator or tested with students or assistive technology.

Lesson 1: Stated, inferred, or not established

Time: 25 minutes. Unit overview | Next

Goal

Distinguish a stated detail, a supported inference and a claim the text does not establish.

Materials

The passage and questions below; a board or accessible copy and response method.

Steps

1. **Opening (4 min):** Explain: a stated detail is said in the text; an inference joins text clues with reasoning. Read the passage twice, displaying or providing it accessibly. Ask who placed the cards: **Mina**; point to the first sentence. Reread and model finding a detail if needed.

   Mina put a stack of blank cards beside the classroom door. A sign above the cards said, “Write a question for our guest.” By lunchtime, several cards had writing on them. Mina placed the written cards in a folder.

1. **Model (6 min):** “Mina placed the cards in a folder” is stated. “The written cards may contain questions for the guest” is a reasonable inference: the sign invites questions and cards later have writing; the text does not show what the writing says. “The guest is a scientist” is not established: no job is given. Model “may,” not “must.”
2. **Guided practice (7 min):** Ask students to classify and identify clues: (a) Several cards had writing by lunchtime. (b) Someone may have used the cards to prepare for a guest. (c) Every student wrote a question. Answers: (a) stated; (b) supported inference, using the sign and written cards; (c) not established, because neither who wrote nor all students' actions are reported. Listen for alternatives that fit the passage.
3. **Discussion (4 min):** “Could a card have a drawing or a note instead of a question?” Yes; its exact content isn't given. “What would help?” Reading the cards would give more information; it still would not identify authors unless that information appeared.
4. **Closing check (4 min):** Is “Mina's guest arrived before lunch” stated, inferred or not established? **Not established**; a sign names a guest but no arrival time is given. Privately ask for the reason. Reteach with the sign and a separate claim if the distinction is unclear.

Vocabulary

Stated: directly said. **Inference:** a reasonable conclusion based on clues and reasoning. **Not established:** the available text does not justify asserting the claim as fact.

Differentiation

- **Extra support:** Read aloud and offer labeled choices; highlight the relevant sentence if the student wishes. Record the help given.

- **Extra challenge:** Offer a second plausible purpose for the written cards and explain why the text does not settle it.

⚠ Safety

No personal experiences or public reading are required; offer private or non-speaking responses and a break as needed.

Teacher notes

A reasonable inference is not guaranteed true. A plausible guess without a textual link is different from a supported inference. Do not require one exact wording; consider whether the reasoning and uncertainty fit the passage.

Lesson 2: Two clues together

Time: 25 minutes. Previous | Unit overview | Next

Goal

Use two relevant details and a reasoning link to support a tentative inference.

Materials

The passage and prompts; accessible copies and response tools.

Steps

1. **Opening (4 min):** Review “stated” and “may.” Read aloud twice:

   The community garden had a row of small plants. A wooden label beside the row read “Beans.” On Saturday, Tavi carried a watering can to the row. Afterward, the soil around the plants was wet.

1. **Model (6 min):** “Tavi may have watered the plants.” Clue 1: Tavi carried a watering can to the row. Clue 2: afterward the soil was wet. Link: a watering can can be used to wet soil. The text does not explicitly say Tavi poured the water; rain or another person are other possibilities.
2. **Guided practice (7 min):** Ask students to point to or identify both clues. Which two details support “the row might contain bean plants”? **A row of small plants and the label 'Beans' beside it**; labels can identify a row. The label could be mistaken, so the variety is not certain.
3. **Discussion (4 min):** “Does the text say Tavi grew the plants from seed?” No. “Does wet soil prove Tavi watered them?” No; other explanations fit. Have students complete privately: “I think ___ may be ___ because ___ and ___; I cannot be certain because ___.” Accept any text-compatible version.
4. **Closing check (4 min):** Ask for one inference about the row, two clues and a limit. Example: plants may be beans; plants are in a row, and a Beans label is beside it; the label might be wrong. If a response states only clues, model the missing reasoning link.

Vocabulary

Clue: a detail that helps support an idea. **Reasoning link:** how the clue makes an idea plausible. **Certain:** known without doubt.

Differentiation

- **Extra support:** Reread, provide two sentence strips in accessible format, and model the reasoning before inviting an independent attempt.
- **Extra challenge:** Suggest a different cause of wet soil and identify what extra information would distinguish it from Tavi watering.

⚠ Safety

Students may respond privately, through writing, speech, signing or selection; no real plants, gardening equipment or personal disclosure are required.

Teacher notes

The passage establishes wet soil, not the weather or who watered. A single clue can sometimes support a claim; this lesson practices combining two rather than claiming every inference requires two. Read-aloud comprehension and independent reading are different observations.

Lesson 3: Choose relevant evidence

Time: 25 minutes. Previous | Unit overview | Next

Goal

Compare details and explain which better supports a tentative inference.

Materials

The passage and question below; accessible copies and response tools.

Steps

1. **Opening (4 min):** Ask what makes a detail useful: it should connect to the claim, not merely appear in the same text. Read twice:

   At the school concert, Noor set a music stand next to a chair. Noor put a sheet titled “Concert Program” on the stand. A blue curtain hung behind the chair. Soon, a musician sat there and looked at the sheet.

1. **Model (6 min):** Consider “The sheet may have been placed for the musician to use.” Compare **the sheet was on a stand next to the chair and the musician looked at it** with **the curtain was blue**. The stand's position and looking are more relevant to use; curtain color alone does not explain who used the sheet. Looking is observable; a private purpose is not certain.
2. **Guided practice (7 min):** Ask: “What might the sheet tell the musician?” It **may** list parts of the concert, because of its title. We have not seen its contents. Ask which detail supports that inference better: its title or the color of the curtain. **The title**; explain the connection.
3. **Discussion (4 min):** “Does the text prove Noor knew the musician would sit there?” No. The placement is compatible with that, but we are not told what Noor knew. A reasonable interpretation should not be reported as fact.
4. **Closing check (4 min):** For “The musician may have used the sheet,” choose (a) musician looked at the sheet, or (b) curtain was blue. **(a)** is more relevant; looking can be a way to use it. It does not prove what the musician read or thought. Accept a clear equivalent explanation.

Vocabulary

Relevant: connected to the claim being considered. **Evidence:** a detail used to support a claim. **Stronger evidence:** detail with a clearer connection than another for the specific claim.

Differentiation

- **Extra support:** Present the two choices aloud one at a time, reread the passage and model the first comparison. Accept pointing or selection.
- **Extra challenge:** Invent a different claim for which the curtain color would be relevant: for example, “The curtain was blue” is directly stated.

⚠ Safety

Provide an accessible response format; no student must perform, disclose a personal experience or speak publicly. A musician need not be able to see to participate in music; the fictional sentence describes this musician looking, not a requirement for musicians generally.

Teacher notes

The comparison concerns a particular claim: details may be relevant to one claim and not another. A title is a clue to content, not proof of every item on its sheet. Do not infer a character's thoughts from an action alone.

Lesson 4: More than one possibility

Time: 25 minutes. Previous | Unit overview | Next

Goal

Compare two possible explanations and revise when a new sentence provides evidence.

Materials

The passage and additional sentence below; accessible response tools.

Steps

1. **Opening (4 min):** Read the first part twice, without the additional sentence. Ask what is directly stated.

   At the craft table, Ari put a paper bird in a small box. Ari wrote “For the display” on a label and placed the label on the box. Later, the box was on a shelf near the door.

Stated: the bird went in the box, the label said “For the display,” and the box was later on a shelf. 2. **Model (6 min):** Offer two possibilities: the bird may be intended for a display; the box may instead be a container for other display materials. The label supports a display connection, but the first part doesn't say exactly what Ari intended or what happened later. Model “may,” not “proved.” 3. **Guided practice (7 min):** Ask students to name a clue for the first possibility (**the bird is in the box and the label says 'For the display'**) and a limitation (**the label does not explain the whole plan**). Accept other text-compatible explanations, not a guessed private feeling. 4. **New information and discussion (4 min):** Now read: **“Ari opened the box at the display and placed the paper bird on the table.”** What changed? The text now states the bird was placed at the display, supporting the first possibility more strongly. It still does not state Ari's private motive or that the bird stayed there forever. Change a prior claim if needed. 5. **Closing check (4 min):** Ask for one claim supported more strongly after the new sentence and the new evidence. Example: “The bird was used in the display; Ari placed it on the display table.” A student may quote the new sentence instead of using the same wording. Reread and model revision if needed.

Vocabulary

Interpretation: a way of making sense of evidence. **Revise:** change an idea in response to information. **Alternative:** another possibility.

Differentiation

- **Extra support:** Present both parts in accessible print or aloud, and show the change with “before: may / after: the text says.”
- **Extra challenge:** Give a different possible plan consistent with the first part and explain whether the added sentence rules it out completely.

⚠ Safety

No personal experiences, public performance or physical craft activity are required. Students may respond privately or with an accessible method.

Teacher notes

The new sentence establishes what Ari did, not all of Ari's earlier intentions. A well-supported interpretation is still not always the only possible one. Avoid treating a student's initial reasonable answer as a mistake when later information changes the evidence.

Lesson 5: A new text and formative check

Time: 25 minutes. Previous | Unit overview

Goal

Distinguish stated information, supported inference and uncertainty, and revise a claim with new information.

Materials

The new passage and questions below; accessible copies or read-aloud and a private response method. Do not use this passage in earlier lessons.

Steps

1. **Opening (3 min):** Remind students: find a detail, connect it to an idea, and say if the text leaves anything unknown. Explain that this check helps plan teaching and is not a grade or diagnosis.
2. **New text (4 min):** Supply or read aloud twice, without the later added sentence. Students may listen, read independently, or use both approaches.

   Before opening the library, Jo placed a cardboard box by the door. A paper sign on the box said “RETURN BOOKS HERE.” When the bell rang, three students put books into the box. Jo looked at the box and carried it behind the desk.

1. **Individual check (10 min):** Ask privately, in accessible form:
2. Where did Jo first place the box? What words tell you?
3. What might the box be used for? Give **two** details and explain how they support your idea. Is the idea certain?
4. Can we know from the passage whether Jo made the sign? Explain why or what information would be needed.
5. A reader guesses, “Jo put the box on the floor behind the desk.” Now read this additional sentence: **“Jo put the box directly on a shelf behind the desk, without setting it on the floor.”** Would you keep or revise the guess? Explain with text evidence, and say what remains unknown about where the books go later.
6. **Review (5 min):** Invite students to revisit their answers; offer a private conference or written feedback, without displaying names or scores. Use the answer guide below. Accept other defensible text-linked answers.
7. **Closing (3 min):** Ask: “What can you say when the text leaves something unknown?” Example: “We cannot tell yet; we would need more information.” Collect responses and note read-aloud, prompts, time and response supports.

Answer guide and next steps

1. **By the door.** “Jo placed a cardboard box by the door.” A selection or paraphrase is fine. If needed, model returning to the first sentence.
2. **It may be a place to collect returned books.** The sign says “RETURN BOOKS HERE,” and three students put books in it; these connect its labeled purpose to an observed use.

The sign and Jo's placement by the door are also relevant clues. Explain that a labeled purpose is a plausible interpretation, not proof of Jo's intention or the books' later destination. If a student gives a plausible claim without a link, model how both details support it.

3. **No.** The passage says there was a sign but not who made it. Information identifying its maker would help. Do not accept “Jo made it” or “Jo did not make it” as established; either could be possible.
4. **Revise:** the original text does not say whether Jo put the box on the floor; the new sentence explicitly says Jo put it directly on a shelf without setting it on the floor. Neither passage specifies where the books end up later. Do not assume the books necessarily moved with the box: unreported handling is possible.

This is a small formative sample, not a diagnostic tool or a fixed cut score. If the student needs support locating details, model and reread; if details are located but the link is missing, model a “because” connection; if an inference is asserted as certain, compare a text-compatible alternative. Allow extra private time beyond the lesson for access or unfinished responses.

Vocabulary

Evidence: text detail supporting a claim. **Revise:** change an idea using new information. **Not established:** not justified as fact by the text.

Differentiation

- **Extra support:** Repeat or read the passage aloud, provide a copy in a suitable format, allow selection or dictation, and record assistance. Oral comprehension does not establish independent reading.
- **Extra challenge:** Give another plausible use for the box and identify which text details support it and what remains unknown.

⚠ Safety

Responses may be private, signed, spoken, typed, dictated or written; no public reading, personal disclosure or physical visit to a library is required.

Teacher notes

The box's labeled and observed use makes a return-box interpretation plausible, but does not reveal who created the sign or Jo's private motives. Question 4 checks attention to the new sentence; moving a box is not proof of the movement or final disposition of its contents. Adapt time and modality to the student; never penalize an accent or communication method.