

Tools for Instruction

Cite Textual Evidence

Citing textual evidence to support statements is an essential skill that students are expected to demonstrate in their writing and in class discussion. This skill reflects close reading, which is central to understanding both literary and informational text. Yet students often struggle with the difference between paraphrasing and direct quotation, and they tend to rely on opinions or background knowledge, instead of textual evidence, to support statements about a text. Challenge students by frequently asking questions such as, *Did the author say that? Can you show me exactly where?* Teach them to cite textual evidence properly, whether through paraphrase or direct quotation.

Three Ways to Teach

Use Paraphrasing or Direct Quotation 20–30 minutes

Help students distinguish between paraphrasing and direct quotation, and to understand when to utilize each.

- Say, *When you write about or discuss a text, you are expected to make reasonable statements about it. You support these statements by referring to specific details from the text. This is called citing textual evidence. Doing so helps you to confirm that your statements are reasonable.*
- Explain that two ways to cite textual evidence are through direct quotation and paraphrasing. Display these terms and explain their meanings. Then use a current text to provide examples. The following examples are based on *About Time: A First Look at Time and Clocks*, by Bruce Koscielniak.

Type of Citation	How To Do It	Example
Direct Quotation	Copy the author's exact words, and place them in quotation marks	"Spring makers hand-forged (heated and pounded into shape) and polished steel clock springs."
Paraphrase	Restate the author's words in your own words	The spring makers made and polished all of the springs for the clocks by hand.

- Point out that paraphrasing must be worded differently enough to distinguish it from the author's wording. Otherwise, students might mistakenly be claiming an author's ideas as their own.
- Distribute **Textual Evidence Chart** (page 3). Using the same text, model creating a statement and then supporting it with one paraphrased and one directly quoted piece of evidence. These examples should be different from the examples in the chart above.
- Repeat this exercise, guiding students to give the statements and provide the evidence. Monitor their paraphrasing and offer corrections for wording that is too close to the original or that does not capture the same idea as the original.

Support Special Education Students Help students paraphrase by focusing on one or two sentences in the text. Have the student read sentences, close the book, and repeat what was just read. Write down what the student tells you and compare what you wrote with the author's exact words. Make further revisions, as needed, to create a paraphrase.

Evaluate Supporting Textual Evidence 20–30 minutes

When citing textual evidence, students can struggle to identify key ideas and details from a text that actually support a statement. Teach the difference between relevant and irrelevant textual evidence.

- Display a statement about a text. For example, a statement from *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulson, might be the following: *It is terrifying for a child to suddenly be all alone, with no one to help.*
- 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.

- Display a chart like the one shown below. Add four to five phrases, some from the text and some not, and discuss which meet both rules. See the examples below.

Evidence to Support Statement	Is it in the text?	Does it tell more?
Brian cried endlessly in the corner of a dark cave.	(yes)	(yes)
Brian had never tasted anything as good as that first bite.	(yes)	(no)
Brian had to figure out how to survive.	(no)	(yes)

- Point to the evidence that meets both rules. Say, *This is evidence that supports the statement because it comes from the text and it tells more about the statement.* Review why the other statements are insufficient.
- For independent practice, have student pairs generate two additional statements and locate textual evidence to support them. Then have pairs evaluate their evidence to determine whether it meets both rules.

Evaluate Support in Persuasive Writing 20–30 minutes

Connect to Writing Review the rules for citing textual evidence to support a statement. Then organize students into pairs, and have them peer edit a draft of a current text-based writing assignment, evaluating the textual support used for each statement. Provide a checklist for students to guide their evaluation, including questions such as these.

- *What is the statement, or reason?*
- *What is the evidence given to support it?*
- *Does each piece of evidence tell more about the statement or reason? Why or why not?*
- *What advice can I give my partner to make the argument stronger?*

Check for Understanding

If you observe...	Then try...
students citing evidence that does not come from the text	asking questions such as, <i>Where did you read about that? Can you show me?</i>
students citing evidence that does not support the statement	asking questions such as, <i>Does this tell more about the statement? Why or why not?</i>

Name _____

Textual Evidence Chart

Statement



Textual Evidence 1: Page ____

Textual Evidence 2: Page ____

Textual Evidence 3: Page ____
