



# Cite Text Evidence: Grades 3–5

## OVERVIEW:

Text evidence is information (facts, details, quotes) from a text that is used to support an opinion, claim, or answer. Historians use text evidence to ensure claims, conclusions, and inferences are valid, credible, and reliable. Using text evidence to answer questions and support thinking is a key skill in social studies reading comprehension, as it requires students to read and evaluate the important information in a text and to think critically about it. Knowing how to find and cite evidence helps students consider the value of information in the text and discern how it does or does not support claims or opinions. When they are guided to search for evidence, students learn to filter information and critically approach texts. In addition, identifying and utilizing pertinent text evidence improves reading comprehension and prepares students to write well-supported arguments and informative texts about a topic.

## Mini-Lesson I

### Finding Relevant Text Evidence (20 minutes)

**Background:** In order for students to proficiently use the skill of citing text evidence, they must first learn how to locate evidence that answers a specific question. It can be difficult for students to distinguish between relevant information—information that relates to the question being asked—and information that is interesting but unrelated. The following lesson teaches students to first evaluate the question being asked to help focus their attention as they reread the text to find relevant details that support their answer. Note that the teaching suggestions are based on the article “The Life of Harriet Tubman” from the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.”

- As needed, review the definitions of *text evidence* and *relevant*:
  - *text evidence*: facts, details, or quotes from a written text or media that support an idea or opinion
  - *relevant*: related to; details that are related to the question or main idea
- Share with students that finding text evidence allows them to check their answers for accuracy and provide proof to support their claims. Emphasize that it is essential to make sure there is evidence to back up ideas or opinions, whether your own or someone else's. Text evidence helps students prove their points and makes their arguments stronger.
- Explain that the first step in using text evidence is being able to find evidence in the text that answers a question. Share with students that they will read a text and then use evidence from the text to answer a question.
- Conduct a read-aloud of the text.
- After reading, invite students to read the question at the bottom of the page:
  - Why did Harriet Tubman return to Maryland, where she had been enslaved, after successfully escaping to freedom?

- Think aloud to model unpacking the question: For example:
  - *The question asks me why Harriet Tubman returned to Maryland. Since it asks me why, I know that I am looking for a reason. I think the important words I need to think about to answer this question are returned and Maryland. I'm going to re-read the text, and highlight every time I see the words returned or Maryland to find the **reason** she went back to Maryland.*
- Share with students that they will now re-read the text, looking for details to answer the question. Reinforce how the key words, *returned* and *Maryland*, can help them. Model rereading and highlighting *returned* and *Maryland*. (Note the word *returned* does not appear, while *Maryland* appears several times.)
- After rereading the passage, look back at the sentences you highlighted and think aloud to determine if the sentence helps you answer the question.
  - First sentence: "Harriet grew up in enslavement in Maryland."
    - *This sentence tells me that she grew up in Maryland. It does not tell me why she went back.*
  - Second sentence: "He didn't want to leave Maryland."
    - *This sentence tells me that when Harriet left Maryland, her husband John did not want to leave. It doesn't tell me why she went back.*
  - Third sentence: "She traveled back to Maryland to help enslaved people and guide them north."
    - *This sentence tells me that Harriet traveled back to Maryland to help enslaved people and guide them north. Traveled back is a synonym for returned, so this sentence answers the question. She returned to help enslaved people escape to freedom.*
- Read the question again and invite students to answer the question based on the text evidence they identified. Then invite students to look at the answer choices to determine which one most closely matches their response.
- Highlight and explain the correct response:
  - "She returned as a conductor on the Underground Railroad to help other people escape, too."
    - *This answer is correct because the text said that she returned to Maryland to help enslaved people and guide them north.*
- Explain to students that sometimes questions need more than one piece of text evidence and that key words from the questions will not always be in the evidence that answers the question.
- Invite students to go to the next page in the lesson (5-Build) and read the question aloud:
  - As a conductor on the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman helped many freedom seekers to reach safety. What else did Tubman do to fight for equality? Select the **two** correct answers.
- Ask students to turn and talk, discussing with a partner to determine what the question is asking them to find. Invite a student to share, or provide them with the correct response:
  - *The question wants us to find two pieces of evidence that show what Tubman did to fight for equality.*
- Explain that in order to answer this question, we need to consider what someone might do to fight for equality. Invite students to turn and talk, and then solicit responses, recording them on the board. For example:
  - *protest slavery/unfair treatment/segregation; give speeches, write letters or articles; work for organizations that fight for equality*
- Share that you will re-read the article and look for ways that Harriet Tubman fought for equality. Highlight the following pieces of text evidence and invite students to do the same:
  - "After she became free, Tubman decided to help other enslaved people. She worked as an abolitionist. She gave speeches describing how terrible life in enslavement was."
    - *I know that abolitionists worked to end slavery, which is one way to fight for equality. It says Tubman gave speeches about life under enslavement.*
  - "During the war, Tubman helped the North as a nurse, a scout, and a spy. In 1863, she became the first woman to lead a U.S. military mission. During the mission, she helped rescue more than 700 enslaved people."
    - *I know that during the Civil War, the North was fighting to end slavery. Tubman worked for the North and led a mission that rescued 700 people from slavery. This is definitely a way to fight for equality.*
  - "She fought for voting rights for women and people who had once been enslaved."
    - *Fighting for women and formerly enslaved people to have the right to vote is definitely a way to fight for equality.*

- Read the question again, and invite students to answer the question based on the text evidence they identified. Then ask them to look at the answer choices to determine which two most closely match their response.
- Invite a student to share, explaining why the correct responses are:
  - *She was a spy for the North during the Civil War.*
  - *She spoke out for voting rights for women and the formerly enslaved.*
- Ensure that you give extra attention to the first answer option, explaining that while the text says Tubman helped the North as a nurse, it does not say that she trained other nurses.

## Mini-Lesson II

### Paraphrasing Text Evidence (30 minutes)

**Background:** Once students have mastered locating text evidence to answer questions about a text, they are ready to learn how to paraphrase text evidence to support a claim or answer. Paraphrasing text evidence requires students to locate text evidence and restate it in their own words. Note that the teaching suggestions are based on the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “American Indian Nations of the Southwest Before Colonization.”

- As needed, review the academic vocabulary with students before beginning the lesson:
  - *claim*: the main argument of a paper or piece of writing
  - *paraphrase*: to give the meaning in different words
  - *direct quotation*: exactly what is written in a book or piece of writing
- Share with students that often, when they are asked to answer a question or make a claim, they need to provide text evidence to support their response.
- Explain that there are two ways to include this text evidence in their written response—direct quotations and paraphrasing. Share that in this lesson, they will learn how to paraphrase text evidence.
- Read the prompt on page 10-Build of the lesson aloud with students:
  - “Choose one nation discussed in the lesson and describe how its culture and ways of life reflected the geography, climate, and natural resources of the Southwest.”
- Invite students to create a T-chart in their notebook, titling one column “Geography/Climate/Resources” and the other “Culture/Way of Life.” Share that as they read, students should look for details to add to their T-chart.
- Begin a read-aloud, stopping as desired to ensure that students jot notes about the Hopi. Think aloud as you model adding notes to your T-chart. For example:
  - Article: “Living in the Southwest”
    - Section - Pueblo People and Dry Farming
      - *Geography/Climate/Resources: adobe*
      - *Culture/Way of Life: used to build homes that stayed cool during the day and warm at night*
      - *Geography/Climate/Resources: not much rain, planted shrubs with crops to slow evaporation*
    - Article: “The Cultures of Southwest Nations”
      - Section - “Hopi Clothing” image
        - *Geography/Climate/Resources: grew cotton*
        - *Culture/Way of Life: used cotton to make clothes*
      - Section - The Environment and Religious Beliefs
        - *Geography/Climate/Resources: droughts*
        - *Culture/Way of Life: rain ceremony called Hopi Snake Dance to try to bring rain*
  - After reading, invite students to look over their T-chart. Display and re-read the prompt from page 10-Build of the lesson and invite students to respond, using their T-chart.



- Emphasize that students should use their own notes, rather than looking back at the text, to respond.
- Explain to students that even though we are paraphrasing and not quoting directly from the text, we still need to say where the information came from. This both helps students avoid plagiarizing and provides strength and credibility to their argument.
- Provide sentence stems for students to use in their response, such as “According to the text” and “The text says.” Model how to use a stem to include paraphrased text evidence. For example:
  - *There was a lot of adobe in the Southwest, so this was a natural resource. **According to the text**, the Hopi used adobe to build homes that were cool during the day and warm at night.*
  - *There was not much rain in the Southwest, so growing crops was tricky. **The text says** that the Hopi planted shrubs with their crops to slow down evaporation.*
- Invite students to return to the text to check the accuracy of what they wrote.

## Mini-Lesson III

### Elaborating on Text Evidence (30 minutes)

**Background:** In order to write strong arguments or explanations about a history topic, students need to be able to elaborate on their text evidence by explaining how or why it supports their claim or main idea. This is often difficult for students, but it is critically important. Not only does this skill help students see how the evidence connects to the claim or main idea, but it also helps them explain their thinking and monitor their understanding. Note that the teaching suggestions are based on the article “Companies and People Suffer” from the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “What Was the Great Depression?”

- Remind students that as effective historians, it is important to support their writing with evidence. Share that in addition to including text evidence, it is important to explain how or why the evidence supports a claim or main idea.
- Explain that in this lesson, students will use a section of text to find evidence and explain how it supports a claim.
- Display or invite students to access the section titled “Even Tougher Times for Some” in the article “Companies and People Suffer.” Explain that this article is about how the Great Depression negatively impacted Americans and that this section in particular discusses how it was even harder for certain Americans.
- Read the paragraph aloud once, inviting students to follow along.
- Display and read the claim below:
  - The Great Depression was especially hard for Black Americans and immigrants.
- Invite students to find a piece of text evidence that shows that the Great Depression was especially hard for Black Americans. Ask a student to share, and record it where students can see it. For example:
  - *Black workers were usually the first ones fired and the last ones hired back.*
- Ask students to turn and talk about the following questions:
  - How does this evidence prove the claim? Why does this help support the idea that the Great Depression was especially hard for Black Americans?
- Invite student pairs to discuss, and then solicit student responses, recording one of the responses. For example:
  - *Though many people lost their jobs during the Great Depression, Black Americans were the first to lose their jobs. They were also out of work the longest, since they were the last to be hired back. This means that they probably suffered without basic necessities like food or clothes for the longest because they did not have income from working.*
- Invite students to find a piece of text evidence that shows that the Great Depression was especially hard for immigrants. Ask a student to share, and record it where students can see it. For example:
  - *Immigrants were often deported so they wouldn't compete with Americans for jobs.*

- Ask students to turn and talk about the following questions:
  - How does this evidence prove the claim?
  - Why does this help support the idea that the Great Depression was especially hard for immigrants?
- Invite student pairs to discuss, and then solicit student responses, recording one of the responses. For example:
  - *Immigrants were sent back to their home countries, which they had left to come to the United States. The choice of where they wanted to live was taken away from them. They most likely did not have work or a place to stay in these countries. There could also have been reasons they left their countries that made returning dangerous, like lack of religious freedom.*
- As desired, read through the entire paragraph, highlighting how each elaboration explains why the text evidence is important and supports the claim.
- Emphasize that when we write about topics that people do not know about or that they might have different opinions about, it is especially important that we use evidence to support our claims, and explain how our evidence supports our claim.

## Check for Understanding

### If you observe ...

### Then try ...

**students having difficulty locating text evidence**

asking a question and then reading the paragraph that contains the answer. Model thinking about the question and then re-reading the paragraph to find the evidence that answers the question.

**students struggling to paraphrase text evidence**

copying a piece of text evidence directly from the text and modeling how to rewrite it in your own words. Share with students that they can use strategies such as:

- restating the idea in eight words or less
- using synonyms to rephrase what is being said
- telling a classmate what you remember about a piece of evidence, asking them to repeat it back to you, and writing down what they say

**students struggling to elaborate on text evidence**

inviting students to choose a high-interest topic that they know a lot about. Ask them to write a claim about the topic and provide evidence to support their claim. Invite students to share their claim and evidence with you. After each piece of evidence, them to respond to the following question:

- Why does it matter?

For example, a student who claims that Steph Curry is the greatest basketball player of all time might provide the evidence that he holds the NBA record for most three-point shots made. When asked why that matters, the student could state that this means Curry has scored a lot of points for his teams, which contributes to those teams winning games.