

Tools for Instruction

Cite Textual Evidence

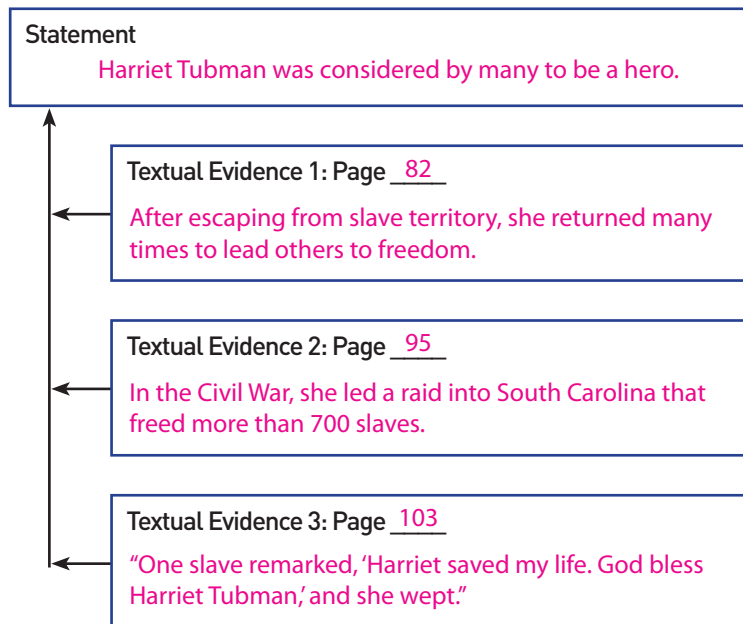
As students develop critical arguments about literary and informational text in their writing and class discussions, they are expected to cite textual evidence in order to prove that their arguments are sound and reasonable. Learning to cite evidence properly can be challenging, though. Students must be able to point to specific details that give evidence, rather than relying solely on their opinions or background knowledge. Also, when paraphrasing or quoting directly, they must understand how to use information in its correct context so that they do not change the author's intent. Support students in citing textual evidence by examining what makes evidence weak or strong, and by asking questions such as, *Did the author say that? Can you show me where?*

Three Ways to Teach

Cite Three Examples 20–30 minutes

Help students understand that a good argument should be supported with several details from the text.

- Say, *In writing, we tend to use three examples when we support a statement about a text. This is one way to show that our idea is sound and well supported.*
- Distribute and display **Textual Evidence Chart** (page 3), and read aloud a passage from a current text that students each have a copy of. The example below is based on a book about Harriet Tubman.
- Ask, *What is one statement we could make about [subject], based on what we just read?* Record the statement on the chart, and have students fill in their copies.
- Then work with students to find evidence in the text to support the statement. Remind them to consider using a combination of direct quotation and paraphrasing. Say, *We quote directly when we copy the author's words exactly and place them in quotation marks. We paraphrase when we restate the author's ideas in our own words.*



- Point out the page numbers in the chart, and remind students that keeping record of these pages will help them to revisit the text more quickly when they need to verify their evidence.
- Make spare copies of the textual evidence chart available for students to use as a prewriting tool.

Evaluate Strong and Weak Textual Evidence 20–30 minutes

An important part of citing evidence is learning the difference between evidence that strongly supports a statement and evidence that offers weaker support. Teach the difference between strong and weak textual evidence.

- Display a statement about a text. For example, a statement from *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*, by Katherine Paterson, might be the following: *Acts of kindness are always rewarded.*
- Then explain that you need evidence to support this statement. Share these rules for supporting evidence.

Rule 1 It has to come from the text.

Rule 2 It has to tell more about the statement.

- Discuss examples of weak and strong support for this statement, using models such as the one shown.

Weak Support	Strong Support
The lord despised Shozo because he was no longer handsome.	Yasuko and Shozo are mysteriously rescued by masked strangers.

- Ask, *Why is the first example weak?* (because it does not tell more about the statement) *Why is the second example strong?* (because it comes from the text and gives an example of how the act of kindness was rewarded)
- Have partners find other examples of weak and strong support for this statement. Then have them repeat this activity with other statements and other texts. Remind them to use both paraphrasing and direct quotation as evidence.

Evaluate Strong and Weak Persuasive Support 20–30 minutes

Connect to Writing Connect strong and weak textual evidence with what students are learning about supporting reasons in a persuasive essay. Have students evaluate their own persuasive writing. Provide a checklist for students to guide their evaluation, including questions such as these.

- *What is the statement, or reason?*
- *Is this reason strong or weak? Why?*
- *What is the evidence given to support it?*
- *Is each piece of evidence strong or weak? Why?*

Have partners share their evaluations and make recommendations for improving the textual support.

Check for Understanding

If you observe...	Then try...
citing evidence that does not come from the text	asking students to tell how they know. As they tell, listen for details and help to correct assumptions by revisiting concrete details and restructuring students' thinking.

Name _____

Textual Evidence Chart

Statement	
	Textual Evidence 1: Page _____
	Textual Evidence 2: Page _____
	Textual Evidence 3: Page _____