

INTRODUCTORY LESSON: LUNCHROOM FIGHT II

MATERIALS

- 📄 Student Handout - Lunchroom Fight: The Evidence
- 📄 Student Handout - Lunchroom Fight: Evidence Context Handout
- 📄 Student Handout - Suspension Report

COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

- 📖 Page 61 - #1 (Gr. 6-12), #2 (Gr. 6-8), #4 (Gr. 6-8), #6 (Gr. 11-12), #8 (Gr. 6-12), and #10 (Gr. 6-8)

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

1 Introduce Lunchroom Fight.

If you have completed the first Lunchroom Fight lesson, you can say:

When we did the first Lunchroom Fight activity, we focused on sourcing. You wondered how two accounts of the same event could be different if no one was lying, and you considered why some accounts might be more reliable or trustworthy than others.

Today you're going to receive evidence from eyewitnesses and others connected to the fight in the lunchroom. Your job is to figure out who should get suspended for starting the fight. In order to figure that out, you're going to need to source, contextualize, and corroborate. In other words, you're going to need to read and compare multiple pieces of evidence in order to figure which are more reliable and how they all fit together to fill out the story of what happened in the lunchroom that day.

If you have not completed the first Lunchroom Fight lesson, you can say:

Today you're going to receive evidence from eyewitnesses and others connected to a fight in a lunchroom. Your job is to figure out who should get suspended for starting the fight. In order to figure that out, you're going to need to source, contextualize, and corroborate. In other words, you're going to need to read and compare multiple pieces of evidence in order to figure which are more reliable and how they all fit together to fill out the story of what happened in the lunchroom that day.

2 Hand out “Lunchroom Fight: The Evidence” and “Lunchroom Fight: Evidence Context Handout.”

Explain:

Read through the headnote and all the evidence. Then go back and identify pieces of context that shed light on who started the fight. Write each piece of context in the correct part of the first column of the handout.

For example, from the headnote we learn that Justin's father fired Max's mom and dad. So we're going to write that in the "Town context" part of the handout.

Continue doing that for all the evidence. You need to find at least TWO additional pieces of context for each of the areas of context.

Review student answers. Potential answers:

(a) Outer circle: Town

- *Justin's dad fired Max's mom and dad.*
- *The economy is not strong.*
- *Max mentors younger boys and helps out at church.*
- *Justin has moved around a lot.*

(b) Middle circle: School

- *Justin is a new kid and shy.*
- *Max is popular but lately has been depressed and withdrawn.*
- *Max and his friends are mean to Justin in the hall and glare at him in English class.*
- *There is tension in the school as a result of the reorganization plan.*

(c) Inner circle: Cafeteria

- *The fight happened while the boys were in line.*
- *Max pushed Justin.*
- *Justin punched Max.*
- *Max and his friends were joking around.*

3 After students share their answers, have them go back and fill in the second and third columns:

Discuss student answers.

- (a) Students will likely say that Max, Justin, their parents, and Max's friend are all unreliable because they are clearly aligned with one side.
- (b) Students may say that Jamie, the cafeteria worker, and the bystander are reliable because they don't have a vested interest in either side.
- (c) Some interesting discussion may come up around Max's girlfriend (who we would predict would side with Max, but in fact says that he's been mean recently), and the English teacher (who we would predict would be neutral, but whose comments suggest that he feels for the boys whose parents lost their jobs, and might have turned a blind eye to their teasing of Justin).

- (d) The important point to discuss here is the role that context plays in painting a full picture of what happened and why. If students eliminate all the “unreliable” evidence, they would throw away some critical contextual information (e.g., that Justin moved around a lot or that Max’s friends think he’s weird). It would be difficult to paint a full picture of what happened using only the information in the “reliable” evidence (because bystanders typically see the events from a distance). Remind students that even if they believe a source is mostly unreliable, it may still contain some useful information.

Note: Students may question whether the information in the headnote is reliable or not. Students would be right to question the reliability of the headnote information. If they do so, congratulate them on their impressive sourcing skills, but tell them that for the purposes of this exercise, they can assume that the headnote gives reliable information. They should focus on which sources corroborate information in the headnote and whether those sources are reliable.

4 Have students fill out the "Suspension Report" independently.

Have students share out their answers.

- (a) As students share answers (and potentially disagree about who should be suspended), encourage them to use the terminology of historical thinking (context, source, reliable, corroborate, evidence, etc.).
- (b) Explain that all the lessons in this unit on Reconstruction will be about using all the skills of historical thinking to evaluate evidence and come to conclusions about what happened in the past.

LUNCHROOM FIGHT: THE EVIDENCE

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

You are a principal who is trying to figure out the truth about a lunchroom fight. The fight was between Justin and Max. Justin is a new student. He is shy, quiet, and does not have many friends. He moved to town last month because his father was hired to take over the town's main business. Justin's father fired many people, including Max's parents, when he reorganized the business. Max is a popular student, who is known for his friendliness and good humor. In the past few weeks, however, he has been withdrawn and somewhat depressed.

THE SOURCES

Justin: *"That kid started it. Max. I was just standing in line waiting to pay for my food, and he shoved me super hard. And, like, for no reason. He just freaked out on me. I don't even know the kid, and he's been weird to me ever since I started going to this school. He and his friends glare at me in English class for no reason."*

Max: *"That kid is psycho. He turned around and punched me out of nowhere. Me and my friends were standing in line just joking around, and he turned around and punched me for no reason. He's messed up and creepy. Ask anyone."*

Eric (Max's good friend): *"The new kid definitely started it. He really just attacked out of nowhere. He's a freak, and he seriously thinks he's better than everyone because of his dad."*

Anthony (bystander): *"I was pretty far back in the line, but Max and his friends were being kind of loud and joking around. I couldn't really hear what they were saying. And then all of a sudden I saw people pulling Justin and Max apart."*

Megan (Max's girlfriend): *"I wasn't there. All I can say is that Max has been really different lately and kind of mean. I don't know what's going on, but he's not himself."*

Cafeteria worker: *"The group of boys were pushing each other around. I think it was an accident, and one of them pushed into the new boy, and he took it the wrong way."*

CONTINUE 

Max's mother: "Max would never start a fight. He's the sweetest boy. I know he's had a hard time lately with me and his dad losing our jobs, but he still would never start a fight with anyone. He's a mentor to the younger boys and helps out at church. You can ask anyone in this town."

Justin's father: "I can guarantee 100% that Justin would never lay a finger on anyone unless he was really provoked. Trust me. And I know because we've had to move around quite a bit in the last few years because of my job, so unfortunately, Justin knows what it's like to be the new kid. And I've watched him go through these adjustment periods at each new school. He just lies low, and pretty soon the other kids see what a great kid he is. So I know as a fact that Justin wouldn't stir up trouble. It's really not in his nature."

Jamie (student in English class with Max and Justin in the period right before lunch):
"I wasn't in the cafeteria today, and I'm not friends with any of those guys, but I've seen Max and his friends be mean to Justin in the hallways and in class when the teacher isn't looking. Not physical or anything, but they'll like say jokes under their breath and then laugh and stuff like that. They make him uncomfortable."

English teacher: "To be completely honest with you, I'm not surprised that this happened. There has been a lot of tension in the school and in the town, in general, with the reorganization plan. A lot of people are very upset with the decisions of the new management to fire people, and I must say that I myself am very surprised that they've done this. It's a tremendous strain on the community, and I feel for all the boys."

LUNCHROOM FIGHT: EVIDENCE CONTEXT HANDOUT

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS

Use the evidence from the Lunchroom Fight Evidence sheet to complete the table below. Each row in the table should have at least two pieces of evidence.

Town Context: What is happening in the town that might explain the lunchroom fight?	Who said this?	Explain if this source is reliable or not and why.

School Context: What has been happening in the rest of the school (for example, in English class)?	Who said this?	Explain if this source is reliable or not and why.

Cafeteria Context: What happened in the cafeteria?	Who said this?	Explain if this source is reliable or not and why.

LUNCHROOM FIGHT: SUSPENSION REPORT

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

SUSPENSION REPORT

- (1) What happened in the cafeteria?(Please identify sources of information.)

- (2) In my judgment, the following student should be suspended:
_____. My reasoning is as follows:

Principal Signature

Date