

Using the evidence

What does that prove, and what would prove you wrong?

7 days · 6 books · 293 min in full · 154 min short · Grades 2-3

The idea

Evidence in a chapter book is spread out, and some of it is put there for the reader rather than the character. These six books include two proper detective stories, and both of them play fair - the clues are available before they are needed, and one of them plants two of them chapters early.

The unit distinguishes four things a class tends to run together: a clue, a pattern, a claim and a conclusion. A clue is one detail. A pattern is several details pointing the same way. A claim is what the reader thinks those details mean. A conclusion is what remains after the claim has been checked against the rest of the evidence.

Bagels Come Home contains nearly the whole sequence in one lesson: a pattern is spotted, doubted, checked and finally confirmed. The false-lead day is the pivot. Three accusations are each investigated rather than believed, which is the habit the unit is actually for.

The arc

1. A clue is a detail that supports a claim
2. A pattern is several clues pointing one way
3. A claim has to be checked, not believed
4. Some evidence is planted for the reader before a character notices it
5. One small object can be used as evidence more than once
6. An interview can succeed while feeling like a failure
7. A prediction can be tested against what happens next

Where this fits

When to run it. Grades 2-3, after the problem unit. Its checking habit assumes the class has already seen plausible attempts fail.

What it assumes. The Grade 2 inference unit if the class had it; otherwise the ability to name a detail behind a claim.

What it builds. Distinguishing clue, pattern and claim; investigating a claim instead of accepting it; noticing evidence planted for the reader; reusing one piece of evidence; saying what would make a claim fail.

What it leads to. The fact-and-fiction unit, where the question becomes whether a claim is true at all and how it could be checked.

The 7 days

DAY 1

Inference: Who Has Been Opening the Doors Track where the cat is each time the dog escapes, and explain how the mystery is finally solved.

Why here. First because one lesson contains the whole shape - a pattern spotted, doubted, checked and confirmed. The class gets the sequence before the parts are separated.

From Bagels Come Home by Joan Betty Stuchner · A pattern the narrator spots, doubts, and is proved right about 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A three-row clue sheet, plus the answer

DAY 2

Using Evidence: The Three Clues Set out the three clues that solve the case, and explain what each one supports.

Why here. Second: three clues, two planted in the reader's view chapters before they matter. The class learns that an author can supply evidence before a character knows it is evidence.

From Lark and the Dessert Disaster by Natasha Deen · Three clues, two of them planted in the reader's view chapters early 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A three-row evidence sheet: the clue, where it appears, and what it supports

DAY 3

Checking a Claim: Two Men and an Overheard Word Follow the false leads in this book and explain how each one is checked and ruled out.

Why here. Third, and the pivot. Three accusations are investigated rather than believed. Same book as day 2 so the class already holds the genuine clues.

From Lark and the Dessert Disaster by Natasha Deen · Three accusations, each properly investigated instead of believed 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A checking sheet: the accusation, the check, and the result

DAY 4

Using Evidence: The Beaver on the Nickel Explain how a coin settles the argument about the animal, and follow the coin through the rest of the book.

Why here. Fourth: one small object used as evidence several times, then a second one. Evidence gets reused rather than spent.

From Badir and the Beaver by Shannon Stewart · One small object used repeatedly as evidence, and then a second one 35 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A two-column comparison, plus the places the coin becomes evidence

DAY 5

Using Evidence: The Interview That Worked Record the answers Sophie gives to Beatrice's questions, and explain how those answers end up solving the present problem.

Why here. Fifth. An interview its own interviewer thought had failed - the class re-reads a transcript and finds what was already there.

From Beatrice More and the Perfect Party by Alison Hughes · An interview its interviewer thought had failed 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A two-column interview sheet, plus the evidence it turned out to hold

DAY 6

Inference: Why He Keeps Looking Work out why the search matters so much to Reece, using what the book tells you early and what it holds back.

Why here. Sixth: a reason supplied in pieces and completed late. Evidence that accumulates across a whole book rather than inside one scene.

From Where's Burgess? by Laurie Elmquist · A reason supplied in pieces, and completed late 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A two-column sheet: what we are told, and what we work out

DAY 7

Inference: Working Out Where a Lion Would Hide Follow Jelly's reasoning about what the escaped lioness is feeling, and explain how it leads her to the right place.

Why here. Last: a prediction made from several pieces of evidence, tested and eventually confirmed. It closes the unit on evidence used to generate a claim rather than merely explain one.

From Princess Angelica, Part-Time Lion Trainer by Monique Polak · A prediction built from evidence, tested, and confirmed 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A three-row inference sheet, plus the search list it produces

Words to use	
Word	How it is used
clue / pattern	Separated on days 1 and 2 and kept apart.
claim	What the evidence is being used to support.

check	Day 3, and the unit's central verb.
planted	Day 2, for evidence the author gives the reader before it becomes important.
disprove	Used only for a specific piece of evidence that would make a claim untenable.

What to prepare

- Checkpoint 1 page, one per child
- Checkpoint 2 page, one per child
- An evidence board, A3, per group of four

Checkpoints

After day 3 · Clue, pattern or guess Six statements from a book the class has met. The child sorts them into clues, patterns and guesses.

Without a book. Six slips and no book.

Look for. A pattern is distinguished from a single clue. Confusing guess with clue is the error to watch.

Say to the child. Sort these three ways. Which are single clues, which are patterns, and which are guesses?

After day 7 · What would prove you wrong A claim the child makes about any book in the unit, with its evidence. They then name one specific thing they could discover that would make them abandon or revise the claim.

Without a book. A blank page and no book.

Look for. The disconfirming evidence is specific and findable. “Nothing” is the answer to work on; it means the claim is being held as a belief rather than something that can be checked.

Say to the child. Make a claim and give the evidence. Now tell me one thing you could find that would make you change your mind.

The task at the end

The evidence board

Groups of four take one book and build a board for one question: every relevant clue with where it appears, the pattern the clues form, the claim they support, and one line naming the evidence that would make the group revise or abandon that claim.

Boards are swapped. The receiving group checks whether the evidence really supports the claim and whether the proposed disconfirming evidence would genuinely test it. If the receiving group can find evidence on the board that weakens the claim, they mark it.

Collect. The board, the receiving group's check, and any evidence they identified that weakens the claim.

Time. One session of about 45 minutes, or two shorter ones.

Teacher key

- Checkpoint 1: the doors being open repeatedly is a pattern; one open door is a clue; that the cat did it merely because cats are like that is a guess.
- Checkpoint 2: any specific, findable piece of evidence that would require the child to revise or abandon the claim is a full answer.
- Task: the assessment is whether the group can distinguish evidence that supports a claim from evidence that would weaken it. A claim so vague that nothing could count against it needs rewriting.

What a strong answer looks like

Strand	What to see
Clue	Names a detail and where it is.
Pattern	Groups clues that point the same way.
Checking	Investigates a claim rather than accepting it.
Revision	Says what evidence would make the claim change.

Keeping the daily evidence

Keep each child's earliest claim-and-evidence response from the opening days and the after-day-7 answer to "what would make you change your mind?" The growth to look for is not simply more evidence, but a claim that the child understands can be tested.

What to pass on

- A child answering "nothing" at checkpoint 2 should meet the fact-and-fiction unit with that flagged; that unit asks whether a claim is true, which requires a way to check it.

- Lark supplies days 2 and 3 and they must run consecutively; the false leads work best while the genuine clues are fresh.

The books this unit uses

- Bagels Come Home by Joan Betty Stuchner · 1 lesson
- Where's Burgess? by Laurie Elmquist · 1 lesson
- Badir and the Beaver by Shannon Stewart · 1 lesson
- Beatrice More and the Perfect Party by Alison Hughes · 1 lesson
- Lark and the Dessert Disaster by Natasha Deen · 2 lessons
- Princess Angelica, Part-Time Lion Trainer by Monique Polak · 1 lesson

What was considered and left out

65 lessons were available at this grade. These were wanted and not used:

- 7455 · what-badir-knows — Facts with their sources attached. It is about where information comes from rather than what it supports, and it belongs in the fact-and-fiction unit.
- 7469 · how-lark-investigates — An investigation method stated with its reasons. It would have opened this unit well, but the three-per-book cap with days 2 and 3 already taken from Lark excludes it. Recorded as the best unplaced lesson in the band.
- 7213 · the-posters — One document redrawn four times with the reason stated. Author's purpose rather than evidence, and it has no unit in this wave.