

Mini-Lesson: Analyze Evidence (STAR – “A” Step)

Objective:

Students will learn how to explain why a quote or detail supports their answer, practicing analysis in their writing.

Duration:

20–25 minutes

Materials:

- Short text or article (can be nonfiction or fiction)
- Writing prompt (e.g., Why is perseverance an important trait?)
- “Evidence + Thinking” graphic organizer
- Sentence starters for analysis
- Sticky notes or index cards for group activity

Introduction (5 mins)

Start with this analogy:

“Finding evidence is like collecting puzzle pieces—but analyzing means fitting them together to show the big picture.”

Show two examples on the board:

- Quote only: The article says, “He never gave up, even when things were hard.”
- Quote + Analysis: This shows he had perseverance and kept trying, which helped him reach his goals.

Ask students: What’s the difference? Why does the second sentence feel stronger?

Explicit Modeling (5–7 mins)

Model using a STAR prompt:

Prompt: Why is perseverance important? Answer: Perseverance helps people succeed when they face challenges. Evidence: The article says, “He failed three times but kept working toward his dream.” Analysis: This proves that even after many failures, determination can lead to success.

Break it down:

-  Strong analysis connects evidence to the reason (T)
-  Ask: What is this quote really saying?

Share sentence starters:

- This shows that...
- This proves...
- This means...

- From this, we can understand that...

Guided Practice (10 mins)

Give students a short paragraph and prompt:

Why is teamwork important in school?

Students highlight a quote, then complete an “Evidence + Thinking” organizer:

Evidence	What It Means
“The group shared ideas and solved the problem faster.”	This shows that teamwork helps people work efficiently and learn from each other.

Students work in pairs to write their STAR “A” step, citing the quote and adding analysis.

Circulate and ask follow-up questions like:

- Why does this detail matter?
- How does it connect to the topic?

Wrap-Up (3–5 mins)

Challenge students to revise a sample STAR paragraph by improving the “A” sentence. Use a weak example:

The text says they worked together.

Ask them to build stronger analysis:

This shows that working as a team helps solve problems and builds trust between students.

Differentiation Tips

- Color-coding: Assign colors for Evidence (blue) and Analysis (green). Have students highlight each part of their writing before turning it in.
- Sentence Frames: Post them on desk tents or mini-bookmarks students can refer to during independent writing.
- Partner Talk: Let students orally rehearse their “A” step before writing it down. Sentence starters help scaffold academic language.
- Mentor Paragraphs: Provide a few annotated STAR examples that include strong and weak analysis. Discuss what makes the stronger ones more convincing.
- Sticky Note Warm-Up: Each student answers “What does this quote mean?” on a sticky note and posts it under an analysis anchor chart.

Mini-Lesson: Text Evidence Detective

Grade Level: 6–8 Focus Skill: Finding and citing evidence to support answers (STAR Strategy – “A” step)

Objective:

Students will identify relevant quotes or details from a text and cite them using sentence starters to support their written response.

Duration:

20–30 minutes

Materials:

- Short reading passage (e.g., a paragraph on honesty, trust, or a short story excerpt)
- Writing prompt: Why is honesty important?
- Detective-themed printables: magnifying glass cutouts, “Evidence Log” handouts, clue sticky notes
- STAR anchor chart displayed
- Sentence starter list for citing evidence
- Optional: clipboards, detective badges, props for flair

Lesson Plan Breakdown

1. Hook (5 mins)

“Today, we’re going undercover as detectives—but instead of solving mysteries, we’re hunting for clues that prove our answers are strong!”

- Show a detective-themed slide or hold up a magnifying glass.
- Briefly review the STAR strategy with emphasis on the A = Add Evidence step.

2. Modeling (5–7 mins)

- Read part of the passage aloud with the class. Highlight one clear quote: “Honesty helps people trust each other and build stronger relationships.”
- Show how to cite it using a sentence starter:
- Break it down:
 -  Clue: The quote itself
 -  Connection: This proves that honesty helps friendships grow stronger.

3. Guided Practice (10 mins)

- Students reread the passage in pairs or small teams.
- They record 1–2 quotes on their “Evidence Logs” using this structure:

Evidence Clue	Connection
“Honesty helps build trust.”	This shows honesty strengthens relationships.

-

Encourage using sentence starters:

- The passage states...
- In paragraph 2, it explains...
- According to the author...
- Circulate and confer—offer feedback on quote selection and clarity of connections.

4. Wrap-Up / Exit Ticket (5 mins)

- Students write a STAR-style mini-response to the prompt using one cited quote.
- Encourage them to underline the evidence sentence and mark it with a magnifying glass icon.

Example:

Honesty is important because it helps people trust one another. According to the passage, “Honesty helps build stronger relationships.” This shows that being honest helps create loyal friendships.

Differentiation & Support

- Struggling Writers: Pre-highlight strong quotes in the text; provide sentence frames with visual icons.
- ELLs: Use dual-language support or pictograms next to sentence starters.
- Advanced Writers: Invite paraphrasing or dual-source citation; challenge them to explain author’s tone or purpose behind the quote.

Sticky STAR Stations: Step-by-Step Teacher Guide

Objective

Help students **build one paragraph collaboratively** by rotating through stations that break the writing process into manageable steps. Each group contributes a piece of the STAR response, using sentence frames, visual icons, and color-coded materials.

Station Setup

Station	STAR Step	Symbol	Suggested Color	Materials Needed
#1	 Set Up	 Star	 Yellow	Sentence frames, sticky notes, anchor chart
#2	 Text Evidence	 Book	 Blue	Highlighters, quote strips, source text
#3	 Analyze	 Magnifying Glass	 Green	Sentence starters, analysis prompts

#4	 Restate	 Echo	 Orange	Restate frames, colorful pens, example posters
----	---	--	--	--

Student Experience Flow

Rotation Instructions:

1. Divide class into groups of 4–5 students.
2. Each group starts at one STAR station.
3. Give 5–8 minutes per station. Students collaborate to complete their assigned sentence or idea.
4. Groups rotate clockwise until every team contributes to all four parts.
5. At the end, each group reads their complete STAR paragraph aloud.

Station Tasks in Detail

Station 1: Set Up

- **Goal:** Create a strong, direct answer to a prompt.
- **Supports:**
 - “It is important to ___ because...”
 - “I believe ___ due to...”
- **Tips:**
 - Display the prompt at this station.
 - Let students use yellow sticky notes to draft multiple options.

Station 2: Text Evidence

- **Goal:** Add supporting details from a text or resource.
- **Supports:**
 - Provide excerpts or visuals.
 - Sentence frames like “For example...” or “The text states...”
- **Tips:**
 - Highlight possible quotes with blue markers.
 - Laminate quote cards students can choose from.

Station 3: Analyze

- **Goal:** Explain why the evidence is meaningful.
- **Supports:**
 - Frames: “This shows...” / “This means...”
 - Green “thought bubbles” or analysis templates
- **Tips:**
 - Offer examples of weak vs. strong analysis.

- Include peer feedback cards to build deeper ideas.

Station 4: Restate

- **Goal:** Wrap up the paragraph by repeating the answer in a new way.
- **Supports:**
 - “That’s why...” / “In conclusion...” / “Clearly...”
 - Orange cards or posters with restatement starters
- **Tips:**
 - Ask students to reword the Set Up sentence creatively.
 - Encourage dramatic reading or mini-presentations.

Final Activity: Class Share + Reflection

After each group completes a paragraph:

- Read aloud and celebrate contributions.
- Discuss which STAR step was hardest and why.
- Use exit tickets or journals for individual reflection:

1. “Restate Like a Reporter” Mini-Lesson

Objective: Students will restate a prompt as if reporting it in the news.

Setup:

- Display a prompt (e.g., *Why is teamwork important in school?*)
- Show a short video clip of a news anchor or play a mock recording for tone and format.

Activity:

Students pretend they’re news reporters introducing a story. They write or say their restated answer in a “news voice,” using prompts like:

- “*Breaking news: Teamwork is important because...*”
- “*Here’s why many believe teamwork matters in school...*”

Let them pair up and present their restated sentence in front of the class or record short videos using Flip.

 Extension: Compare the reporter-style restatement to formal academic writing—what changes?



2. “The Echo Game” Mini-Lesson

Objective: Students learn to “echo back” the question in their own words using a game format.

Setup:

- Create cards with writing prompts (e.g., *Why is it helpful to read directions first?*)
- Prepare sentence starters for restating.

Activity:

One student reads the card aloud, and another has 10 seconds to “echo” the question back with a restated opening sentence. Example:

- Student A: “*Why is it helpful to read directions first?*”
- Student B: “*Reading directions first is helpful because it prevents mistakes.*”

Make it competitive with points or badges—or play it as a timed classroom challenge with rotating partners.

 Tip: Let students act as judges and give feedback on clarity.



3. “Restate Remix” Mini-Lesson

Objective: Students practice rewriting the prompt using different tones (formal, humorous, persuasive).

Setup:

- Pick a familiar prompt (e.g., *Why should students take breaks during the school day?*)
- Model three versions:
 -  Formal: “*Students should take breaks during the school day because...*”
 -  Funny: “*Even brains need recess, which is why we take breaks!*”
 -  Persuasive: “*If you want better grades, take brain breaks—here’s why...*”

Activity:

Students choose their tone and restate the prompt in that style. Invite them to share and “remix” someone else’s version by changing the tone.

 Differentiation: Offer sentence frames based on tone; use visuals or emojis for support.



STAR Strategy with Reading Passages + Scaffolded Questions

1. Select the Right Text

Choose a passage that's:

- Short (½ page to 1 page)
- High-interest or tied to current class topics
- Rich in facts, opinions, or themes students can analyze

Examples:

- A short article about recycling, space exploration, or animal adaptations
- An excerpt from a novel where a character makes a key decision
- A paragraph from a science textbook with bolded vocabulary

2. Pre-Highlight Text Evidence (T Step)

Before handing out the text:

- Use **blue highlighter or underline tool** to mark 1–2 pieces of strong evidence
- Label them as “Possible Evidence” so students don’t get locked into only one option

 Why it works: Pre-highlighting focuses attention and supports the **Analyze** step, especially for students who struggle to locate relevant info.

3. Use a Scaffolded STAR Question Set

Pose one prompt and walk students through each STAR piece.

Example prompt: “**Why is recycling important?**”

STAR Step	Scaffolded Question	Sample Sentence Starter
 Set Up	What's your answer to the question?	“Recycling is important because...”
 Text Evidence	What fact from the passage supports your answer?	“For example, the passage says...”
 Analyze	Why does this fact matter? What does it show?	“This shows that...” or “This helps us understand...”
 Restate	How can you say your answer again in a new way?	“That’s why recycling helps the environment.”

 Tip: Put this chart in a worksheet or slide. Let students color-code their own responses as they go.

4. Differentiate with Support Tools

To support all learners:

- Provide fill-in-the-blank paragraph frames for beginners
- Offer sentence banks at writing stations
- Use peer STAR bookmarks so partners can coach each other
- Add visual icons (star, book, magnifying glass, echo) to make each step more memorable

5. Wrap Up with STAR Revision

After students write their STAR response:

- Ask them to reread their paragraph and label each sentence (S, T, A, R)
- Use colored pencils to highlight each step
- Have students explain one STAR part to a partner—this boosts metacognition and oral language