

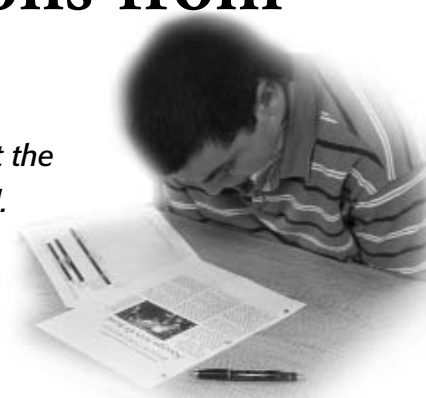
“Educe means ‘to draw out,’ and so we do with each question, draw ourselves further out into the world of uncertainty and amazed understanding...”

—*The English Teacher’s Companion*, p. 253

5

Draw Conclusions from What You Read

Effective readers draw conclusions about the meaning and purpose of what they read.



Essential Skill Set

- ▶ **Draw** conclusions about what a work of fiction or expository prose means.
- ▶ **Establish** a purpose that helps you evaluate the importance of information.
- ▶ **Identify** the most important details according to your purpose.
- ▶ **Draw** conclusions based on those details.

Frame the Lesson

IN ALL ACADEMIC SUBJECTS, STUDENTS READ TEXTS, BOTH LITERARY AND EXPOSITORY, about which they must draw conclusions regarding people, trends, events, or ideas. In this lesson, my students read an article and draw conclusions about a public speaking program they will be participating in. The teaching sequence in the lesson is easily adapted to other texts and situations. If your students are just beginning to learn about drawing conclusions, see “Assess and Extend” for an alternate approach.

Gather and Prepare

In the model lesson, my students read “Messages from the Heart,” an article about the demands and benefits of participating in Toastmasters International’s Youth Leadership Program. The article is included in *Tools and Texts* for your reference. The strategies and tools in this lesson can be used with any expository text.

- ▶ Make copies of the **Main Idea Organizer** for each student. Also make an overhead transparency.
- ▶ After reading the lesson, consider the text you plan to teach. Decide whether to direct your students toward certain conclusions. I want my students to draw conclusions about what the Toastmasters International youth program is all about and why it’s worth doing.

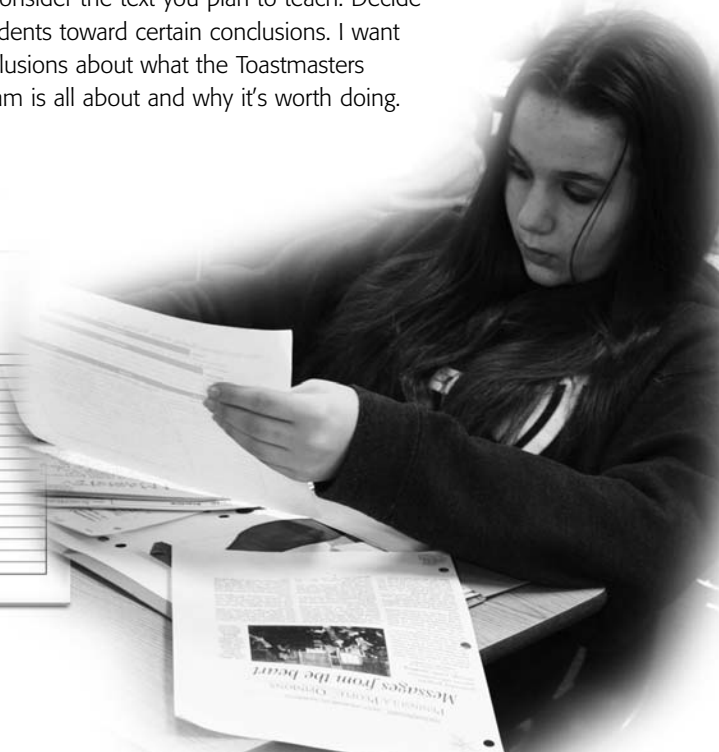
Arianna takes notes on the *Main Idea Organizer* to help her draw conclusions about the Toastmasters International Youth Leadership Program. She will use the notes to write an organized response to the article.

Main Idea Organizer: Reading, Writing, Watching, Listening

Subject: _____

Main Idea: _____

Details	Detail	Detail	Detail
• Examples			
• Names			
• Questions			
• Explanations			



The **Main Idea Organizer** tool can be found on the CD-ROM.

Help kids make connections to the article and to “drawing conclusions”.

Define what it means to “draw conclusions” and give examples from students’ other classes.

Use what they know to help them understand what they don’t.

Teach

BEFORE WE BEGIN PARTICIPATING IN THE Toastmasters International Youth Leadership Program, we need to learn what the program is all about so you know what you will have to do and how the program will benefit you. I brought in an article this morning about the program and thought we would use it to also learn how to draw conclusions from what we read.

Anyone know what I mean by “draw conclusions”? This is a different way to use the word *draw* than most of you are used to. What does the word *draw* mean in this context?

No one offers an idea, which confirms my hunch that it’s necessary to define these words.

Anyone ever had to get a blood test?

Immediately a bunch of kids squirm and announce their horror of needles. A ripple of chatter runs around the room.

It seems a random question to ask, I know. What could a blood test possibly have to do with drawing conclusions? Anyone know?

KENDALL: Don’t they say “draw blood” when they take your blood?

They do, yes. Very good, Miss Dittman. But what are they doing when they *draw* blood? How does a syringe actually do that?

JUAN: Well, they stick it in your arm and pull it out. It pulls your blood into those glass tube things. I hate that, man.

So when you *draw* something (not a picture), you are sort of pulling it out. What about *conclusions*? What are those?

JOE: That’s the last paragraph in your essay.

Well, yes and no. It depends on what you do in that last paragraph. What does a writer usually try to accomplish in that last paragraph in an essay or an article?

JOE: They try to summarize what they have been saying.

Good, so if we put those two ideas together—*draw* meaning to pull out and *conclusion* meaning to summarize your main ideas—we get the idea that when we, the readers, draw conclusions, we have to pull out important details from the article and use them to draw a conclusion about what the writer is saying about a particular subject. For example, if a writer includes many startling facts and pieces of information about changes in the global workplace, we might draw the conclusion that the future will be more competitive and we need to be prepared to meet those challenges.

Your History classes ask you to draw conclusions all the time. You might get information about changes in immigration patterns or racial injustices, and you have to gather ideas from that information and use it to draw conclusions about what effect those changes had or how those injustices led, for example, to the civil rights movement.

This article we are reading today is about Toastmasters International’s Youth Leadership Program, a public speaking program we are going to work with in the coming



months. I am passing out two sheets: the article and a Main Idea Organizer. We'll set them up in a minute to help you take notes.

While kids pass out the pages, I place a transparency of the Main Idea Organizer on the overhead and shine it onto the whiteboard. I do this because it gives me more space to write.

In the Subject area, go ahead and write "Toastmasters program." Then skim the article to get a sense of what it is about. Just read the first lines of each paragraph and the last paragraph, and jot down two to three key facts about the program in the Subject area.

I give them a few minutes to skim the article. Then I make sure they understand the basic facts about the subject—who, what, when, and where, for example—before we proceed.

You can leave that Main Idea area blank for now, but in the first Detail column write "What students do", in the second column, write "Benefits." In the third, write "What I think." These are your purpose questions to take notes on while you read. In the third column, I want you to draw conclusions about what the program is all about and why it's worth doing.

As you read, take notes in the appropriate box. Use bullets to set your ideas off from each other. For example, I might write "• increases self-confidence" in the Benefits column if I read something like that.

After students finish reading, I want them to use their notes to write a paragraph in which they synthesize the conclusions they have drawn about the program.

Because we have been focusing on paragraph organization lately, I want you to write a good paragraph using your notes, one that has FODP. Remind me—what does FODP stand for again?

CLASS: Focus...Organization...Development...Purpose....

So the focus is what?

ALEJANDRO: Toastmasters.

Right. We go to the Subject line and find "Toastmaster's program." What can we write in the Main Idea area that shows what we conclude about the program?

FANNY: Toastmasters program teaches kids to do public speaking and gives them much confidence.

I like that. Let's see if we can adjust it a bit so it's not limited to just confidence. *(We talk about it back and forth a bit.)*

Okay, so here is what I have from our discussion:

"Toastmasters benefits students in many ways by teaching them to speak in public and provide leadership." That's good. I like that.

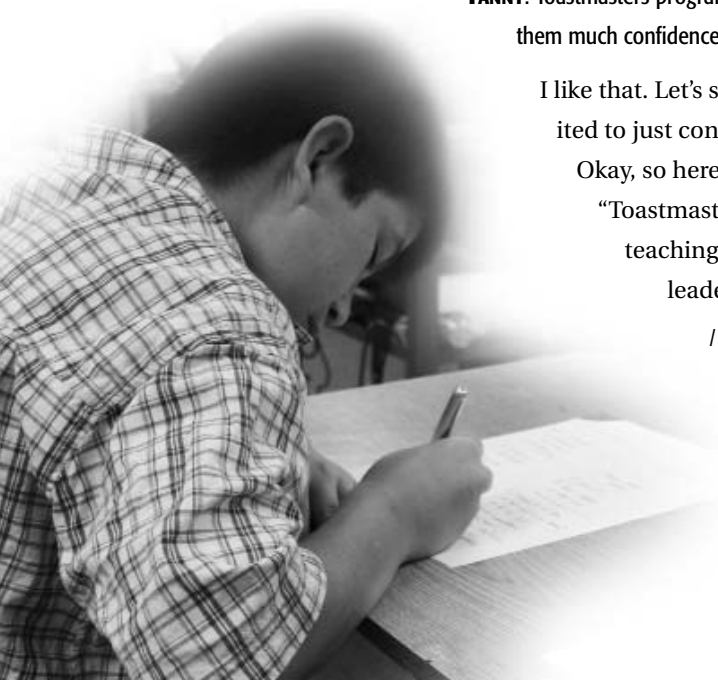
I write it in the Main Idea area.

Now use that main idea to write your paragraph. Remember to use the organization of the Main Idea Organizer to give your paragraph organization and development.

Using the Main Idea Organizer, establish purposes for reading to help students identify the important details and draw conclusions.

Model how to use the tool and technique so students know what the work should look like.

Help students form a main idea and write a synthesis of their conclusions.



If students are just learning about drawing conclusions...

If students need to work on their writing skills...

If students are ready to extend the lesson...

Assess and Extend

- ▶ **USE THE DRAWING CONCLUSIONS TOOL** To work specifically on drawing conclusions, use the **Drawing Conclusions Organizer** in the *Tools and Texts* Book. This tool reinforces the almost mathematical formula for drawing conclusions: find two to three important pieces of information about the subject and, based on those details, draw a conclusion.
- ▶ **EVALUATE AND DISCUSS STUDENTS' PARAGRAPHS** If students do a good job drawing the conclusions but need to work on the paragraph, cull strong examples from today's work and put them on an overhead transparency to discuss next time. Explain why these examples are effective. Then have students revise what they wrote, or move on to new material that provides a fresh opportunity to draw conclusions and write.

Drawing Conclusions Organizer

DIRECTIONS: While reading an article you find, extract the information for responses for the three main important pieces of information (character details, events, etc.) in the Information box. In the Conclusion box, write down what conclusions you can draw based on these pieces of information. In the Paragraph box, respond to the conclusion and explain why it is important.

SUBJECT:

Q. 1. Information	A. Conclusion
1.	
2.	
3.	
P. Paragraph	

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Q. 1. Information	A. Conclusion
1.	
2.	
3.	
P. Paragraph	

The **Drawing Conclusions Organizer** tool can be found on the CD-ROM.

- ▶ **BUILD FLUENCY BY DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM A VARIETY OF TEXTS**



Use a variety of texts—newspaper and magazine articles, essays, textbooks, and fiction—over time. Keep copies of the **Main Idea Organizer** and the **Drawing Conclusions Organizer** available for students to use on their own.