

Social Studies Whole-Class Instructional Strategy:

Claims Testing

The Basics

What: A protocol to help students evaluate and test claims.

When? When students are preparing to write or speak.

Why? To help them categorize, rank, and critically review their claims and supporting statements.

How to Implement

1. To become familiar with claims testing, watch [“How Do We Decide What to Believe?”](#)
(Note: Middle school and high school students could also watch this video.)
2. Introduce students to claims testing by reviewing what claims are (and what they are not), the importance of thinking critically about statements and arguments they read, and how this strategy will help them think through their own claims and assess the claims of others.
3. As a class, create a claims-testing poster, then review and discuss each of the four claim testers.
 - **Intuition** – Intuition can be a way to test some claims. Intuition is often a gut feeling when the support for the claim just seems right.
 - **Authority** – This is accepting information or data from a credible or believable source.
 - **Logic** – In some instances, claims are tested by carefully thinking about something to see if it makes sense.
 - **Evidence** – This refers to gathering up available information about the world. The word evidence comes from evident: to be able to see something.
4. Lead students in practice testing and organizing claims using this [example](#).

5. Present students with a series of claims written on small cards. Review the Claim Cards as a class before engaging in the activity. Explain to students that they will be working with these claims in three rounds, taking about five to seven minutes each.
 - a. First, instruct students to find or write supporting statements for the claims.
 - b. Second, support students in gauging the strength of the statements they provided and categorizing each into one of the four claim testers (intuition, logic, authority, evidence).
 - c. Finally, have students find or write statements that refute the claims using primary and secondary sources they have been learning about in class.

Once students have completed the claims testing, extend this activity by having them, either in small groups or individually, write a one- to two-paragraph mini-essay using one of the claims as a thesis statement. Then, instruct students to use a few of the best supporting statements as evidence to support their claim (thesis). Students should also acknowledge the counterclaim or refuting statements in their mini-essay.

Resources and Additional Information

- [Research](#) supporting Claim Testing
- Defining Claims [Research](#)
- [Video Model](#) of this strategy
- Examples of activities: [Grades 9-12](#)
- Example topics in [Bayou Bridges: A Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum](#), in which the claims testing strategy would be helpful:
 - **Grades 6-8:** Reform Movements (BB G7 U4, LSSSS 7.11, 7.11.a, 7.11.b), The Road to Revolution (BB G6 U4, LSSSS 6.11.c)