

About This Lesson: Citing Textual Evidence

Common Core State Standards

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
RL/RI 1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL/RI 1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	RL/RI 1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Lesson Objectives

Tell students that, in this lesson, they will learn to

- define *evidence*
- explain why textual evidence is important in writing and discussions
- cite directly stated evidence to support the analysis of fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and photographs
- use evidence to make logical inferences about texts

Strategies for Teaching

How you use this interactive lesson will reflect your personal teaching style, your instructional goals, and your available technological tools. For example, *Citing Textual Evidence* can work well as both a whole-class lesson or as a targeted small-group skill review.

Here are teaching tips for each screen in the lesson.

SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

Screen 2: What Is Evidence?

As a group, create a quick working definition of *evidence*. Then have students list examples of evidence. Examples may include DNA, fingerprints, film footage, or recorded conversations.

Ask students if their examples fit the working definition. Revise the definition as necessary.

Definition: *Evidence* is made up of facts, statements, or physical signs that prove something or support a conclusion.

Screen 3: The Power of Evidence

After discussing the advantages of strong evidence, you may wish to discuss these additional questions with students:

- In what situations have you used evidence to prove a point?
- Does strong evidence always convince others to believe you? Explain.

LEARN THE SKILL

Screen 4: What Is Textual Evidence?

Before revealing the answer, ask students: Knowing what you know about evidence, what do you think is meant by the term *textual evidence*? Why is it important to cite textual evidence in your writing and discussions about texts you read?

Screen 5: Identify Textual Evidence

Use these questions to help students complete the activity:

- What kinds of evidence are used in the strong statements? (*specific quotations and examples from the story*)
- What makes the other statements weak uses of textual evidence? (Because I said *so is never a solid reason*; He acts crazy and unhinged throughout the story *is not specific enough*.)

Screens 6 and 21: Mark Up Details in the Text

Have a student highlight the details that tell that Buck is in danger. Enlist the rest of the class to help confirm the details and explain why those details were chosen.

Screen 7: Find Directly Stated Evidence

Before students try to answer the question, review the following definitions:

- **quotation:** the exact words used by a writer
- **paraphrase:** a restatement of all the ideas in a text using different words; should be about the same length as the original text
- **summary:** a brief retelling of a text's main ideas using different words; should be shorter than the original text

Screen 8: Make Logical Inferences

Have students use these or similar sentence starters. Make sure students provide evidence in the text and their own prior knowledge to support each inference.

- Buck is . . .
- Buck may/may not . . .
- Buck had . . .

Sample inferences:

- Buck may not trust the men he's with.
- Buck had a nice, easy life before this.

Screen 9: Tips for Citing Textual Evidence

Have students complete the sentence starters using the passage from *The Call of the Wild*. Then have small groups use the sentence starters to discuss or write about a text the class has read recently.

Here are some more sentence starters to share with students:

- The author describes . . .
- For instance, . . .
- According to the text . . .
- Readers can tell that . . .
- In the text, . . .

PRACTICE & APPLY

Screens 10 and 22: Find Evidence in a Novel

Have volunteers underline details that tell about Dicey's thoughts and feelings. Enlist the rest of the class to help explain what the details reveal. Have students record three pieces of directly stated evidence in the response area and identify the part of the passage that states each piece of evidence.

Screen 11: Make Inferences from a Novel

Invite volunteers to highlight any details that give clues to Dicey's personality. As a class, discuss which statements are logical inferences, and ask students to support their ideas with evidence in the text and details from their prior knowledge. Click to check answers. Ask: What other inferences can you make? Possible responses might include:

- Dicey feels responsible for keeping herself and her siblings safe.
- Dicey can't look to her mother for overall guidance.

Screens 12 and 23: Find Evidence in a Poem

Have one student highlight the details that describe the speaker's actions. Have another student write the speaker's actions. Prompt the rest of the class to help identify details and add more thoughts to the writing.

Screen 13: Make Inferences from a Poem

Have students use a three-column chart to make inferences. For example:

Column 1: Evidence

- The speaker loses an arrow.
- The speaker sings a song unsure if anyone is listening.
- The speaker later finds the arrow and the song.

Column 2: Prior Knowledge

- Sometimes lost items reappear and sometimes they don't.

Column 3: Inference

- You can't always know the consequences of your actions.

Screens 14 and 24: Find Evidence in Nonfiction

Have a student highlight the details that suggest hearing loss in teens is a problem. Ask the rest of the class to help confirm the evidence. For example, students should highlight the second sentence.

Screen 15: Find Evidence in Nonfiction

For each item that students identify, have them locate the part of the passage that states the evidence. For items that are not directly stated, have students explain what the text actually says. Then ask a volunteer to come up to the whiteboard and click all the items to check the answers.

Screen 16: Make Inferences from Nonfiction

The first inference is supported by evidence in the text. (A 30-percent increase in teen hearing loss reflects a significant problem.)

The fourth inference is supported by evidence in the text. (Many teens listen to portable music players, which were not as widespread decades ago.)

Have students explain why the second and third inferences are not logical or supported by evidence in the text.

Screen 17: Find Evidence in a Photograph

Ask volunteers to circle or draw arrows to striking details in the photograph. As a group, discuss the meaning of the details. For example, students might note the worried expression on the mother's face or the tattered clothing on the three family members. Students might also note the children's heads are facing away from the camera. See pages 7–8 in this document for more information about Dorothea Lange, "Migrant Mother," and extending the discussion around analyzing images.

Screen 18: Make Inferences from a Photograph

Have students make inferences based on the details in the photograph and vote to identify all the words that apply. If you don't have interactive response systems, take a vote of hands for each lettered item or have volunteers circle their choices. For each detail they choose, have students explain their choice. See pages 7–8 in this document for more information about Dorothea Lange, "Migrant Mother," and extending the discussion around analyzing images.

Screen 19: Wing It

Have volunteers use the sentence starters to cite evidence from *The Hunger Games* or a text they have recently read.

Share this background about *The Hunger Games* either before or after students complete the starters: Katniss Everdeen, has been forced to compete in a brutal game against other

teenagers, or tributes. Her mentor, Haymitch, has instructed her about what to do when the Hunger Games begin.

After students have read the excerpt, ask:

- What do you learn about Katniss and about the Games from the details in this passage?
- Based on the textual evidence, what inferences can you make?

Screen 20: Cite Visual Evidence

As students drag tiles to the image, ask them to explain each choice. Invite them to make inferences about the characters in the image based on the evidence they see. They might infer that the man in the background is the girl's father or grandfather, that they are taking a vacation, or that they enjoy spending time together.

Note: Printable versions of all public-domain selections in this lesson are available on the next page of this document.

from *The Call of the Wild*
by Jack London

Buck's first day on the Dyea beach was like a nightmare. . . . He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial. No lazy, sun-kissed life was this, with nothing to do but loaf and be bored. Here was neither peace, nor rest, nor a moment's safety. All was confusion and action, and every moment life and limb were in peril. There was imperative need to be constantly alert; for these dogs and men were . . . savages.

"The Arrow and the Song"
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

More About Dorothea Lange and “Migrant Mother”



Background

The Great Depression, which began with the stock market crash of 1929 and lasted to about 1940, had devastating worldwide effects. All people, rich and poor, faced huge losses of personal income and rampant unemployment. Farming and rural areas of the United States were especially hard hit as crop prices fell dramatically and jobs became scarce. This photograph was taken in March 1936 by Dorothea Lange, a documentary photographer and photojournalist, who had just completed a month-long assignment to research and document rural conditions for the Farm Security Administration (FSA).

As Lange was driving home from her assignment, about 200 miles north of Los Angeles, she stopped at a Pea-Picker’s Camp. At the camp, Lange took six photographs of a mother and her children. Within a few days, the photos ran in newspapers around the country. This photo, tagged “Migrant Mother,” quickly became an iconic image of the Great Depression.

According to Lange’s account, the mother in the photograph was 32, and the family had been living on frozen vegetables from nearby fields and birds that her children had killed. The identity of the mother, Florence Owens Thompson, was discovered in 1978. Thompson is quoted as saying, “I wish she [Lange] hadn’t taken my picture. I can’t get a penny out of it. She didn’t ask my name. She said she wouldn’t sell the pictures. She said she’d send me a copy. She never did.”

Extend the Discussion

Discuss the relationship between a photographer and her or her subject, as well as the use of lighting, camera angles, and composition as elements of photography.

- **Relationship** The goal of documentary photography is to convey truthful, objective images. Ask students if they think viewers question the truth of images in the same way they might question the truth of text. For example, suppose a photograph conveys a compelling message, but the message is misleading or not completely accurate. Is the photo telling the “truth”? What kind of responsibility does the photographer have to his or her subject? And to viewers? (*Answers will vary, but students may talk about images they have seen of celebrities, how they may or not be accurate, and how those images affect the viewers.*)

- **Lighting** Photographers can use lighting to focus the viewer’s attention and to create dramatic effects. When discussing lighting for a particular photograph, ask students to consider whether the image is mostly light or dark. Where is the light coming from and what does it illuminate? Analyzing these details can help students determine a photographer’s message.
- **Camera Angle** A photographer can choose to show the subject at eye level, or from a high or low angle to create certain effects. For example, in Lange’s “Migrant Mother,” the camera is at the eye level of the subject. Ask students: What effects does the eye-level shot create? How would the message change if the camera were looking down on the subject? *(Students may say that the camera angle allows the viewer to feel close to the subjects and their feelings.)*
- **Composition** Explain that **composition** is the arrangement of elements within the frame of the photograph. Ask students to consider how the details of this composition prompt an emotional response. For example, how might the photograph have been different if the children had been facing the camera? *(Answers will vary, but students may say that if the children had been forced to face the camera, they may have felt pressure to smile or hide their true feelings, which would have changed the overall feeling of the image.)*