

Grade 8: Unit 7

Freakonomics: Connected Text Seminars

Seminar 1: Connected Text

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars explain the difference between correlation and causation. They articulate the author's argument about the importance of analyzing correlation to discover causation when making business decisions.

Seminar 1: "The Difference Between Correlation and Causation" by Archana Madhavan (Nonfiction)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday's seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today they will be reading “The Difference Between Correlation and Causation,” an article that examines causation, correlation, and the importance of distinguishing between the two. Build excitement by telling scholars that this article will develop their background knowledge about an essential concept in *Freakonomics*.

Read and Discuss — 40 minutes

Display “The Difference Between Correlation and Causation.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the article to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (3 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, What is this text mostly about?*

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Read (15 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, Why did the author write this text?*
- Read lines 58 through 89 aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copies. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
 - Stop after line 63, “... and measure the difference.”
 - Partner Talk: According to Rand Fishkin, what is the difference between correlation and causation?
 - Stop after line 89, “... your long-term gains.”
 - Partner Talk: What does the author mean by “unless causation can be clearly identified, it should be assumed that we’re seeing correlation”?
 - Discuss: Why is understanding the difference between correlation and causation important to being successful in business?

Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull’s-eye main idea jot and which do not.

Discuss (10 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class: How does causality let you change the future? How do the text features support the author's argument?

Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does the author believe that it is important to consider causation, and not just correlation, when making business decisions? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “The Difference Between Correlation and Causation.”

Homework

- Read *Freakonomics*, Explanatory Note (pages xxiii–xxvi) and Introduction (pages 1–14).