

Where's the Evidence?

Sorting activities to help students learn to support
and explain ideas with evidence from a text
Grades 3-6

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Sorting Activities for ELA

These activities are designed to help students understand how to include ideas, specific evidence, and explaining (interpretive) sentences.

How to Use the Sorts:

1. Copy on to card-stock then cut them up and have students work in pairs to put them back together.
2. Give a partially filled out sort and have students work in pairs to finish it.
3. Students make their own sorts on index cards or the blank sheet for other groups to solve.

Three Type of Sorts:

1. Given a general idea and then add (or match) a specific quote and/or a detail sentence to prove it.
2. Given a specific detail and then explain (or match) how it proves the point.
3. Sort relevant, fully explained evidence from irrelevant, incomplete or unclear evidence.

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The grade levels are only suggestions. Feel free to use how you see fit.

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Is there something special about being up in the branches of a tree? What happens up there? Is a tree the perfect place to be? The speaker in this poem has some answers. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

EVERY TIME I CLIMB A TREE

Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
Every time I climb a tree
I scrape a leg
5 Or skin a knee
And every time I climb a tree
I find some ants
Or dodge a bee
And get the ants
10 All over me

And every time I climb a tree
Where have you been?
They say to me
But don't they know that I am free
15 Every time I climb a tree?
I like it best
To spot a nest
That has an egg
Or maybe three

20 And then I skin
The other leg
But every time I climb a tree
I see a lot of things to see
Swallows, rooftops and TV
25 And all the fields and farms there be
Every time I climb a tree
Though climbing may be good for ants
It isn't awfully good for pants
But still it's pretty good for me
30 Every time I climb a tree

—David McCord

Specific, important, relevant, explained details

Unimportant, not relevant, not explained

<p>The poet says he is free when he climbs a tree. All kids like being free.</p>	<p>He skins his knees. He gets his clothes ripped. He dodges bees.</p>
<p>Everyone asks the poet, "Where have you been?" This means the kid has been hiding out in the tree and is enjoying his secret place.</p>	<p>"Where have you been?" They say to me.</p>
<p>He likes to "spot a nest that has an egg or maybe three." The poet likes being out with nature and the tree puts him closer to birds and bees and ants.</p>	<p>It says, there are ants and bees. He dodges. He gets ants all over me. And then I skin the other leg.</p>
<p>The poet likes the view from the tree with the rooftops and fields and farms.</p>	<p>This is a poem about a boy who climbs a tree. He looks around up there. He gets bugs on him. He sees things.</p>

<p>Even though he skins his legs and gets ants on him, you can tell the poet likes climbing trees because he says, “it’s pretty good for me.”</p>	<p>Climbing is not good for pants. It’s good for me. Every time I climb a tree.</p>
<p>The poet must like dodging bees and getting ants on him. I know this because it says, “every time.” This means he must climb all the time, and that means he must like it.</p>	<p>One time my mom told me not to climb a tree but I climbed it anyway.</p>
<p>The poet says he “skins his knees” and it is “isn’t awfully good for his pants”, but he says is pretty good for him. The author doesn’t care that much about his clothes, he wants adventure.</p>	<p>I really like this poem because I like to climb trees.</p>
<p>Also, climbing trees is good is because the poet feels free and he can escape his parents or whoever is looking for him. He writes, “Don’t they know that I am free every time I climb a tree?”</p>	<p>There is freedom.</p>

GRADE 3

(see *Diary of Wimpy Kid* (1st one in series) pages 64-67)

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid is a book about the life of a boy named Greg, his mom and dad, and his two brothers, Rodrick and Manny. In this selection, Greg and his friend Rowley are getting ready to go Trick or Treating. Read the selection and then answer the question below.

Short Answer:

Based on the article, describe how Greg's and Rowley's moms make it difficult for them to enjoy Trick or Treating.

<p>One way Greg's mom makes it difficult is she insists Greg take Manny.</p>	<p>If they take Manny then can't go to scary but fun places like Snake Road or houses with spooky decorations.</p>
<p>Also, Greg's mom makes Greg's Dad go along.</p>	<p>Because of this, the dad finds another dad and they slow things down talking about football.</p>
<p>Rowley's mom makes it difficult because she changes his knight costume.</p>	<p>The costume now has reflective tape, and he has a glow stick instead of a sword.</p>
<p>Greg's mom makes it hard because they won't get as much candy.</p>	<p>They wanted to hit 152 houses in 3 hours but with all the changes they could only hit 1 house every 20 minutes.</p>

Add an explaining detail!

One way Greg's mom makes it difficult is she insists Greg take Manny.

Also, Greg's mom makes Greg's Dad go along.

Rowley's mom makes it difficult because she changes his knight costume.

Greg's mom makes it hard because they won't get as much candy.

The Statue of Liberty

by Mary F. Porsche

Welcome!

- 1 Many people have come from other countries to live in the United States. Some come to find new jobs. Others are looking for a better way to live. All of them want to be free.
- 2 For more than 100 years, the Statue of Liberty has greeted newcomers as they sail into New York Harbor. It gives hope to everyone who dreams of freedom.

A Gift from France

- 3 The people of France have been friends with the people of the United States for a long time.



<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2013/release/g3ela.pdf>

The question is “Explain why the Statue of Liberty is important to the people of the United States.” Add detail or specific evidence that supports these ideas.

<p>The Statue of Liberty is important because it shows our friendship with France.</p>	
<p>Also, the Statue is important because it gives hope to everyone who comes to America.</p>	
<p>Another way that shows how important the statue is to Americans is because people want to take care of the statue.</p>	
<p>Most of all, the statue is important because it is a reminder.</p>	

The question is “Explain why the Statue of Liberty is important to the people of the United States.” Add an explaining sentence to these specific details. “This shows/proves that...”

“It gives hope to everyone who dreams of freedom.”	
A French artist gave the statue as a gift to the United States.	
In 1980, the people of the United States decided to repair the statue to make her look new again.	
Many people visit the statue.	

Use as a sort or as answers

<p>The Statue of Liberty is important because it shows our friendship with France.</p>	<p>The statue was a gift of friendship from a French Artist named Frederic Bartholdi. He wanted to share his love of freedom.</p>
<p>Also, Lady Liberty is important because it gives hope to everyone who comes to America.</p>	<p>The statue greets people from other countries as they enter New York harbor. They want a “better way to live” and “they want to be free.”</p>
<p>Another way you know it is important because people want to take care of the statue.</p>	<p>In 1980, Lady Liberty looked old. People gave money to replace the rusty parts, clean inside and put in new elevators.</p>
<p>Most of all, the Statue of Liberty means a lot to people because it is an important reminder.</p>	<p>The article said that many people visit the statue because “it reminds us how good it is to be free.”</p>

Answers or use as a sort

<p>“It gives hope to everyone who dreams of freedom.”</p>	<p>This proves that it is important because people in other countries come here for a better life, jobs, and hopes for freedom and the statue greets them when they come into New York Harbor.</p>
<p>A French artist gave the statue as a gift to the United States.</p>	<p>This shows that the statue is important because it is a symbol of friendship between two countries.</p>
<p>In 1980, the people of the United States decided to repair the statue to make her look new again.</p>	<p>This proves the statue is important because if people didn't care about Lady Liberty, they would not have cleaned her up and put in a new elevator. They even had a party for her birthday!</p>
<p>Many people visit the statue.</p>	<p>The proves it is important because people wouldn't visit every year if she wasn't a reminder of freedom.</p>

When 12-year-old Milton Daub sees snow falling outside the window of his New York home, he has no idea that he is living through a historic storm. The Snow Walker is based on real events from the blizzard of 1888, one of the worst snowstorms in United States history. Read the story to find out what Milton does during the storm and answer the questions that follow.

from **The Snow Walker**

by Margaret K. and Charles M. Wetterer

Monday, March 12, 1888

- 1 Crack! The sound jolted Milton awake. A howling wind rattled the window. Milton jumped out of bed and pushed aside the curtains. A smile lit his face. Snow! Snow was everywhere. He saw that a giant branch had broken from the maple tree. Now wind was tossing it crazily across the yard.

The Snow Walker by Margaret K. and Charles M. Wetterer. Text copyright © 1996 by Carolrhoda Books. Illustrations copyright © 1996 by Mary O'Keefe Young. Reprinted by permission of Carolrhoda Books, a division of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2009/release/g3ela.pdf>

How did the snow make it difficult for Milton to get milk?

<p>One way the storm made it difficult was it was hard for Milton to see.</p>	<p>Gusts of wind scooped fallen snow and tossed it into the air and whiteness was swirling around him.</p>
<p>Also, the storm made it difficult because Milton didn't recognize things.</p>	<p>Everything looked different piled with snow everywhere.</p>
<p>Another way it was difficult because Milton couldn't find Mr. Ash's store.</p>	<p>The store's sign had blown away, snow covered the door and window.</p>
<p>It was also difficult because it was hard to walk.</p>	<p>Milton had to climb over drifts, some were hard as icebergs. It was slippery.</p>
<p>It was difficult because the weather was cold and hurt Milton.</p>	<p>His toes ached and the wind stung his nose and eyes.</p>

Add a specific detail from the story to prove the idea.

<p>One way the storm made it difficult was it was hard for Milton to see.</p>	
<p>Also, the storm made it difficult because Milton didn't recognize things.</p>	
<p>Another way it was difficult because Milton couldn't find Mr. Ash's store.</p>	
<p>It was also difficult because it was hard to walk.</p>	
<p>It was difficult because the weather was cold and hurt Milton.</p>	

Add an explaining sentence to each detail.

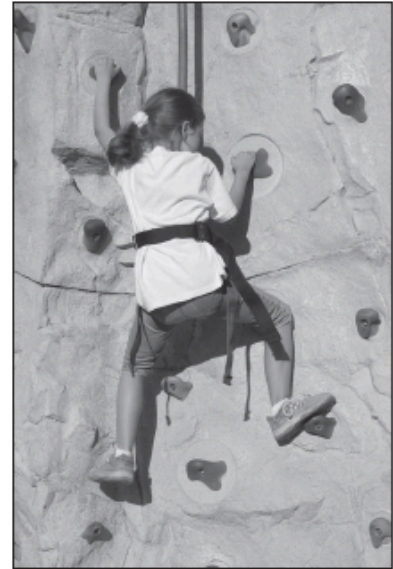
Gusts of wind scooped fallen snow and tossed it into the air and whiteness was swirling around him.	This shows that
Everything looked different piled with snow everywhere.	
Mr. Ash's sign had blown away, snow covered the door and window.	
Drifts were hard as icebergs. It was slippery.	
His toes ached and the wind stung his nose and eyes.	

Read the article about indoor rock climbing. Then answer the questions that follow.

YOU ROCK!

by Elizabeth L. Ward

- 1 You're high up in the air, facing a rock cliff. One chalky hand grips a piece of the cliff; the other slips into a crack. You wear climbing shoes and brace both feet against the surface.
- 2 Too busy to look down at the ground, you call, "Slack!"
- 3 Your partner feeds you more rope and calls back, "Climb on!"
- 4 "Climbing!" you shout, and pull yourself up the final few inches to the top. Now it's time to look down and enjoy the goose bumps. You're a rock jock.
- 5 An indoor rock jock, that is. You've just climbed a wall of mock rocks at an indoor climbing gym. It's one of many where kids like you hang on and hang out after school and on weekends. Brenna, 11 years old, first climbed at Prairie Walls Climbing Gym in Rochester, Minnesota, when she was 10.



BOULDERING

Bouldering, or ropeless climbing, is done close to the ground, always within

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2013/release/g4ela.pdf>

Explain what rock climbers can learn from climbing in indoor rock gyms.

Explain what rock climbers can learn from practicing at indoor rock gyms. Add relevant details or specific evidence or short quotes that support and explains these ideas.

<p>Indoor rock climbers can learn courage and self confidence.</p>	
<p>Also, climbers can learn to be strong.</p>	
<p>In addition to strength, practicing at indoor rock gyms gives you skills you can use outside the gym.</p>	
<p>Most importantly, practicing at rock gyms teaches you to depend on others.</p>	

<p>Indoor rock climbers can learn courage and self confidence.</p>	<p>One climber named Brenna said, "I have noticed that I can do a lot more than I think I can." Also, you can overcome your fear of heights.</p>
<p>Also, climbers can learn to be strong.</p>	<p>A climber named Andrew says, "It helps me with finger muscles." And bouldering without ropes develops muscles because it's just "you and the rock."</p>
<p>In addition to strength, practicing at indoor rock gyms gives you skills you can use outside the gym.</p>	<p>After climbing indoors, you can go outside and climb at places like the Black Hills in South Dakota. Also, you can learn to tie knots that you can use in other situations.</p>
<p>Most importantly, practicing at indoor rock gyms teaches you that you can depend on others.</p>	<p>Brenna says, "You need to trust your belayer." Trust is one of the most important lessons to learn in life!</p>

Explain what rock climbers can learn from practicing at indoor rock gyms. Add an explaining sentence to these specific details. "This shows/proves that..."

<p>A climber named Andrew says, "It helps me with finger muscles."</p>	<p>This shows that indoor rock climbing builds strength in even the small muscles!</p>
<p>One climber named Brenna said, "I have noticed that I can do a lot more than I think I can."</p>	<p>This proves the indoor rock climbing builds confidence. You learn that you can improve with practice.</p>
<p>Brenna says, "You need to trust your belayer."</p>	<p>This comment shows how indoor rock climbing teaches you to depend on others. Depending on someone to hold the ropes is a big step!</p>
<p>Bouldering is done close the ground without ropes.</p>	<p>This kind of climbing builds both courage and confidence because you have to trust your body. The article says "it's just you and the rock."</p>
<p>Brenna thinks that you have to overcome your fear of falling.</p>	<p>The friendly indoor instructors help you get over your fears.</p>
<p>After climbing indoor, you can go outside to places like the Black Hills.</p>	<p>This show how indoor rock climbing is helpful to build skills that you can use in other climbing situations.</p>

This poem is a conversation between a dog and a squirrel. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

Dog and *Squirrel*:
Steps
in a Flirtation

The bushy flick of your tail
catches my attention.

*I am aware of your presence,
but I am ignoring you.*

5 You are now my bull's-eye.
This will be a fine game.
*It may be a game,
but I set the rules.*

Whenever you lower your guard,
10 I step forward.
*I never lower my guard.
All escape routes are intact.*

My body is an arrow
pointing at your heart.
15 *O large clumsy one,
have you any idea how fast I can run?*

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2013/release/g5ela.pdf>

The question is, “How does the Squirrel Show Confidence?”.
Add a specific detail (evidence) to these ideas.

The squirrel shows confidence because she doesn't see the hunt as dangerous.

The squirrel also shows how confident she is because she knows he can get away easily.

The squirrel is confident because she doesn't think the dog is as fast or as skillful as she is.

The squirrel is so confident that she actually “flirts” with the dog.

The question is “How Does the Dog show Confidence?” Add an explaining/interpretive sentence to these details.

<p>The dog says, “My Body is an Arrow,” and later in the poem he adds, “You are my bulls-eye.”</p>	
<p>Another way the dog shows confidence is he says, “The space between us is nothing.”</p>	
<p>The dog even says that he can taste the silk of the squirrel’s tail.</p>	
<p>At the end of the poem the dog declares, “You can’t possibly get away now.”</p>	

Answers or use as a sort

<p>The dog says, "My Body is an Arrow," and later in the poem he adds, "You are my bulls-eye."</p>	<p>This proves that the dog is very confident because he uses a metaphor to compare himself to a speedy, deadly arrow and the squirrel to a target.</p>
<p>Also, dog shows confidence when he says, "The space between us is nothing."</p>	<p>When he says this the dog shows exaggerated confidence because there is obviously some space between them but the dog thinks he can cover it easily.</p>
<p>The dog even says that he can taste the silk of the squirrel's tail.</p>	<p>This is the classic counting your chickens before they are hatched type of confidence. The dog does not have the squirrel yet, but he can taste it and thinks the game is over.</p>
<p>At the end of the poem the dog declares, "You can't possibly get away now."</p>	<p>This shows the ultimate over-confidence of the dog. He thinks there is no way the squirrel can get away. But, the squirrel is gone!</p>

Answer or use as a sort

<p>In the beginning, the squirrel shows confidence because Arrow, and later in the poem she first sees the dog, she is not afraid. she is not afraid. bulls-eye.</p>	<p>In stanza 1, the squirrel says This proves that the dog is very she is "aware" of the dog but is confident because he uses a "ignoring" him. A squirrel metaphor to compare himself who was not confident would to a speedy, deadly arrow and run away in this situation. the squirrel to a target.</p>
<p>Also, the squirrel also shows how confident she is because when he says, "The space she knows she can get away between us is nothing. easily.</p>	<p>The squirrel says "she sets the When he says this the dogs rules" and she notes in line 12 shows exaggerated confidence "All escape routes are intact." because there is obviously some space between them but the dog thinks he can cover it easily.</p>
<p>One can see the squirrel is especially confident later in the poem, because she can taste the silk of the squirrel's tail. doesn't think the dog is as fast or as skillful as she is.</p>	<p>She says, "O large clumsy one, have you no idea how fast I can run?" (line 15). She is almost making fun of the dog. This is the classic counting your chickens before they are hatched type of confidence. The dog does not have the squirrel yet, but he can taste it</p>
<p>In the end, the squirrel is so confident that she actually "flirts" with the dog noticing At the end of the poem the dog declares, "You can't possibly get away now."</p>	<p>In line 19, she says, "Odd how and thinks the game is over. the sunlight kindles your dark fur." The squirrel seems This shows the ultimate over-entranced by the dog. She adds confidence of the dog. He in line 24, "Still, those eyes..." thinks there is no way the squirrel can get away. But, the dog again. Like boyfriend and girlfriend, the poem ends, "My heart pounds, see you tomorrow?"</p>

Fire can be destructive, but it also plays an important role in the life of our natural environment. Read the selection to find out more and answer the questions that follow.

*from **Fire: Friend or Foe**¹*
by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

ADAPTATION TO FIRE

- 1 **F**ire came to Earth long before living things, so it's no surprise that both plants and animals have ways of dealing with this powerful natural force. Living things are not helpless before fire.
- 2 Each kind of natural environment, or ecosystem, has its own rhythms with relationship to fire. While it's natural for grasslands to burn every few years, the lodgepole pine forests of Yellowstone National Park burn every 250 to 350 years.

Fire: Friend or Foe by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent. Copyright © 1998 by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Photograph 1 copyright © Hal Beral/CORBIS. Photograph 2 copyright © Scott T. Smith/CORBIS.

G5 MCAS 2013

Explain how fire can be both friend and foe.

<p>Fire is a friend to the ecosystem because after a fire there are new homes for birds.</p>	<p>Woodpeckers and bluebirds make nest holes in burned trees. Warblers like the varied landscape.</p>
<p>Another way fire is a friend to the environment is that the fire clears old dead trees.</p>	<p>It burns dead trees like lodgepole pines that lay on block the forest floor and make it hard for larger animals to get around.</p>
<p>Fire also helps forest life because it opens up the forest to sunlight.</p>	<p>The sunlight helps shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers grow with new light. These plants provide birds, insects, and grazers like elk nutritious new foods.</p>
<p>Interestingly, fire is good for some hunters and bad for some prey.</p>	<p>Hawks and coyotes feed on mice fleeing the fire, and birds feed on insects that must fly away from the fire.</p>
<p>However, fire does have bad effects on the forest because it destroys some animal homes and kills older trees that aren't adapted for fire.</p>	<p>Birds like goshawks need old growth trees to survive. Only some trees (like the lodgepole pine with serotinous cones and the thick-barked giant sequoia) can survive the fires.</p>

Imagine being on a plane high over New York City and finding out the engines have stopped working! You are too far away from the airport to go back and land. Read the article below to find out what happened to a jet airplane that had to make an emergency landing on the Hudson River.

Miracle on the Hudson

Based on an article from the newspaper, *USA Today*

January 15th was a clear, calm day in New York City-- a perfect day for flying. At 3:26 PM, a jet carrying 150 passengers left from LaGuardia Airport in New York on its way to South Carolina. Less than one minute into the flight, the plane ran into a flock of birds that caused the engines to stop working. With no time to go back to the airport, the quick thinking pilot, Chelsey "Sully" Sullenberger, made the decision to land the plane on the Hudson River. He glided it down carefully and landed on the water. The landing was so smooth that all of the 150 passengers and all five crew members were saved. Some didn't even get wet!

Safe water landings are extremely rare. Todd Curtis, a jet expert, said, "This is only the fourth time in history a pilot has purposely landed a jet plane on water." The jets usually flip over, crash, and then sink. In this case, even though the plane was going 125 miles per hour, the pilot landed it smoothly. Then, flight attendants helped passengers to remain calm and got them out onto the wings of the plane as it floated in the river. Rescuers arrived in boats and pulled the passengers to safety. The water was icy cold, but people stayed calm and worked together. It's amazing that no one drowned. New York's governor called it "a miracle on the Hudson."



Some of the 150 passengers and crew on the wings of the jet as they wait to be rescued

Based on the article, explain why was this landing called a “miracle.” Support your answer with important details from the article.

Sort **unimportant/ unexplained details** into one column and **important/explained** into another

January 15 th was a clear, calm day. It was a perfect day for flying.	The jet landed safely on the water which is very rare.
The jet was carrying 150 passengers. The plane was going to South Carolina.	Even though the water was icy, people remained calm and no one drowned.
Todd Curtis is a jet expert.	The plane was going 125 miles per hour but still it landed smoothly on the water.
This happened in January of 2009.	All 150 people were saved. Some people didn't even get wet!
The plane hit a flock of birds.	Jets usually flip over when they hit the water, but this one didn't.
The plane was going 125 miles per hour.	The pilot was quick thinking and he didn't try to land in the crowded city. He decided to go for the river.
The water was icy.	This is only the fourth time a jet has landed on the water on purpose. They usually flip, crash, and sink.
The governor called it a miracle on the Hudson.	Everyone helped. The rescuers, the pilots, flight attendants, and passengers all did a good job.
