Prove It With the Text

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 6
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Reading comprehension: citing evidence
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to cite exact words for explicit facts and inferences. They defend claims about a tower story in a court-style team trial.

Curriculum links

- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Learning objectives

- Students will cite exact words to prove explicit details in text.
- Students will cite text clues to support inferences from text.
- Students will explain how each quote supports a claim.

Success criteria

- I can quote exact words to prove an explicit detail.
- I can quote clues to support an inference I make.
- I can explain how my quote proves my idea.

What students already know

Ask: What is the difference between what a text says right out loud and what you figure out from clues? Take 2 quick examples from yesterday's reading.

Key words

explicit	said straight out in the words on the page
inference	a smart guess you make by putting clues together
cite	to show the exact words where you found proof [1]
claim	an idea about the reading that needs proof
quote	exact words copied word for word from the page

Materials

- projector with Slides 1-5 and 10-12
- printed copies of worksheet page 1 passage The Tower That Stayed Up
- printed copies of Worksheet Task A and Task B
- claim cards for Put the Claim on Trial
- whiteboard and markers
- timers

Before the lesson

- Print class sets of The Tower That Stayed Up passage and Tasks A and B
- Make claim cards with the three claims used in Stage 4 and one set of evidence cards with paragraph numbers marked
- Test projector and Slides 1-5 and 10-12 and set timers for trial rounds
- Arrange desks for teams of 3-4 with space to walk to the front

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Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook interest in proving ideas and recall the need for proof.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 Prove It: Citing Text Evidence and read the title line Show where the text tells you.
2. Say the hook: Court is in session and your only witness is the text itself.
3. Show Slide 5 Think, pair, share question: Your partner says a character in a story is kind. What proof do you ask for?
4. Take 3 quick answers and push for exact words, not just opinion.

STUDENTS DO

1. Tell a partner what proof they would ask for.
2. Share one answer with the class.

Say: Today we prove ideas like lawyers. You cannot just say what you think. You must point to the exact words that prove it. Your partner will ask you, where does it say that?

Ask: Your partner says a character is kind. What proof do you ask for? (The exact words or action in the text that shows kindness.) · Why is I just know it not enough? (Because it has no proof from the text to support analysis [1].)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name what to ask for: exact words. If many are unsure, model one more: Show me the sentence.

Support: Let students answer with one word first, then stretch to a full sentence. **Stretch:** Ask students to name two kinds of proof: words that say it and clues that hint it.

Use: Slides 1, 5

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5–15 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To model how to cite explicit details and inference clues with explanation.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 2 objectives and Slide 3 chain: Read and ask what it means, spot claim, find exact words, explain link.
2. Show Slide 4 statement: Don't just tell what you think — show where the text tells you.
3. Model with paragraph 1 using close reading, which is careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage that pays close attention to individual words and syntax [6].
4. Show Slide 10 What Makes Evidence Strong and think aloud how the quote matches the idea.

STUDENTS DO

1. Follow along in paragraph 1 and 2 copies and underline the quoted words.
2. Repeat back whether each model is explicit or inference and why.

Say: Explicit means the author says it word for word. An inference is what you figure out from clues. Both need short, exact proof and one sentence that explains how the proof fits. Stronger readers use more proof every year [1].

Worked example: Claim 1 explicit: The student did not get supplies at first. Proof, paragraph 1: A student in the back row stared at the boxes and did not move to get supplies. I copy the key part: did not move to get supplies. Explanation: Those exact words say it directly, so no guessing is needed. Claim 2 inference: The student felt discouraged. Proof, paragraph 2: shoulders low, tapping a pencil on the desk and I tried this last year and mine fell in three seconds. I am just bad at this. Explanation: The words shoulders low and I am just bad at this hint at giving up, so I infer discouragement.

Ask: Which quote proves an explicit fact about supplies? (did not move to get supplies, because it says it word for word.) · Which words are only clues for feeling discouraged? (shoulders low and I am just bad at this, they hint it without saying discouraged.) · What must you add after every quote? (One sentence explaining how the proof supports the idea.)

Check understanding: Hold up 1 finger for explicit, 2 for inference as I read two new lines. Reteach with paragraph 1 if mixed.

Support: Point to the exact line numbers and have students echo-read the quote. **Stretch:** Ask students to shorten a long quote to just enough to prove the point.

Use: Slides 2-4, 10

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15–27 min **Guided practice** 12 min · Pairs

To practice sorting explicit facts from inference clues with citations.

YOU DO

1. Hand out passage and Worksheet Task A: Use paragraphs 1-4. Sort each detail by whether it is stated word-for-word or must be figured out from clues.
2. Read paragraph 2 aloud while pairs follow, stressing tapping a pencil and shoulders low.
3. Circulate and prompt pairs to copy exact words plus paragraph number for each sort.
4. Stop at 10 minutes and confirm two answers as a class.

STUDENTS DO

1. Discuss each Task A detail with a partner and sort to explicit or inference.
2. Write the short quote and paragraph number for each decision.

Say: With your partner, decide: does the text say it straight out or do you have to figure it out? Sort it, then copy the exact words and paragraph number that prove it. You must draw upon and write about evidence from the text [1].

Worked example: Detail: The tower was 28 inches tall. Sort: explicit. Proof paragraph 4: The rebuilt tower stood 28 inches tall and held the book for the full ten seconds while the whole class counted aloud. Short quote: stood 28 inches tall. Detail: The student felt nervous at the start. Sort: inference. Clue paragraph 2: shoulders low, tapping a pencil on the desk. Explanation: body clues hint worry, the text never says nervous.

Ask: Is At 2:15, the final test began explicit or inference? (Explicit, paragraph 4 says it word for word.) · Is the student gave up for good an inference? What clue disproves it? (Yes, inference, and paragraph 3 disproves it: tested a short tower three times, fixing the legs each time.)

Check understanding: Pairs swap sheets and check every sort has a matching quote. Fix any quote that is retold instead of exact.

Support: Give a version with two key sentences already underlined so students choose from less text.
Stretch: Ask students to add a second piece of proof for the same inference and tell how the clues connect.

Use: Worksheet Task A

27–50 min **Main activity** 23 min · Groups

To defend claims about the text with two cited quotes and reasoning.

YOU DO

1. Post three claim cards on the whiteboard: 1. The student felt discouraged at the start. 2. The student learned a new strategy after lunch. 3. Testing and fixing made the tower succeed.
2. Give each team one claim, the passage paragraphs 1-4, and a timer for 8 minutes to find two exact quotes with paragraph numbers and write one reasoning sentence per quote.
3. Call teams to the front in trial order to present quote plus reasoning while the class considers a wider range of textual evidence to make fuller use of text [1].
4. Lead the vote: strong proof or weak proof, and record winning quotes on the whiteboard.

STUDENTS DO

1. Hunt for two best quotes for the team claim, copy them exactly with paragraph numbers.
2. Present quotes and reasoning at the front and vote on other teams proof.

Say: You are lawyers and the text is your only witness. Bring two exact quotes to prove your claim. Tell if each quote is explicit proof or an inference clue, and explain how it proves your claim. Short, exact, and on topic wins.

Worked example: Claim: Testing and fixing made the tower succeed. Quote 1, paragraph 3: tested a short tower three times, fixing the legs each time. Reasoning: This shows repeated fixing, which is testing. Quote 2, paragraph 4: The rebuilt tower stood 28 inches tall and held the book for the full ten seconds while the whole class counted aloud. Reasoning: The fixed tower held the book the full time, so the fixing worked. Both quotes together prove the claim.

Ask: Which two quotes best prove the student learned a new strategy? (Paragraph 3: sketched a wide triangle base in a notebook and asked for extra tape, joined two other students.) · How do you show a quote supports an inference, not just repeats it? (Add one sentence linking clue words to the idea, like wide triangle base shows a new strong-shape plan.)

Check understanding: Each team must read both quotes aloud and say explicit or inference. If quotes are long or off topic, send team to shorten to key words.

Support: Give teams evidence cards with paragraph numbers marked so they search in a smaller section.
Stretch: Require the other team to find a counter-quote and challenge the first inference.

Use: Worksheet Task B

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To check that both explicit facts and inferences need cited proof.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 mystery: A reader points to five words and wins the argument. What power is that? Elicit citing exact text proof.
2. Show Slide 12 true or false: You need evidence for both explicit facts and inferences. Inferences must be backed by text clues.
3. Collect oral answers and restate the rule: exact, short, on topic, plus explanation.
4. Give 3-question exit ticket on paper.

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer true or false with reasons using quotes from today.
2. Complete the exit ticket on their own.

Say: Both explicit facts and inferences need proof from exact words. Point to the words, say if it says it or hints it, and explain the link. That is how you win the argument.

Ask: True or false: Only inferences need proof? (False. Both need proof from exact words.) · What power wins an argument about reading? (Citing exact text evidence to prove explicit meaning and inferences.)

Check understanding: Read exit tickets as students leave. If many miss inference proof, start tomorrow with paragraph 2 clues again.

Support: Provide sentence frames: The text says ___ which proves ___ and I infer ___ because the text says ___. **Stretch:** Ask students to explain why one inference is stronger based on how direct the proof is.

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Retelling in own words instead of citing exact words	Answer has no quotation marks or does not match the passage	Have students put finger on the sentence and copy 4-8 key words exactly with paragraph number [6].
Mixing up explicit and inference	Labels a figured-out feeling as word-for-word fact	Ask: Does the page use that exact word? If not, it is an inference and needs clue words plus reasoning [1].
Dropping a quote with no link to the claim	Quote is correct but no explanation of how it proves the idea	Add frame: This proves ___ because ___, using short, on-topic proof.

Support

- Give evidence cards with paragraph numbers marked so teams search a smaller section
- Provide sentence frames and pre-underlined key sentences for students who find it hard
- Pair readers so one finds the line and the partner copies the quote

Stretch

- Require finding a counter-quote to challenge another team's inference
- Ask for a second quote for the same inference and explain how clues connect
- Ask why one inference is stronger based on how direct the proof is

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target pairs in guided practice and trial. Help locate paragraph numbers, check quotes are exact, and prompt the linking sentence.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Is this explicit or inference: The tower held the book for ten seconds? Copy the proof.	Explicit. stood 28 inches tall and held the book for the full ten seconds, paragraph 4.
What clue proves the student felt discouraged at first? Is it explicit or inference?	Inference. shoulders low, tapping a pencil / I am just bad at this, paragraph 2.
Claim: The student kept trying. Give one quote and explain the link.	Tested a short tower three times, fixing the legs each time, paragraph 3; shows repeated fixing, so kept trying.

Homework

Find two sentences in your independent reading book, copy one explicit fact quote and one inference clue quote with page numbers.

Sources

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