



Developing Claims, Reason, and Evidence through Art a 20–60-minute classroom or gallery activity

Grades 6–12

By Jeanne Sheets-Sagoo, Center for Advanced Learning

Lesson Overview: Students will use artwork to practice identifying the relationship between claims, reason, and evidence.

Suggested Posters:

- Many posters could work for this activity. Some suggestions:
- Diego Rivera, *Los Futos del Trabajo*
- Ka'ila Farrell-Smith, *After Boarding School: In Mourning*
- Hale Woodruff, *Sunday Promenade*
- Giuseppe Bonito, *Il Femminiello*
- Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled* from the series *Kitchen Table*
- Elizabeth Nourse, *Femme au Fagots*
- Michel Corneille, the elder, *Cleopatra and the Asp*

Materials:

- A work of art from the Portland Art Museum Poster Project. Request posters at <http://portlandartmuseum.org/learn/educators/resources/posters/>.
- Pencils or pens and paper—or computer

Before the Lesson:

1. Make sure all students have access to the posters by laying them out on tables or hanging them on the walls within reach.
2. Distribute materials to each table.

Lesson Steps:

1. Prompt: What can you assert or claim about this painting? Make a list of all of the evidence that you see in the painting/photo. These are details (objects, people, spacing, emotions, etc).
2. Discuss: With a partner, discuss the evidence that you see within the painting. Create a claim that could be substantiated by at least three pieces of evidence that you found. Use reasoning to explain how the evidence supports the claim. Why is it a valid claim?
3. Write your claim, reason, and evidence in outline form. (See examples below.)
4. Elaborate: Using your claim as your topic sentence, write a paragraph that explains how your claim is made valid through logical reasoning supported by relevant evidence.



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Examples:

Claim: Artist Michel Corneille argues that Cleopatra's act of suicide is noble.

Reason: She seems accepting of her fate.

Evidence: Her facial expression is depicted as calm and thoughtful.

Claim: The painting, Cleopatra and the Asp, depicts an act of suicide.

Reason: Cleopatra is choosing her death.

Evidence: She is reaching for the Asp without being forced.