Think Like a Detective: Running a Claim Through CLEAR

Digital Citizenship and Critical Thinking - Grades 3 through 8 - 45-minute lesson



Subject/Course	Digital Citizenship and Critical Thinking
Grade Level	Grades 3 through 8. Case selection adjusts difficulty.
Duration	45 minutes
Standards	TEKS Technology Applications 126: digital citizenship and evaluating the accuracy of digital information. Confirm the exact TEKS strand and grade-level code for your campus.

CLEAR Thinking Process

C — Claim
Identify the specific, testable claim.

L — Lens
Name assumptions, source, purpose, and tone.

E — Evidence
Sort strong evidence from weak evidence.

A — Alternatives
Generate another possible explanation.

R — Response
Choose a fair, thoughtful action.

1. Learning Objectives

- Identify the specific, testable claim inside a post, ad, or rumor
- Differentiate strong evidence from weak evidence using observable criteria
- Generate at least one alternative explanation before deciding on a response
- Justify a fair response to a questionable claim using the five CLEAR steps

2. Materials and Technology

- The CLEAR Crew Detective game, open in a browser: mglearn.github.io/tcea/clear
- Projector or interactive display for the whole-group case
- One device per student or pair, such as a Chromebook, tablet, or phone, for independent play
- CLEAR Thinking Process poster displayed or projected
- Scratch paper or a five-box organizer labeled Claim, Lens, Evidence, Alternatives, Response, one per student

3. Lesson Sequence

Phase	Time	What happens
Hook	5 min	A real-looking claim sparks disagreement in the room.
Direct Instruction	8 min	Teacher names the five CLEAR steps using the poster.

Phase	Time	What happens
Guided Practice	15 min	Whole class solves one case together on the projector.
Independent Work	12 min	Students work a second case solo or in pairs.
Closure	5 min	Exit ticket connects CLEAR to a chatbot answer.

Hook (5 min)

Teacher: Project this claim with no comment: "The field trip is canceled. My cousin's friend heard it from a teacher." Ask: "Hands up, would you reshare this? Keep them up or put them down." Count the split.

Students: Vote with their hands, then turn and tell a neighbor why they voted the way they did.

Direct Instruction (8 min)

Teacher: Display the CLEAR poster. Walk through each letter once: Claim, Lens, Evidence, Alternatives, Response. Say: "We are not going to decide if this is true yet. We are going to run it through these five steps first." Point out that Response comes last on purpose. We act after we think.

Students: Label their five-box organizer to match the poster.

Guided Practice (15 min)

Teacher: Open the same field-trip case in the game on the projector. Work it as a class. At the Claim step, ask: "What is it actually saying we can check?" At Evidence, read each clue aloud and take a class vote on strong or weak before tapping. Think aloud at the Lens step: "What are we assuming if we believe two hundred likes?"

Students: Record the class decision in each box of their organizer. At least three students explain a choice out loud before the class taps an answer.

Independent Work (12 min)

Teacher: Assign each student or pair a different case matched to their grade band. Circulate. When a student rushes to Response, stop and ask: "What other explanation did you rule out?"

Students: Work one case solo or in pairs, filling in all five boxes of the organizer as they go.

Closure (5 min)

Teacher: Pose the exit ticket: "A chatbot just gave you an answer that sounds right. Which CLEAR step would you run first, and why?"

Students: Write two or three sentences and hand the ticket in on the way out.

4. Differentiation

Need	Teacher move
Support	Assign a grades three through five case, such as the missing jacket or the wilting plant. Pair a developing reader with a stronger one. Pre-fill the Claim box so the student starts at Lens.
Extension	Assign a grades six through eight case, such as the recycled flood photo or the snack-box study. Then have the student write a short case with a clear claim and a planted weak clue for a classmate to solve.
ELL and language support	Provide sentence frames: "The claim is ____." "The strongest evidence is ____ because ____." "Another explanation could be ____."

5. Assessment

Formative: The hand-vote at the hook, the strong-versus-weak class votes during guided practice, and the cold-call explanations show who is reasoning versus guessing.

Summative: Collect the five-box organizer. Look for a testable claim, at least one correctly sorted piece of evidence, and one genuine alternative. The exit ticket shows transfer from the game to a Gen AI context.

6. Teacher Notes

- Watch for the rush to Response. The most common student move is to decide first and reason backward. Slowing them at Alternatives is where the thinking actually happens.
- If guided practice runs long, cut independent work to a single shared case and assign solo play as follow-up.
- Younger students may treat a confident tone as evidence. Name that out loud when it surfaces. A loud voice is not a strong clue.
- This pairs naturally with a follow-up lesson applying CLEAR directly to a chatbot transcript, where students audit a Gen AI answer instead of a rumor.

Teacher Quick Script

"We are not going to decide if this is true yet. We are going to run it through CLEAR first. Claim, Lens, Evidence, Alternatives, Response. Response comes last because acting before thinking is how rumors move faster than facts."

Student CLEAR Organizer

Name: _____ Date: _____ Case: _____

Use each box before you decide what to do. Response comes last.

C - Claim

What exactly is being said that you can check?

L - Lens

What source, purpose, tone, or assumption affects how you see it?

E - Evidence

Which clues are strong? Which are weak? Why?

A - Alternatives

What else could explain what happened?

R - Response

What is a fair response after thinking through the first four steps?

Exit Ticket: A chatbot just gave you an answer that sounds right. Which CLEAR step would you run first, and why?