

Effective Communicator: Claim, Evidence, Reasoning

A QUICK GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



CER:

A writing framework

Claim:

strong claims express a clear opinion or answer to the prompt

Evidence:

effective evidence includes information found in the text(s) to support a claim

Reasoning:

logical reasoning explains how the evidence supports the claim

Supporting Students to Communicate Effectively with Claims, Evidence and Reasoning

The vision for each and every Kentucky learner is to have the necessary communication skills to become an engaged citizen and to lead a life filled with purpose. The ability to communicate effectively is critical for the vision's success. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) guides districts to ensure that reading and writing are integrated in all disciplines across the school day. The *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing* outlines text-based and evidence-based writing as communication tasks that students should engage in. Additionally, reading and writing should be viewed as complementary learning rather than separate learning experiences. Research concludes that both reading and writing instruction must be explicit. When students understand clear expectations and receive support to employ coherent language and writing strategies, the cognitive load of the complex process of writing is reduced, and they can focus on developing and communicating their ideas. Strong claims, effective evidence and logical reasoning are language found across KAS and in many High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs).

Connection to Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

Institute of Education Science (IES) Guides (2019) synthesize current research findings into principles for reading and writing instruction across developmental ages. Teaching students to make strong claims, find effective evidence and explain thinking logically with reasoning connect to strong instructional writing practices including: explicit instruction of writing strategies according to the purpose, scaffolded support and providing students with opportunities to apply and practice strategies. A gradual release of responsibility from the teacher modeling writing strategies to students applying them independently may include: modeling how to use tools to support writing strategies, teaching how to organize ideas logically and turn the organizer into a piece of writing that effectively communicates and using exemplars to show what good writing looks like. (Schopf et al., 2026) When teachers leverage the embedded writing tasks in their HQIR, they give students opportunities to learn structures and practice them through scaffolded learning experiences which leads to students comprehending, expressing their thinking and thinking critically at higher levels. (Hochman & Wexler, 2017) Coherent strategies across disciplines and grade levels supports students by providing clear, consistent writing support. The Claim Evidence Reasoning strategy is an example of a framework to provide students with a coherent road map to use for a variety of writing tasks and purposes because it aligns with discipline-specific KAS and many local HQIRs. However, teachers should avoid calling a writing task a CER; it is not a type of writing, but rather, the use of Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning can be used as a tool for students to use as a support.

Connection to High-Quality Instructional Resources

In many HQIRs *claim*, *evidence* and *reasoning* is used for opinion/argumentative writing AND for responding to text prompts such as constructed responses. Other HQIRs distinguish the use of claims, evidence and reasoning for opinion/argumentative writing and use terms such as, *focus statement* or *topic sentence* with *evidence* and *explanation* for writing to inform or explain. If multiple words are used across the resource, prioritize KAS language to align instruction with state standards. This tool can be used to support students to organize their ideas and develop their thinking. Using KAS Conferencing Guides from Composition rubrics, targeted feedback can be given to students to make and develop strong claims/counterclaims with relevant evidence and logical reasoning at a progression appropriate to the grade level.

*References



Kentucky Department of
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