

# Lesson Plan: The Real Story Behind the Story

**Subject:** English Language Arts / Media Literacy

**Age Group:** 12-14

**Time Allotment:** 60-75 minutes

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## Materials Needed

- A short, engaging article on a current issue. (Example provided: "The True Cost of Fast Fashion" - You can find many versions from sources like BBC News, Teen Vogue, or National Geographic).
  - Access to 2-3 additional articles on the same topic from different perspectives (e.g., one from an environmental group, one from a business journal, one from a news organization). Links can be provided.
  - Highlighters (different colors recommended) or digital annotation tools.
  - "Claim, Evidence, & Impact" Graphic Organizer (can be printed or a digital document).
  - Notebook or word processor for writing.
  - Whiteboard or chart paper (optional, for brainstorming).
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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Identify the central claim (main argument) in an informational text.
  - Analyze the evidence an author uses to support their claim.
  - Evaluate the author's purpose and potential bias in presenting information.
  - Formulate a reasoned opinion about a real-world issue based on textual evidence.
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## Lesson Procedure

### I. Introduction (10 minutes)

#### Hook & Engagement

Start with a thought-provoking question related to a common experience. For example:

**Educator:** "Think about your favorite t-shirt. How much did it cost? Maybe \$10? \$20? Now, what if I told you the real 'cost' of that shirt might be polluted rivers in another country or unsafe working conditions for the person who made it? Today, we're going to become detectives. Our job is to look at articles and news stories not just for the information they give us on the surface, but for the story they are trying to tell us underneath. We're going to learn how to figure out what an author *\*really\** wants us to think and how they use facts and stories to convince us."

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## State Objectives

**Educator:** "By the end of our time today, you'll be able to read an article about a real-world issue and confidently answer three big questions:

1. What's the author's main point?
2. How are they trying to prove it?
3. Is their argument strong and fair?

This is a superpower for navigating the world, from understanding the news to making smart decisions as a consumer."

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## II. Body (45-55 minutes)

### Part 1: I Do - Modeling the Skill (15 minutes)

**Educator:** "Let's start with a topic many of us are connected to: fast fashion. That's trendy, inexpensive clothing that moves quickly from the runway to stores. I have a short article about it. I'm going to read it aloud and show you exactly how I think through it like a detective."

1. **Model Reading & Annotating:** Read a short, introductory article about fast fashion aloud. While reading, use a think-aloud process.
  - "Okay, this first paragraph says millions of tons of clothing end up in landfills. I'm going to highlight that in yellow because it seems like a key fact." (Highlighting for **Evidence**).
  - "The author uses words like 'shocking' and 'disastrous.' That's strong language. It tells me the author has a strong opinion. I'll highlight that in pink." (Highlighting for **Author's Tone/Bias**).
  - "Hmm, this sentence seems to summarize the whole point: 'The fast fashion industry prioritizes profit over people and the planet.' That sounds like the main argument, or the 'claim.' I'll underline that." (Underlining the **Claim**).
2. **Model the Graphic Organizer:** Project or share your screen with the "Claim, Evidence, & Impact" graphic organizer. Fill it out based on your think-aloud.
  - **Claim:** Write down the main argument you identified.
  - **Evidence:** List 2-3 pieces of evidence (statistics, expert quotes, examples) the author used.
  - **Author's Purpose/Impact:** Write down your thoughts. "The author seems to want to persuade the reader that fast fashion is harmful. They use emotional words and shocking statistics to make me feel worried and maybe even a little guilty about my shopping habits."

### Part 2: We Do - Guided Practice (15 minutes)

**Educator:** "Great. Now let's try it together. Here is a second article that goes a little deeper into the topic. We'll read the first few paragraphs together, and you'll help me fill out the organizer."

1. **Collaborative Analysis:** Read a new, slightly more complex article together. Pause after each paragraph and ask guiding questions:
  - "What's the most important sentence in that paragraph? What do you think the author's big point is here?"
  - "Did you spot any numbers, quotes, or specific examples? Let's highlight those as evidence."
  - "How does this paragraph make you feel? What words is the author using to create that feeling?"

- "Based on this, what do we think the author wants us to \*do\* or \*believe\* after reading this?"

2. **Co-Create the Organizer:** Fill out a new "Claim, Evidence, & Impact" organizer together, using the learner's responses to guide the process. Encourage discussion if there are different interpretations.

### Part 3: You Do - Independent Practice (15-25 minutes)

**Educator:** "You've got the hang of this. Now it's your turn to be the lead detective. I have a few articles here about fast fashion from different viewpoints. One is from an environmental organization, another is a news report, and one might even defend some aspects of the industry. Choose the one that seems most interesting to you."

#### Instructions for the Learner:

1. Choose ONE of the provided articles.
2. Read and annotate it yourself. Use highlighters or notes to mark the author's main claim, key pieces of evidence, and any powerful or biased language.
3. Fill out a blank "Claim, Evidence, & Impact" graphic organizer for your article.
4. Be prepared to share your findings in a few sentences. What was the story behind the story in your article?

*Provide support as needed, but encourage independent analysis.*

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## III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

### Share & Recap

**Educator:** "Alright, let's bring our detective work together. Can you share the main claim from the article you read? What was the most convincing piece of evidence the author used?"

- Have the learner present their findings from their graphic organizer.
- Ask follow-up questions: "Was your author trying to inform you, persuade you, or something else? How could you tell?"

### Reflection & Reinforcement

**Educator:** "So today, we learned that reading is more than just understanding words; it's about understanding a message. We practiced finding the main claim, spotting the evidence, and thinking about the author's goal. This doesn't just apply to articles about fashion—you can use this skill on a news report about politics, a review for a video game, or an ad you see online. It helps you become a smarter thinker who can make up their own mind."

**Final Check for Understanding:** "In your own words, what are the first two things you should look for when you're trying to analyze an article?" (Expected answer: the main claim/argument and the evidence used to support it).

## Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe learner participation and answers during the "We Do" guided practice. Their contributions to the collaborative graphic organizer serve as a check for understanding.
  - **Summative:** The completed "Claim, Evidence, & Impact" graphic organizer from the independent "You Do" activity serves as the primary assessment of the lesson's objectives. Evaluate it based on the clarity of the identified claim, the relevance of the chosen evidence, and the thoughtfulness of the analysis of the author's purpose.
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## Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For Struggling Learners (Scaffolding):**
  - Provide an article with the main claim already highlighted.
  - Offer an article that is shorter or written at a more accessible reading level (e.g., from a site like Newsela).
  - Provide sentence starters for the graphic organizer, such as "The author's main claim is that..." or "One piece of evidence they use is..."
- **For Advanced Learners (Extension):**
  - Challenge the learner to find two articles with opposing viewpoints on the same issue and fill out a graphic organizer for each, comparing the evidence they use.
  - Ask them to write a short paragraph evaluating which author made a more convincing argument and why, referencing the evidence they gathered.
  - Have them create their own short piece of persuasive writing (e.g., a letter to the editor, a blog post) on the topic, making sure to include a clear claim and supporting evidence.
- **Context Adaptation (Classroom vs. Homeschool):**
  - **Classroom:** The "We Do" can be a think-pair-share activity. The "You Do" can be followed by a gallery walk where students view each other's organizers.
  - **Training Context:** The topic can be switched to a workplace issue (e.g., analyzing reports on a new software, evaluating articles on industry trends). The "I do, We do, You do" model remains highly effective for teaching analytical skills to adults.