Middle School Lesson 4: Connecting and Building with Reason and Logic

This lesson offers significant learning opportunities. Students engage in a cooperative exercise called the Doodle Game in which they learn the value of interpreting a picture from various angles and perspectives while building on each other's ideas. Additionally, students practice expressing themselves in complete sentences using sentence frames and develop research skills to find evidence supporting their claims.

Time Required: 40–45 Minutes

Standards

Common Core State Standard (CCSS)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 (Grades 5–8)

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, group, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.D, 6.1D, 7.1D, 8.1D

Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

National Council for Social Studies C3 Framework

D2.Civ.7.5-8.

Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school settings.

Learning Objectives

- Listen attentively and consider topics from different angles.
- Consider reasons for agreement and disagreement.

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- Constructively build on others' words with reason and logic.

Essential Question

How can we build on others' words with reason and logic?

Materials Needed

- Class presentation: "Connecting and Building with Reason and Logic"
- Class norms
- Sentence frames
- Paper for doodles
- Student self-evaluation

Begin with direct instruction on the lesson concepts using the class presentation as your guide.

Part I: Partner Activity—Doodle Game (15 minutes)

Use Slides 1–9 to guide the activity. Match students with a partner. The students will take turns being Doodler 1 and Doodler 2. They will practice interpreting each other's scribbles with the eventual conclusion that everyone sees things differently.

Part II: Partner Activity—Students Practice Using Sentence Frames (10 minutes)

- Slide 10: Start by explaining that sentence frames can help students speak clearly and build on each other's words. To become comfortable with using sentence frames, students need to practice using them.
- Pass out sentence frames or refer to posted sentence frames on the wall. Explain how they can be used to improve the quality of discussions.
- Slide 11: Ask for two volunteers to practice with sentence frames in front of the class with the following topic: "Which is better: chocolate or vanilla ice cream?" They can use sentence frames such as "I believe ____ because ____" and "I agree with ______ because ______."
- Slide 12: Remind the class that everyone is responsible for providing reasons and evidence for their opinions in a learning discussion. Everyone will practice using sentence frames. (Provide them with a list of accountable-talk sentence stems.)
- Slide 13: After the conversation, ask the class to reflect on how well they applied accountable talk and how they can improve.

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Part III: Partner Activity—Practice Researching to Provide Evidence and Logical Reasons (10 minutes)

Discuss (Slides 14–15): When we talk and listen to other people, we can understand each other better when we

- 1. listen attentively;
- 2. consider reasons for agreement and disagreement; and
- 3. constructively build on others' words with reason and logic.

With a discussion partner, students will respond to this question, **"Is homework helpful?"** with evidence, carefully thought-out reasons, and logic. Students can research the topic online to make their point. (Britannica ProCon.org has a page dedicated to this question.)

Part IV: Closure (5–10 minutes)

How can we build on others' words with reason and logic? Offer students time to complete a self-evaluation of their performance.

Post Lesson: Optional Fun Bulletin Board

If you want, you can collect the doodles and display them on a bulletin board as a reminder of what students learned and the day's objectives.

The Story of the Doodle Game

Years ago, when my children were young, we were looking after our neighbor's child one day, and the kids were getting restless. To keep them entertained, I grabbed a piece of paper, made a scribble on it, and handed it to my son, challenging him to turn it into a drawing. Given their artistic talents, this little game worked like a charm and kept them occupied for quite a while. As time went on, whether we were waiting at the doctor's office or goofing off at home, the Doodle Game became a source of joy for our family. Later, when I returned to teaching, I discovered that the Doodle Game had educational value. It could be used to engage students and help them learn vocabulary. It encouraged the exploration of various perspectives in interpreting the doodles. Recognizing its potential for teaching students how to take on other perspectives, the Doodle Game became a beloved teaching strategy in my English as a second language classroom for over 15 years.

—Betty Nordengren

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