

TIQA Paragraph Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:
**Informational, Literary Analysis,
Constructed Response**

Grade Level:
Grades 6-12

Stage of Writing Supported:
Drafting and Revising

PURPOSE:

What does this strategy help students do?

TIQA helps students write well-structured paragraphs that include a clear topic sentence, relevant textual evidence, and thoughtful analysis.

Why is this strategy effective?

It breaks down paragraph writing into manageable steps, supports text-based writing, and encourages deeper thinking about evidence

T

Topic Sentence

What is the main idea or claim of my paragraph?

I

Introduce Evidence

Who or what is the source of the evidence?

Q

Quote or Paraphrase

What specific evidence supports my idea?

A

Analyze

How does this evidence support my topic sentence?
What does the evidence show or mean?

TIQA Strategy: Troubleshooting

STEP	ISSUE/ CHALLENGE	WHAT TO DO	HELPFUL PROMPTS
Topic	<p>Students write an answer that is too vague to sustain a strong paragraph.</p>	<p>Ask the student to be more specific. Remind students that the stronger their topic, the more interesting their paragraph will be to read and to write.</p> <p>Guide students through trying to write the paragraph and finding that there is no evidence because there is nothing to prove or that their analysis is weak because their topic is weak. Once they get to this point, you can have a discussion about how the topic provides the foundation for the whole paragraph.</p>	<p>“What else?”</p> <p>“How can we make that more specific?”</p> <p>“Does that topic fully answer the question?”</p> <p>“What about (specific part of question)?”</p> <p>“Is your topic strong enough that we could find evidence and explain how it supports the topic?”</p>
Introduction	<p>Students give credit to the author, rather than the speaker or character.</p>	<p>Re-read the quote and ask, “Who said this?” Discuss with students the reasons we give credit to the person who said something. If we give credit to the author, we are taking that credit away from the person who actually said the quote. When we say that an author of literature said something that the author had a character say, we might make people believe the author believed something that they did not.</p>	<p>“Who said the quote with their own mouth?”</p> <p>“Who deserves the credit for the quote?”</p> <p>“Did the author use the quote to represent their own beliefs or to show what someone else said or thought?”</p>
Quote	<p>Students select evidence that does not support the topic.</p>	<p>Use think-alouds to analyze unidentified student samples, emphasizing the need to choose quotes that directly support the topic, rather than just those that sound good or are short..</p>	<p>“Which quote best supports the topic sentence?”</p> <p>“How does this quote support the topic sentence?”</p> <p>“Would someone believe the topic sentence based on the quote?”</p>
Analysis	<p>Students rephrase the quote, rather than analyze it.</p>	<p>Provide sentence starters and model using think-alouds.</p>	<p>“How does the quote provide evidence for the topic sentence?”</p> <p>“How can you guide your reader to believe the topic sentence because of the quote?”</p>

TIQA Strategy: Adaptations

Use a graphic organizer with the letters TIQA.

Color-code the steps. Have students highlight the steps in paragraphs.

- T: Civic participation is important because a democracy only works when the people are involved.
- I: In his Inaugural Address, President John F. Kennedy compelled Americans to,
- Q: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”
- Analysis

Allow oral responses before writing. This will support students who need to talk through their ideas and those who learn from hearing others.

Provide a list of synonyms for the word “said” to help students with the I step. Every TIQA paragraph focuses on what someone said, either verbally or in writing, so this resource can be helpful as they learn to use vivid words.

Use high-interest texts or videos for evidence. (If using videos, be sure to turn on closed captioning and be prepared to move through the video and pause for students or give them access to do this themselves.

Once students master TIQA, introduce TIQATIQA with the second T standing for Transition. In TIQATIQA, students provide and analyze two pieces of evidence for the one topic sentence, connecting them with a transition sentence or a transition word or phrase.

TIQA Strategy: Case study

Helping Students Use Evidence in Civics with TIQA

Teacher: Ms. Elena Ramirez

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Subject: Social Studies – Civics

School: Jefferson Middle School

The Challenge

Ms. Ramirez had a thoughtful and curious group of seventh graders, but they struggled when it came to writing about what they read. Whether they were analyzing the Bill of Rights or reading about the responsibilities of citizenship, her students often gave vague answers and rarely supported their ideas with evidence from the text.

When asked, “Why is voting important in a democracy?”, students responded with answers like “Because it helps the country.” and “It’s something people should do.”

They weren’t wrong, but they weren’t showing deep understanding either. Ms. Ramirez realized her students needed a clear structure to help them move from general ideas to specific, supported claims.

Furthermore, they did not have strong reasons to support their answers. When Ms. Ramirez asked how voting helps the country, they answered, “Choosing a President” and “Voting is a right, so people should do it.”

Ms. Ramirez tried asking more how and why questions. She even gave students examples of strong answers and asked them to compare them to their own. However, they continued to struggle with supporting their answers with evidence.

The Strategy: Introducing TIQA

Ms. Ramirez decided to introduce the TIQA paragraph structure. She adapted it specifically for her civics class, with a focus on nonfiction texts and identifying the speaker when introducing quotes.

She told the students they were going to be writing TIQA paragraphs to answer questions and that she was excited to see how this would help them learn to justify their answers. She mentioned this would make them better able to convince people of their ideas and might even help them get their families to agree with them when they asked for privileges or convince their friends they are right when they get into an argument.

Ms. Ramirez explained that they would be using an acronym, a word that includes the first letter of other words, to help them remember how to build their paragraphs.

She displayed the format on the interactive screen and read through it with the class.

- T – Topic Sentence
- I – Introduce the Quote (Who is speaking?)
- Q – Quote (textual evidence)
- A – Analysis (explain how the quote supports your idea)

She also pointed out a colorful [anchor chart](#) she had posted on the wall.

TIQA Strategy: Case study

Modeling the Process

Next, she modeled the strategy using a short excerpt from President John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address. She focused on paragraphs 21-27.

After reading the excerpt aloud and pausing at the end of each paragraph for a brief discussion of what it meant, she showed a prompt on the interactive panel.

Prompt: Why is civic participation important in a democracy?

She then led a think-aloud as she typed the pieces of her TIQA paragraph (in italics) on the interactive screen.

"For T, I need to write my answer to the question. This will also be the topic sentence of my TIQA paragraph. To make it easy for myself, I can use some of the words from the question. The question asks why civic participation is important in a democracy. I can rearrange the words to create the first part of my topic sentence. T: Civic participation is important. Now I need to connect that part to the reason, so I will write because. I need to figure out why civic participation is important in a government of the people. Let me look back at the text we were reading. President Kennedy is talking about how being a part of democracy will help our country continue to be free and make the world a better place. I can write, a democracy only works when the people are involved. Now I have my whole topic sentence."

"According to our acronym, TIQA, I need to write the I next to introduce the quote. To do that, I need to first choose my quote. Looking again at the excerpt of the speech, I really like the quote about not asking what the country can do for people, but what we can do for the country. Let me find that. Oh, I see it in paragraph 25. Ok, to introduce the quote, I need to help the reader know who said the quote and anything else that helps them understand the circumstances or situation. I could write that John F. Kennedy said this, but I want to tell them when. I will start with the when, so the speaker's name is closer to the quote. He was giving his inaugural address at the ceremony where he became President. Being the President makes him credible or worthy of us believing him, so I will include his title. I don't want to write that he just said something. I need to think of a stronger word for how he spoke to tell people to do something. I can use the posters with synonyms for said or I could use a thesaurus. I will use the word 'compelled.' I would want to add a couple of words to connect to the quote. In his Inaugural Address, President John F. Kennedy compelled Americans to
"Now for my quote, I need to use quotation marks." "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

"This next part—Analyze—is the most powerful part of our whole strategy. I need to help my reader understand why I chose the quote I did and how it connects with my topic. This is where I show my thinking, so it will likely be a bit longer than the other parts of my TIQA paragraph. I'm going to start with the words, 'This inspiring line shows' to connect my analysis to the quote and emphasize what a strong quote it is. This inspiring line shows that democracy depends on people taking action and contributing to the common good, not just expecting the government to do everything for them. Since this is the most powerful part of my paragraph, I want to add a little more analysis. President Kennedy is inviting Americans to become involved by doing what they can, since the government and military cannot do everything the country needs.

Ms. Ramirez then read through her paragraph and asked the students to help her highlight each section on the interactive board. As she did so, she referenced the anchor chart on the wall and reminded students of the applicable colors.

TIQA Strategy: Case study

T: Civic participation is important because a democracy only works when the people are involved.

I: In his Inaugural Address, President John F. Kennedy compelled Americans to,

Q: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

A: This inspiring line shows that democracy depends on people taking action and contributing to the common good, not just expecting the government to do everything for them. President Kennedy is inviting Americans to become involved by doing what they can, since the government and military cannot do everything the country needs.

Ms. Ramirez closed her modeling lesson by saying, “Thank you for helping me check the paragraph. I think this is a strong answer to the question about why civic participation is important in a democracy. I used reliable evidence from the President and explained how it supported the answer that a democracy only works with the people’s involvement. We are going to keep using this strategy, and you will become experts at supporting your answers with evidence and analyzing that evidence.” Ms. Ramirez wrote a lot in the Analyze step because she knows her students will write less than she does. By aiming high, she expects they will write a short sentence or two, and that will be a great start.

Scaffolding with Practice

Over the next few days, Ms. Ramirez continued to think aloud and model creating TIQA paragraphs. On the third day, she had students suggest what she could write, and on the fourth day, she student volunteers write for the class on the interactive panel. She used short texts like the Preamble to the Constitution, Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, and excerpts from student-friendly articles on civic duties.

Student Application

Once students had practiced each part, Ms. Ramirez gave them a new prompt:

Prompt: Why is freedom of speech important in a democracy?

Using a short article from her curriculum about the First Amendment and a quote from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, students wrote their own TIQA paragraphs. One student wrote:

T: Freedom of speech is important because it allows people to express their opinions without fear.

I: Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said,

Q: “S speak one’s mind is the bedrock of our democracy.”

A: This means that people must be able to share ideas and disagree with the government in order for democracy to work.

Ms. Ramirez was thrilled. Her students were finally connecting ideas, citing credible sources, and explaining their thinking.

Reflection and Growth

By the end of the unit, Ms. Ramirez noticed a significant improvement in her students’ writing. They were more confident, more precise, and more thoughtful in their responses. She also saw them applying the TIQA structure in science, ELA, and even class discussions.

She reflected, “TIQA gave my students a voice. It helped them understand that their ideas matter—but they need to back them up.”

Publication Details

Contributors

Writing Classroom Development Team

What is the Writing Classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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