

## Week Three: Stories as Evidence and Fragments

**Weekly Focus:** Analysis  
**Weekly Skill:** Identifying Evidence

**Lesson Summary:** Students will read an excerpt from Philosopher Seneca. They will learn what a “claim” is and evidence is and then work to identify these pieces in their reading. Finally, they will explore parts of a sentence and work to identify fragments. Students will continue their discussion of the essential question, “Why do we tell stories?”

**Materials Needed:** Seneca Reading, Seneca Grammar, Group Roles, Reading Log

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- Read and comprehend a difficult text.
- Identify the claim of an argument.
- Identify the role of stories as evidence.
- Understand rules for writing a complete sentence.
- Identify complete and incomplete sentences in other's writing.
- Identify complete and incomplete sentences in their own writing.

**Common Core Standards Addressed:** RL.9-10.2, RL.11-12.7, W.9-10.3., W.9-10.5, L.11-12.1

**Notes:** This week focuses on Analysis in the CARE (Comprehension, Analysis, Response with Evidence) model. Explain to students that this week we will work not only to understand the large ideas of a piece but also the ways in which these ideas are supported. We will do this by breaking a larger piece down into its smaller parts and analyzing it.

There are several different types of Claims. For our purposes, we are focusing on Major Argumentative Claims. To help students understand, explain that the term Claim is like a Thesis. Explain that claims only occur in non-fiction, such as the essays they will write for the GED test.

Many students will find this week's grammar difficult. Tell them that this is okay. We are working with challenging material, but the concepts are ones that we will be returning to over and over again during this class. If they don't get it now, they'll have plenty of time to practice later. It is a good idea to begin introducing academic vocabulary such as “independent clause” and “dependent clause.” It is not important that students necessarily remember these names, only that they are exposed to them and understand the concepts.

## Week Three: Stories as Evidence and Fragments

### Activities:

#### Warm-Up: Creative Writing

Time: 20 min.

Creative Writing Prompt: If you could live a hundred years but never leave your house, or live only thirty years but travel wherever you wanted, which would you choose? Why?

#### Reading and Writing Activities:

Time: 90 min.

- **Review:** Quickly review what a theme is from last week. Remind students that themes are found only in fiction.
- **Pre-Reading Activities:** Locate Rome on a map, briefly give background of Seneca. <http://www.egs.edu/library/lucius-annaeus-seneca/biography/> (Teacher handout only). Preview vocabulary words such as "idle."
- Explain that Seneca's writing is one of the earliest forms of an essay, much like what students have to write for their GED essay. As such, Seneca's essay will have a major claim/thesis. Introduce students to the concept of a claim (explain this is another word for thesis). Discuss how this is different than a theme (nonfiction argument vs. fiction) and also similar (both are main ideas). **Introduce** students to the concept of "evidence" and "warrant." This should just be a brief introduction, as we will work more in-depth with evidence and warrants later. However, be sure that students understand that whenever a claim is made, there must be evidence to support this claim. Not only that, but if you are going to use evidence to support a claim, you must explain how it supports that claim, i.e. you need to provide a warrant for using it. It might help to give a real world example: Claim: Taco Cabana has the best tacos around. Evidence: The Star Tribune reviewer ate there and gave it four out of four stars. Warrant: The Star Tribune is considered a trustworthy source by many people.
- Have students write a definition for "claim" in their notebooks.
- **Reading:** Read the essay excerpt out-loud. Stop. Ask for a volunteer to read it again out-loud. Go over any vocabulary questions.
- Break into small groups. Hand out group roles and have students choose their role. Follow the Reading assignment sheet.
- **Regroup:** Have presenters share their group's answers. Make sure that all students have identified the claim. Ask students why Seneca told stories (he used them as evidence to support his claim). **Writing:** Have students work to write a paragraph to answer the writing prompt. If time, write an example together first. Have volunteers share their paragraph.

**BREAK: 10 MINUTES**

#### Grammar Activity:

Time: 50 min.

**Review:** Briefly review the difference between subjects and verbs.

**Introduction:** Go over rules for making a complete sentence. (subject, verb, complete thought). You may want to introduce the term "independent clause."

**Practice:** Follow directions on the Seneca Grammar assignment sheet. The first activity should be done in groups; the second activity should be done alone, with the class going over the answers. Use the original reading as the answer key. Do not let students look at the original reading as they work.

**Sandboxing:** Have students choose three sentences from their creative writing for today. Have them rewrite these sentences and then identify the subject and the verb by writing an “S” and a “V” above them. Then, have students identify whether or not the sentence is a complete sentence or a fragment by writing Fragment or Complete beside it. If the sentence is a fragment, the student should rewrite it as a complete sentence.

**Wrap-Up: Exit Whip**

**Time: 10 min.**

Have students stand in a circle. Ask the essential question, “Why do we tell stories?” Have each student in the circle give an answer, even if it is only one word.

**Extra Work/Homework:**

Have students turn their writing paragraph from the Reading Assignment into a five paragraph essay.

Differentiated Instruction/ELL Accommodation Suggestions	Activity
Have Beginning students only identify subjects and verbs in their own writing.	<b>Grammar Sandboxing</b>

**Online Resources:**

Claims:

- 1) Establishing an Argument from the OWL at Purdue  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01/>

Parts of a Sentence:

- 1) Fragment Overview from the OWL at Purdue  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/620/1/>

**Suggested Teacher Readings/Trainings:**

- 1) Research Based Beginning Reading Instruction for Adults Online Training  
[online.themlc.org](http://online.themlc.org)
- 2) Teaching Grammar in Adult ESL Online Training  
[online.themlc.org](http://online.themlc.org)

**Taken from Seneca's *Epistles Volume III***

**EPISTLE XCIII**

A life is really long if it is a full life; but fullness is not attained until the soul has rendered to itself its proper Good, that is, until it has assumed control over itself. What benefit does this older man derive from the eighty years he has spent in idleness? A person like him has not lived; he has merely tarried awhile in life. Nor has he died late in life; he has simply been a long time dying. He has lived eighty years, has he? That depends upon the date from which you reckon his death! Your other friend, however, departed in the bloom of his manhood. But he had fulfilled all the duties of a good citizen, a good friend, a good son; in no respect had he fallen short. His age may have been incomplete, but his life was complete. The other man has lived eighty years, has he? Nay, he has existed eighty years, unless perchance you mean by "he has lived" what we mean when we say that a tree "lives."

Pray, let us see to it, my dear Lucilius, that our lives, like jewels of great price, be noteworthy not because of their width but because of their weight. Let us measure them by their performance, not by their duration. Would you know wherein lies the difference between this hardy man who, despising fortune, has served through every campaign of life and public service and has attained to life's Supreme Good, and that other person over whose head many years have passed? The former exists even after his death; the latter has died even before he was dead.

We should therefore praise, and number in the company of the blest, that man who has invested well the portion of time, however little, that has been allotted to him; for such a one has seen the true light. He has not been one of the common herd.

### Small Group Work

**Directions:** Discuss the following questions with your group. You do not need to write down your answers except for questions one and five. Your group timekeeper will keep track of your discussion time. When time is called, move to the next discussion question.

1. Record at least one textual reference for both the “Words of Wisdom” and “Tough Questions” signposts in your reading log. **(10 min.)**
2. To whom is Seneca writing? What kind of relationship do you think they have, and why do you think he is writing to this person? **(5 min.)**
3. What is Seneca's **thesis** or **claim**? Underline it in your text. Do you agree or disagree with his claim? **(10 min.)**
4. Seneca works to convince his reader that what he is saying is true by giving two contrasting examples of people as evidence. What are the two types of people that he compares? **(5 min.)**
5. In your groups, take out a sheet of paper. **(15 min.)**
  - Draw a line down the middle, making two columns.
  - As evidence to support his claim, Seneca tells us a story about a man who lives both a “full life” and one who lives an “idle life.”  
At the top of the first column you drew, write “**Idle Life.**” At the top of the second column, write “**Full Life.**”
  - Under each of these columns, list the characteristics of the person as Seneca describes him.
  - Finally, try to think of examples of each of these kinds of people from today (men or women). The examples can be famous people, people you know, or even yourself or someone in your group.
  - Write down your new examples under the appropriate columns.

### Large Group Regroup

Spend five minutes sharing responses from your small group work with the class. Then answer the following questions together:

“Why did Seneca tell stories?”

“Why do we tell stories?”

### Writing Activity

**Prompt:** Is it better to lead a “full life?” or an “idle life?”

**Directions:** Write a one paragraph response to the above question.

#### **Getting Started:**

1. Start by making your claim, i.e. state in a *complete sentence* which life is better.
2. Then, use at least two textual references from the Seneca reading as evidence to support this claim.
3. Explain *why* you used each textual reference to support your claim (warrant).

## Seneca Grammar Activity

### Fragment Activity #1

**Directions:** Cut out the following fragments taken from the Seneca reading. Each group should get a fragment piece. Together, group members should decide how to make their fragment into a complete sentence. They may use their Seneca reading for help, but they must come up with their own, new sentences. Each group should write their sentence on the board. They should write a **V** above the verb and an **S** above the subject. Have them also underline the original fragment that they received. When everyone is finished, each group should:

- 1) Read the original fragment to the class
- 2) Explain why it wasn't a complete sentence
- 3) Read their new sentence and explain how they made the fragment complete.

If a group finishes early, give them another fragment to work on at their table.

**a life is**

**full life**

**has died late in life**

**duties of a good citizen**

**his age may have been incomplete but**

**departed in the bloom of his manhood**

**the other man**

**Fragment Activity #2**

**Directions:** Below are some questions that are similar to what you will see on the GED Reasoning through Language Arts portion of the test.\* Read the passage and then work alone to choose the correct option.

\*Note: The Official GED Test will be on the computer. The editing questions will be in a drop-down format.

**Pray, let us see to it, my dear Lucilius, that our \_\_\_\_\_jewels of great price, be noteworthy not because of their width but because of their weight.**

- 1) Which is the best way to fill in the underlined portion of the text?
- (1) lives. Like
  - (2) lives! Like
  - (3) lives, like
  - (4) lives. And that

Let us measure them by their performance, not by their duration. **Would you know wherein lies the difference between this hardy man who, despising fortune, has \_\_\_\_\_ every campaign of life and public service and has attained to life's Supreme Good, and that other person over whose head many years have passed?**

- (2) What is the best way to fill in the underlined portion of the text?
- (1) served! Through
  - (2) served through
  - (3) served. Through
  - (4) served, through



Pray, let us see to it, my dear Lucilius, that our \_\_\_\_\_ jewels of great price, be noteworthy not because of their width but because of their weight. Let us measure them by their performance, not by their duration. Would you know wherein lies the difference between this hardy man who, despising fortune, has \_\_\_\_\_ every campaign of life and public service and has attained to life's Supreme Good, and that other person over whose head many years have passed? \_\_\_\_\_.

**(3) Choose the sentence that is written correctly to end this passage.**

- (1) The former exists even after his death; the latter has died even before he was dead.
- (2) Even after his death; the latter has died even before he was dead.
- (3) Exists even after his death; the latter has died even before he was dead.
- (4) The former exists even after his death; the latter has died. Even before he was dead.

## Group Work Roles

### LEADER

- Makes sure that every voice is heard
- Focuses work around the learning task; guide group from exercise to exercise

**Sound bites: Let's hear from \_\_\_\_ next." "That's interesting, but let's get back to our task."**

### RECORDER

- Compiles group members' ideas:
  - Make a star on the sections/numbers we need to go over
  - Write specific questions

**Sound bites: "I think I heard you say \_\_\_\_\_; is that right?" "How would you like me to write this?"**

### TIME KEEPER

- Encourages the group to stay on task
- Announces when time is halfway through and when time is nearly up

**Sound bite: "We only have five minutes left. Let's see if we can wrap up by then."**

### PRESENTER

- Presents the group's finished work to the class

**Sound bite: "Which questions do we need to go over in this section?" "What else do we need to ask?"**

Created by Jen Ouellette for the Minnesota Literacy Council

## Reading Log

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Page # (or Paragraph # for short readings)	Signpost I Noticed (circle one)	Signpost Question	My Notes About It
	Contrasts and Contradictions  Aha Moment  Tough Questions  Words of the Wiser  Again and Again  Memory Moment		
	Contrasts and Contradictions  Aha Moment  Tough Questions  Words of the Wiser  Again and Again  Memory Moment		

Signposts taken from *Notice and Note* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann) by Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst.

