

INTRODUCTORY LESSON: LUNCHROOM FIGHT

MATERIALS

- 📄 Student Handout - Lunchroom Fight

COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

- ☰ Page 61 - #3 (Gr. 11-12), #6 (Gr. 6-12), and #8 (Gr. 6-12)

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

1 Introduction.

Set the stage for students:

Imagine that you are the principal of a school and you just found out that there was a fight in the lunchroom during lunch. You've asked many students and teachers who witnessed the fight to write down what they saw and who they think started the fight. Unfortunately, you have received many conflicting accounts that disagree about important details of the fight, like who started it, when it started, and who was involved. It's important to remember that NO ONE is lying.

2 In pairs, students must answer the following questions:

- (a) How could there be ***different stories*** of the event if no one is lying?
- (b) Who are the ***different people*** who might have seen this fight? (e.g., friends of those involved versus people who don't know the kids who were fighting; those who were fighting versus those who were witnesses; adults versus kids).
- (c) What might make one person's story ***more believable*** than another person's?

3 Debrief.

Issues to discuss.

- (a) Why might people ***see or remember things differently?***
- (b) Who has an interest in one person getting in trouble instead of another? Who was standing where? Could they see the whole event?
- (c) The ***plausibility*** of the stories themselves (e.g., issues of exaggeration and how the stories fit into what is known about the students' prior histories). Is the story believable? Trustworthy?
- (d) ***Time***: Do stories change over time? How might what we remember right after the event differ from what we remember a week later? Does time make the way someone remembers something more or less trustworthy?

- (e) **Physical Evidence:** What physical evidence might affect who/what you believe (bruises, missing objects, etc.)?

4 As you discuss, be sure to underscore these points:

- (a) The principal needs to consider which stories are more or less reliable because it's important to understand why the fight began. Not only is it important that the instigator (if there was one) be punished, but also it's important to think about how to prevent such fights in the future.
- (b) Historians, in trying to figure out what happened in the past, essentially engage in the same work. Just like the principal, there's no way to actually recreate the moment or time-travel to witness it. All that historians have to work with is the remaining evidence—ranging from people's stories to physical artifacts.
- (c) Sourcing is the act of questioning a piece of evidence and trying to determine if it's trustworthy. When you source, you ask how people's biases or perspectives shape their story. This doesn't necessarily mean that a person is lying if he or she comes from a particular perspective. They still might have something valuable to contribute to your understanding of what happened in the past. But *as a reader* it's important to keep in mind that each person sees the world in a particular way. When you keep that in mind, you're sourcing.

LUNCHROOM FIGHT

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS

Imagine that you are the principal of a school and you just found out that there was a fight in the lunchroom during lunch. You've asked many students and teachers who witnessed the fight what they saw so you can figure out who started it. Unfortunately, you have received many different accounts that disagree about who started the fight, who was involved, and when it started. It's important to remember that NO ONE is lying.

In your group, answer the following questions.

QUESTIONS

(1) How could there be *different stories* of the event if no one is lying?

(2) Who are the *different people* who might have seen this fight? (Example: friends of those involved; people who don't know the kids who were fighting; those who were fighting; teachers; students.)

(3) What might make one person's story *more believable* than another person's?
