

Module: Reasoning through Language Arts

Lesson Title: Looking for Evidence

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Define different types of evidence.
- Identify and find different types of evidence in reading passages.

Prerequisite Skills Common Core State Standards	Reasoning through Language Arts 2014 GED® Assessment Targets
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. (RI.4.2) Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RI/RL.7.1)	Identify specific pieces of evidence an author uses in support of claims or conclusions. (R.8.2) Evaluate the relevance and sufficiency of evidence offered in support of a claim. (R.8.3)

Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- **Handout A: Passage #1 - Are Tweens Ready for Cell Phones?**
- **Handout B: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument**
- **Handout C: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument – Answer Key**
- Sample nonfiction texts

Instructional Plan

Overview

In this lesson, students will identify different types of evidence in materials that they read – from facts and statistics to emotional appeal and expert opinion. This lesson is developed to be used with different types of non-fiction text. The purpose of the lesson is to build skills in determining evidence to better craft a constructed response where evidence supports a claim.

Process

Write the following quote from Denis Hayes (2009) on the board – “Evidence isn’t the same as proof. Whereas evidence allows for professional judgment, proof is absolute and incontestable.”

Introduce the lesson by writing the word “evidence” on the board. Have students brainstorm what constitutes evidence.

Discuss with students that there are many types of evidence. Evidence includes more than “just the facts.” Share each type of evidence with students and a short definition. You may wish to provide students with the graphic organizer from **Handout B** or write the following on the board:

- Factual - Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.
- Statistics or Data - Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.
- Examples or Anecdotes - Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author’s claim.
- Expert Testimony - The observations or conclusions of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has first-hand knowledge and experience.
- Logical Reasoning - An explanation which draws conclusions that the reader can understand; a discussion which helps the reader understand or make sense out of facts or examples offered.
- Emotional Appeal - Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader’s emotions – ethos, pathos, logos.

As a class, have students provide statements that support each type of evidence. Prior to students responding, provide them with a sample statement that fits each type of evidence. Write the sample items on the board or on pieces of chart paper that have been labeled by evidence type.

The following are sample statements that can be used to start the activity:

Type of Evidence	Sample Statement
Factual	Individuals who have a high school credential earn more than those without a high school credential.
Statistics	There are 39 million adults who do not have a high school diploma.
Anecdotes	I did not complete high school, but at age 39 I received my GED diploma which allowed me to finally enter college.
Expert testimony	According to a study by the American Council of Education, adults who earn a GED® credential can earn the same level of weekly wages as high school graduates, increasing their earning potential by about \$115 per week.
Logical reasoning	Having a high school credential provides students with the first step toward achieving their educational or career goals.
Emotional appeal	We owe adults nothing less than the opportunity to receive their high school credential; their futures depend on it.

As students provide their own statements, ensure that they are appropriate for each type of evidence identified.

Discuss that the GED® test requires that students be able to evaluate the relevance and sufficiency of evidence offered in support of a claim. Share with students that the activity for today’s lesson will require that they read an article and identify the different types of evidence used by the author.

Provide students with **Handout A: Passage #1 - Are Tweens Ready for Cell Phones?** and **Handout B: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument**. Have students complete a close reading of the article. Next, have them

identify different types of evidence within the source text. Students should write their answers into the graphic organizer.

After each student has completed his/her reading and graphic organizer, divide the class into small groups. Have them share the different types of evidence that they found. Debrief the activity by having each table identify one quote that they located in the source text for each type of evidence. An answer key of sample statements is provided in **Handout C: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument**. Note: These are sample statements to use in debriefing the activity. Students may find additional examples in the article.

Sample Debriefing Questions

Have students answer the following questions regarding identifying evidence:

- What are the different types of evidence?
- How are different types of evidence the same? Different?
- Is it important that nonfiction texts include facts and statistics? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to be able to identify different types of evidence?
- How will identifying evidence assist you in the writing process?

Assessments/Extensions

1. Access additional reading materials and have students identify the different types of evidence. Examples of source materials for use in the classroom can be located from:
 - GED Testing Service® at: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/ddd59448b9f95046eb43f60019cadd9e.pdf>
 - Newsela website at: <https://newsela.com/>
 - Pro/Con.org website at: <http://www.procon.org/>

Have students read the selected article and use the graphic organizer to document the evidence. This type of activity can be used both as a close reading activity, as well as a beginning step for identifying evidence for developing an extended response writing sample.

2. Have students create a short writing sample in which they support a claim, one that they have created or one that you have provided, with different types of evidence. If you provide the claim, start with a topic about which students have background knowledge. For example: Americans supported George Washington as our nation's first president because he was best qualified. Have students identify different types of evidence that would support this claim or statement. Debrief by having students share their evidence.
3. Have students read the quote by Denis Hayes (2009) – "Evidence isn't the same as proof. Whereas evidence allows for professional judgment, proof is absolute and incontestable." Ask students if they agree or disagree with the quote. Have students write a response to the quote. Tell students to provide their rationale for why they feel Hayes was correct or incorrect in his definition.

Handout A: Passage #1 - Are Tweens Ready for Cell Phones?

Source Material #1

Speech: "Tweens" Are Ready for Cell Phones by Deborah Pendergast

"Safer Kids Summit"

Thank you for inviting me to the first "Safer Kids Summit." We are here to discuss ways to keep our children safe in an increasingly complex world. Today's focus is on technology— specifically on the ideal age to give kids their own cell phones. As a representative of a large telecommunications company, I receive many inquiries from parents on this topic, and this is what I tell them: It depends on the child, of course, but in general, age 10 is just about right.

A 2012 survey by the National Consumers League backs me up. The survey found that almost 60 percent of children ages 8 to 12 already have cell phones. These "tweens" can contact their parents at any time, and vice versa, giving the kids a sense of empowerment and their parents a feeling of security. Caroline Knorr, of the group Common Sense Media, says, "We want our kids to be independent, to be able to walk home from school and play at the playground without us. We want them to have that old-fashioned, fun experience of being on their own, and cell phones can help with that." Picture the following scenario: You told your fourth-grader that you would pick her up after school, but you are stuck in traffic. She is waiting for you ...and waiting, and waiting. But if you both have cell phones, you can call her to let her know you are delayed, and she can go back inside the school, where there are adults around. You both breathe a sigh of relief.

Psychologists tell us that the period between ages 10 and 12 is one of growing independence. It is a time to teach children about responsibility, and to give them opportunities to earn our trust. Providing a 10-year-old with a cell phone offers an ideal way to achieve these goals and gives parents peace of mind as well.

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Handout B: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument

Definition of Evidence

Facts, documentation, or testimony used to strengthen a claim, support an argument, or reach a conclusion.

Read the source text and identify different types of evidence that support the author's claim.

Type of Evidence	Definition	Samples Supporting an Author's Claim
Factual	Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.	
Statistics or Data	Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.	
Examples or Anecdotes	Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author's claim.	
Expert Testimony	The observations or conclusions of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has first-hand knowledge and experience.	
Logical Reasoning	An explanation which draws conclusions that the reader can understand; a discussion which helps the reader understand or make sense out of facts or examples offered.	
Emotional Appeal	Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader's emotions – ethos, pathos, logos.	

Handout C: Types of Evidence to Support an Argument – Answer Key

Evidence isn't the same as proof. "Whereas *evidence* allows for professional judgment, *proof* is absolute and incontestable." (Denis Hayes, *Learning and Teaching in Primary Schools*, 2009)

Definition of Evidence

Facts, documentation, or testimony used to strengthen a claim, support an argument, or reach a conclusion.

Claim: The argument in favor of the use of cell phones by “tweens” is better supported because of stronger, more reputable evidence.

Source Text: “Tweens” Are Ready for Cell phones by Deborah Pendergast “Safer Kids Summit”

Type of Evidence	Definition	Samples Supporting an Author’s Claim
Factual	Truthful statements that cannot be denied. Statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.	Cell phone usage among “tweens” has grown rapidly.
Statistics or Data	Numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.	The survey found that almost 60 percent of children ages 8 to 12 already have cell phones.
Examples or Anecdotes	Real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author’s claim.	Picture the following scenario: You told your fourth-grader that you would pick her up after school, but you are stuck in traffic . . .
Expert Testimony	The observations or conclusions of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has first-hand knowledge and experience.	Psychologists tell us that the period between ages 10 and 12 . . . is a time to teach children about responsibility, and to give them opportunities to earn our trust.
Logical Reasoning	An explanation which draws conclusions that the reader can understand; a discussion which helps the reader understand or make sense out of facts or examples offered.	Providing a 10-year-old with a cell phone offers an ideal way to achieve these goals.
Emotional Appeal	Use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader’s emotions – ethos, pathos, logos.	Providing a 10-year-old with a cell phone . . . gives parents peace of mind.