



Civil Discourse: Practicing Our Critical Literacy Skills (4)

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

CCSS.SL.11-12.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Learning Objectives

- Define critical literacy
- Apply critical literacy to an analysis of a text
- Use civil discourse skills to have an effective conversation

Essential Question

What does it mean to be critically literate? How are we critically literate in our daily lives? How does civil discourse help us practice critical literacy?

Media

Choose a poem (such as: "Counting Descent" by Clint Smith, "Mexicans Begin Jogging" Gary Soto, "38" Layli Long Soldier) for this lesson on practicing civil discourse and being critically literate.

Warm-Up

Before starting, review norms from the 1st lesson in this unit or use that lesson to discuss and create norms before proceeding.

Some norm examples, although it is important to note that students should create these norms as a class.

- Respect other people's opinions.
- Try to understand other people's point of view; listen to understand not to respond.
- Participate, participate, participate.
- Respect all opinions.
- Be rational in my response; attack ideas, not people.

Share with the class the following information: What is critical literacy? Critical literacy is analyzing and reflecting on the text one is reading to better understand power, inequality and injustice in human relationships understanding that literacy can create social change.

Ask students to write down what they think this means to them in their lives. After writing down their definitions and reflections on the word, ask them to discuss with a partner.

What do you learn from your partner about what it means to be critically literate?

ASK: Why is it important to be critically literate when discussing text?

Part I: Read and analyze the text

Make sure that each student has a copy of the text they are going to discuss. This copy can be digital as long as they can annotate or on paper where they can physically mark up the text.

Allow students to read the text and mark it up according to your normal class procedures of marking up a text such as close-reading strategies.

Take a few minutes to discuss with students the poem they have read. Students need to understand its themes as well as what is happening.

A great way to do this is to have students [TPCASTT](#) or [TSP-FASTT](#) the poem or just ask questions like:

- What is going on in the poem?
- What is the theme of the poem?
- What words or phrases stick out to you as you read?
- What is the tone of the poem?
- What is the mood that the author wants us to have while reading?

After you have discussed the poem thoroughly you and your students are ready for the wagon wheel discussion.

This discussion may take place during the next class period. If this is going to be the case go to the closing below to find a question to close the lesson for the day and be sure to review the norms and recap the poem so everyone in the room is on the same page.

Part II: Wagon Wheel

CLASS ACTIVITY: THE WAGON WHEEL

You'll need space to be able to create two circles (an inner circle of students and an outer circle of students), the number should be even, so if there aren't enough people join with your students. If there are enough students, walk around the students and talk with them as they are discussing the poem that was read and analyzed.

- Inner Circle (facing out); Outer Circle (facing in).
- Facing pairs will share with each other answers to questions asked.
- When asked, the inner circle will rotate to the right.

Remind students of the norms and they answer questions and rotate to new partners.

Share with students the directions:

- Each partnership will share their answers to a question that the teacher asks, taking about 2 minutes to do so.
- After the time is up, the inner circle will rotate to the right and continue to do so after each question until they are back to their original partner.

Please see below for a general list of critically literate questions, please feel free to add your own:

- Whose voice(s) is/are heard in the text? Whose voices are not heard?
- What does the author think we already know or understand? How do you know?
- What would this text look like if it were written from another perspective? What details would you include and why?
- What did you find challenging about this text? Why?
- What do you already know and believe about the topic of the text? How did this affect your reading of the text?
- What assumptions, beliefs and values does the author bring to the text? What is your evidence?
- What assumptions, beliefs and values does the author make about the reader? What is your evidence?
- Why has the author chosen to convey the claim or theme?
- What questions do you still have about the reading?
- What is the author's purpose? Who is the intended audience? Who is the audience?

"You don't have to have all the answers. You only need to know the questions to ask."

After the Wagon Wheel asks students to go back to their seats and spend a few minutes (3-5) debriefing about what they just did. They can write about anything, but need to know they may be asked to share with the class.

DEBRIEF

- How do you feel about the activity?
- How did this discussion change or affect your understanding of the poem we read?
- Is it easier to talk to someone about a poem of literature using this format? Why or why not?

Let them know they did a good job. Ask them to share what they learned.

Throughout the discussion you will need to have the norms displayed and remind students of the discussion the class had around civil discourse and what the statement on it means.

Closing the Lesson

These can be used at the end of class to bring the topics of today's lessons together:

- What does it mean to be critically literate?
- How did our discussion today help you practice critical literacy skills?
- How does civil discourse help us practice critical literacy?