

Lesson Plan

Evaluating Claims

Book: *Adam Thielen: Football Star*

Series: Biggest Names in Sports

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students practice identifying and evaluating the evidence an author uses to support claims.

Supplies

- *Adam Thielen: Football Star* book
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read through the *Adam Thielen: Football Star* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

The *Adam Thielen* book highlights the football star's path to success. Throughout the book, the author makes several statements describing how unlikely Thielen's success was. Discuss the following questions as a class:

- Page 12 says, "Basketball might have been his best sport." How does the author support this statement? (Answer: He explains that Thielen set the school record for career points scored.)
- What other sports did Thielen play in high school? (Answer: football, baseball, and golf)
- Describing the rookie mini-camp Thielen went to, page 19 says, "Other players came from bigger colleges. Some had even been drafted. Thielen didn't let that intimidate him." How does the author support this statement? (Answer: He describes how Thielen studied the playbook at night, ran the 40-yard dash faster than anyone else, and pushed himself hard every day.)
- Why didn't the Vikings give Thielen a spot as a wide receiver? (Answer: The Vikings already had four good receivers and only had one open spot left; they decided he wasn't quite ready yet.)

Next, have students write a paragraph evaluating another of the author's claims. Page 9 describes Thielen as "one of the league's most dynamic, yet unlikely, stars." Students should use examples from the text to prove or disprove the author's claim.

In their paragraphs, students should start with a clear topic sentence that addresses the prompt and explains what the paragraph will be about. Then, students should include at least three pieces of evidence that support their argument. Students should close their paragraphs with a concluding sentence that summarizes their argument.

Evaluation

Use the following sample paragraph to award students points for each of the following, for up to 6 points:

- 1 point for a clear topic sentence
- 1 point each for three supporting sentences
- 1 point for an original concluding sentence
- 1 point for writing that is relatively free of grammatical and spelling errors

There are many reasons for why Adam Thielen can be considered one of the NFL's "most dynamic, yet unlikely, stars." For one thing, Thielen's path to the NFL was certainly unlikely. He attended a lower-level college and was undrafted, and few NFL teams had even heard of him. Even after gaining the Vikings' attention, he had to prove himself in a rookie mini-camp, on a practice squad, and on special teams before gaining the opportunity to be a starting receiver on the Vikings. But since then, Thielen has proven to be a dynamic player on the field. With 91 catches and 1,276 receiving yards, he ranked among the top eight in the NFL in 2017. And he had an even better season in 2018. Despite his unlikely start, Thielen has earned the reputation of being one of the NFL's best receivers.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' writing standards, grade 4 (W 4.2, 4.4), and reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.2, 4.8).