

Using Textual Evidence to Support Arguments

The introduction of Common Core State Standards has led to an increased emphasis on writing. Students are expected to write in all content areas, for various purposes, and over varying lengths of time (Writing Anchor Standard 10). **Argument writing** is a high priority (indicated by its placement as Writing Anchor Standard 1), and writing must include textual evidence and in-depth analysis as well as structures appropriate to task, purpose and audience (Writing Anchor Standard 4).

“Textual evidence demands that readers engage with the text and share what specific aspects of the text influences their thinking.”

– Dr. Rozlyn Linder, Literacy Specialist

Objectives

1. Students will define textual evidence and understand why it is important to use in supporting written and verbal arguments.
2. Students will cite explicit (directly stated) evidence to support analysis of informational texts.
3. Students will use evidence to make logical inferences about texts.

Materials

- Grade-level-appropriate text of teacher’s choice
- Overhead Projector or SmartBoard (also appropriate for 1:1 initiatives where each student is provided with a school laptop or tablet)
- Pen/pencil
- Notebook

Procedure

1. Pre-Reading Activity

Define Evidence: As a group, have students define evidence and list examples. Examples may include DNA, fingerprints, film footage, photographs, eyewitness accounts, or recorded conversations.

Question: How might evidence convince others to believe you? Give specific examples.

Answers will vary.

Definition: *Evidence* is made up of facts, statements (written or spoken by credible sources), or physical signs that prove something or support a conclusion. People draw conclusions, or make *inferences*, based on the information that is presented to them.

Question: Knowing what you do about evidence, what is *textual evidence*?

Definition: *Textual evidence* is evidence found in a written text that is used to support an argument, a position, or a conclusion. There are two kinds of textual evidence:

- a. *Explicit:* information that is stated directly in the text (the textual evidence is the actual statement)
- b. *Implicit:* clues in the text that are not directly stated but help the reader to make inferences

Question: Why is it important to cite textual evidence in your writing and discussions about texts you read?

Answers will vary, but students should understand that textual evidence helps them to prove HOW they know something. Evidence makes an argument stronger!

2. Reading the Article and Finding Textual Evidence

- a. Divide students into groups of 3-4.
- b. Hand out selected text. Teacher should craft specific questions about the text to stimulate analysis and discussion.
- c. Instruct students to highlight explicit (or directly stated) evidence while you read the text aloud.
- d. Next, encourage them to re-read the article together as a group, this time looking for implicit evidence. Ask students to annotate, or mark up, the article with their inferences.
- e. Now ask groups to respond to questions and cite textual evidence, both explicit and implicit, to support their responses/arguments.
- f. Have each group nominate a speaker to share their findings with the class.

Assessment

Formative Assessment

The teacher will be able to assess student understanding of explicit and implicit textual evidence in the following ways:

- listening in on groups as they work together to find textual evidence to support their arguments
- measuring quality/accuracy of group findings

Summative Assessment – Writing Extension Activity (Homework)

- Assign a second reading and provide several writing prompts. Students will choose one and respond.
- Write a one-page response, supporting your argument with both explicit and implicit textual evidence.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Scoring Rubric – Written Response

Score	Description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response demonstrates a thorough and accurate understanding and analysis of the text, including what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially. Sources, facts and details are used effectively to provide convincing and thorough support for the writer's central idea or argument. Textual evidence is thorough, accurate, and credible. Integration of text-based evidence is purposeful and appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response demonstrates a general understanding and analysis of the text, including what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially. Sources, facts and details are used effectively to provide support for the writer's central idea or argument. Textual evidence is mostly accurate and credible, though there may be some misunderstandings. Integration of text-based evidence is appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response demonstrates some understanding and analysis of the text but may not reflect a clear understanding of the difference between explicit and implicit evidence. Textual evidence is somewhat accurate and/or credible. Integration of text-based evidence is somewhat appropriate to task, purpose and/or audience.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response demonstrates a limited understanding and analysis of the text. Textual evidence is minimal and may be inaccurate. Integration of text-based evidence may be inappropriate to task, purpose and/or audience.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response is incorrect, irrelevant or contains insufficient/unrelated information to demonstrate comprehension. No integration of text-based evidence.