

## ASET Science & Engineering Practice (SEP) Tool: Constructing Explanations



**Name or ID:**  
**Lesson/Unit Title:**  
**Intended Grade:**

### Directions for use

Indicate if a component is present using Y (yes) or N (no) and then, if it is present, fill in the right 2 columns.

A single lesson will most likely not address each of the components below.

The numbering of these components is not meant to indicate they should be used in sequence, they are simply for reference.

<b>SEP 6</b>	<p><b>Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions:</b> The end-products of science are <b>explanations</b> of natural phenomena and the end-products of engineering are solutions to design problems.</p> <p><b>a. Constructing Explanations:</b> The goal of science is the construction of theories that provide explanatory accounts of the world. A theory becomes accepted when it has multiple lines of empirical evidence and greater explanatory power than previous theories.</p> <p><b>b. Designing Solutions:</b> The goal of engineering design is to find a systematic solution to problems that is based on scientific knowledge and models of the material world. Each proposed solution results from a process of balancing competing criteria of desired functions, technical feasibility, cost, safety, aesthetics, and compliance with legal requirements. The optimal choice depends on how well the proposed solutions meet criteria and constraints.</p>		
<b>SEP 6a. Constructing Scientific Explanations</b>			
<b>Components of SEP</b> In this lesson/unit plan, it is clear that students have a structured opportunity to:	Present? Y/N	What teacher actions were taken to facilitate this component for students?	What are the students doing? What sensemaking or intellectual work are students doing?
1) <b>Articulate a claim/explanation</b> (a testable statement or conclusion that answers a question about how or why) that is based on and consistent with available evidence			
2) <b>Identify and describe</b> appropriate and sufficient <b>evidence</b> that support the claim/explanation			
3) <b>Describe</b> the <b>reasoning</b> (mechanism of how or why) that connects the evidence to the claim/explanation using scientific ideas/principles			
4) <b>Revise</b> an explanation*			

## ASET Grade Band Criteria (Grade Band: 6-8)

### Science & Engineering Practices

**SEP 6a: Constructing Scientific Explanations:** Constructing explanations in 6–8 builds on K– 5 experiences and progresses to include constructing explanations supported by multiple sources of evidence consistent with scientific ideas, principles, and theories.

By the end of the grade band **students** will have had a structured opportunity to develop an understanding of each of these. Individual lessons or units should include opportunities for **students** to practice one or more of the following components .....

<p>1) <b>Articulate a claim/explanation</b> (a testable statement or conclusion that answers a question about how or why) that is based on and consistent with available evidence</p>	<p>Clearly <b>articulate a claim</b> about (an explanation of) a phenomenon that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. is a <b>testable statement</b> or conclusion that correctly answers a question about how or why</li> <li>b. relates the <b>given phenomenon</b> to a relevant scientific idea</li> <li>c. includes a <b>grade-appropriate level</b> of the mechanism involved</li> <li>d. is consistent with <b>available evidence</b></li> <li>e. includes qualitative or quantitative <b>relationships</b> between variables that predict and/or describe phenomena</li> </ul>
<p>2) <b>Identify and describe</b> appropriate and sufficient <b>evidence</b> that support the claim/explanation</p>	<p><b>Identify and describe evidence</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. appropriately and sufficiently <b>support the claim</b></li> <li>b. are <b>valid</b> (relevant to phenomena) and <b>reliable</b> (obtained with precision and systematically)</li> <li>c. are <b>obtained from multiple sources</b> such as the students’ own experiments, observations, reading material, numerical data, and/or models or representations</li> </ul>
<p>3) <b>Describe the reasoning</b> (mechanism of how or why) that connects the evidence to the claim/explanation using scientific ideas/principles</p>	<p><b>Describe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. how or <b>why the evidence support</b> the claim using appropriate scientific ideas/principles</li> <li>b. the <b>reasoning that connects the evidence</b> to the phenomenon</li> <li>c. how different <b>pieces of evidence connect</b> to each other (chain of reasoning) to support the explanation</li> <li>d. <b>why the data or evidence is adequate</b> for the explanation or conclusion</li> </ul>
<p>4) <b>Revise</b> an explanation*</p>	<p>Given <b>new evidence or context</b>, students apply scientific ideas, principles, and/or evidence to revise an explanation for real-world phenomena, examples, or events</p>

\* This component is not required in K-2 or 3-5 grade bands