

# The Importance of Using Textual Evidence

This Tip Sheet helps any writer, novice or advanced, to cite textual evidence.

- ▶ What is textual evidence?
- ▶ Why do you need textual evidence?
- ▶ When do you use textual evidence?
- ▶ Is there a method to putting citations into my paper?
- ▶ How do I transition before evidence
- ▶ How do I elaborate

## Citing Evidence for a Constructed Response

Citing evidence to answer a prompt or question requires the writer to find the proof/evidence within the passage(s) given. Constructed responses are most often found on state tests or practice tests. Constructed responses are a great way to learn, in a small segment, how to defend your claims. They efficiently prepare for larger writing tasks such as essays and research papers.

## Citing Evidence for An Essay

Citing evidence for an essay or paper requires the writer to do independent research using multiple sources to find evidence that supports their own claims and analyses. The writer must choose the most compelling sources and evidence that will convince the audience to agree with the writer's thesis, claims, and/or analyses.

## What is textual evidence?

Textual evidence is facts you have researched from the Internet, articles, newspapers, charts, etc. that go with your point.

## Types of Evidence

The evidence you choose will determine whether your audience will agree with your claims or analyses. So it needs to be **STRONG!**

## The 3 Strongest Types of Evidence are

- ▶ Quotes of Expertise from Authorities or Experts –
  - Example – According to Dr. Acer from the American Society For Pediatrics, “children who are exposed to violence have a higher likelihood of developing anxiety.”
  - Two ways to use the word “quote” concerning gathering and citing evidence.
    - QUOTE- words that are borrowed from research. This kind of quote can be a “**statistic**” or a “**verifiable fact.**”
    - A quote of EXPERTISE – This is the UNIQUE and direct words, beliefs, and/or opinions from an expert or authority on the matter, usually the article’s writer. This kind of quote uses the expert’s **OWN words, opinions, or ideas**, NOT statistics or known verifiable facts.
    - A quote can be a **TYPE** of evidence **AND** a **METHOD** for integrating evidence. You can provide a quote (noun) as evidence. Or, you can quote (verb) an expert.
- ▶ Statistics –
  - Example – The CDC reports that smoking causes 480,000 deaths annually in the U.K.
- ▶ Known Verifiable Facts – not quotes or statistics –
  - Example – According to the official government website on bullying, [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), most kids are bullied in middle school, and some effects may last well into adulthood.

## Why do you need textual evidence?

- ▶ To better prove your point – it strengthens your argument and proves that your claims are accurate.
- ▶ To give your essay credit and support your ideas – providing evidence strengthens your credibility by showing you have researched.
- ▶ To disprove the counterclaim – providing evidence disproves inaccurate opposing claims.

- ▶ To educate – providing evidence educates your reader about your topic.

### **When do you use textual evidence?**

Every. Single. Time. you answer a question about a text or write an essay

### **Other Tips**

- ▶ -word choice, don't use overused words!
- ▶ -spelling and punctuation count!
- ▶ -sentence structure, stay away from simple sentences

### **3 Methods for Integrating Evidence**

- ▶ **Quoting** – a word or several sentences taken word for word from another source and enclosed in quotation marks
- ▶ **Paraphrasing** - rephrasing evidence in your own words and voice. Approximately the same length as the original work that you are paraphrasing.
- ▶ **Summarizing** – Give the evidence's central idea in your own words. Usually shorter than the original source work.

### **Transition Before Evidence**

When integrating evidence into a response, most of the time, you will need to acknowledge the source in your answer. In other words, you will tell who said it or where it came from. Usually, you will introduce this with a transition. Below are some transitions that often precede the source.

- ▶ According to (name of a person),
- ▶ According to (name of the passage/article)
- ▶ (Name of person) writes, .....
- ▶ Evidence suggests that .....

Examples of transitions:

Example 1

The writer of the passage for procon.org believes that healthcare should be a right given to every citizen. According to the article, *Healthcare For All*, thousands of people die yearly because of a lack of health insurance.

### Example 2

The writer of the passage for procon.org believes that healthcare should be a right given to every citizen. Susan Adleson writes, “As a society, we have a responsibility to provide healthcare to any citizen who needs it. Allowing people to suffer and die for *any* reason is unacceptable.”

### Elaboration

As a writer, your job is to shape how your reader views your claims and evidence. Therefore, you must discuss and elaborate upon the evidence you have given. By elaborating and discussing, you can:

- ▶ Express the importance/significance of your evidence.
- ▶ Explain any part of your evidence that might not be easy to understand.
- ▶ Pose a solution to a problem.
- ▶ Relate the evidence to a bigger theme.
- ▶ Convince your reader that this evidence is valid.

### Example of elaboration

The most impressionable teens can be let to make bad decisions involving drugs, alcohol, and even crime. According to WebMD, “Teenagers who are more likely to succumb to peer pressure often feel isolated from peers, have a lack of direction in the lives, are uncertain about their place in a peer group, and have low self-esteem.” **Therefore, it is vital for teens to choose their friends wisely and never be afraid to let go of a bad relationship. It is equally important that parents or guardians help their teens stay connected to positive people. (This is the elaboration. The elaboration poses solutions for helping teens make good decisions.)**

### Transitioning before Elaboration

Another great place to add transitions or transitional phrases is just before the elaboration.

- ▶ In other words,
- ▶ As you can see,
- ▶ Therefore,
- ▶ Clearly,
- ▶ This shows that
- ▶ This proves that
- ▶ This is important because
- ▶ Consider the seriousness of

Example 1 of Transition before Elaboration:

The most impressionable teens can be led to make bad decisions involving drugs, alcohol, and even crime. According to WebMD, “Teenagers who are more likely to succumb to peer pressure often feel isolated from peers, have a lack of direction in their lives, are uncertain about their place in a peer group, and have low self-esteem.” **Therefore, it is vital for teens to choose their friends wisely and never be afraid to let go of a bad relationship. It is equally important that parents or guardians help their teens stay connected to positive people.**

Example 2 of Transition before Elaboration:

The writer of the passage for procon.org believes that healthcare should be a right given to every citizen. Susan Adleson writes, “As a society, we have a responsibility to provide healthcare to any citizen who needs it. Allowing people to suffer and die for *any* reason is unacceptable.” **This is important because everyone will need healthcare at one point in their life.**

### **Another Sample Elaboration**

On December 10, 1948, the United States and 47 other nations signed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The document stated that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one’s family, including ...medical care.” **In other words, everyone deserves access to medical treatment and preventative care services that can keep them adequately healthy. The problem is that nobody can agree**

upon what is considered “adequate.” Does this include regular checkups? Major surgery?

In this example, the elaboration explains the somewhat confusing evidence. It goes further to prompt the reader to consider the deeper meaning of the evidence and the dilemma that the evidence poses.

Always remember that you must cite the source for paraphrasing and direct quotes! See our other Tipsheets for citing your sources.