CHAPTER 1

The Role of Evidence in Reading, Writing, and Discussion

Watch Doug introduce the chapter at www.reading.org/ch1_intro or scan the QR code.

Marcus and his group members have completed their reading of the introduction of *10 Days: Abraham Lincoln* by David Colbert as part of a classwide study of the 16th President of the United States. Other groups read different books about Lincoln, such as *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman or *Lincoln: How Abraham Lincoln Ended Slavery in America* by Harold Holzer. Erin O'Malley met with each group, checking in on their reading and thinking. She asked Marcus's group to identify why Lincoln is seen as "the gold standard for a President, even today." Vincent answered first, saying, "Because of his ideas and vision for the country."

In the past, this correct answer would have been accepted, even without the student providing evidence to support his response. After all, the author says as much, just not in the same words. In too many classrooms of the past, correct answers did not require evidence; the teacher assumed that the student had evidence in mind. Unfortunately, student writing suggests otherwise. Far too often, students respond to writing prompts with no evidence in sight. It's recitation rather than reasoning.

When teachers do press for evidence, it's typically because the student has made an error or has a misconception. Too often, when a teacher asks a student for evidence, the student responds "Never mind," assuming he or she is wrong. This has to change. Students should not be surprised, or automatically think that they are wrong, when they are asked to supply evidence for their responses. Classrooms should be places in which evidence is expected. After all, it is expected in most other walks of life, from the courtroom to the boardroom, and lots of places in between.

Returning to the classroom learning about Lincoln, Ms. O'Malley knows that Vincent is on the right track. She also expects her students to supply evidence, in this case from the text itself. She asks the members of the group for evidence that supports or disputes Vincent's claim. Marcus answered, "Because it says right here that he helped create the world we now live in." Jennifer added, "The author says that he thought that the government should serve the people." Michael continued, "Yeah, it says that the government gets its power from the people, and we still think that today."

Making a Case for Evidence

Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind when you think of evidence is the kind that is presented in court. It is used to prove a claim and is often in the form of physical evidence or an eyewitness statement. The evidence may be circumstantial, which means that its presence can be explained in more than one way, or direct, and therefore in need of no further explanation. The jargon of the legal system punctuates our language: We speak of the *burden of proof*, and we turn to *expert witnesses* to help us with technical information.

Or maybe your orientation is of the scientific kind, and you consider evidence as the product of observation and experimentation. The scientific method requires that a hypothesis is proposed, and a fair test experiment is designed and implemented. The data are analyzed by the scientist, who draws conclusions that either support the hypothesis or show it to be false. The process itself is iterative in that proof of a false hypothesis guides the next round of inquiry.

Maybe neither of those orientations describes you at all. Perhaps you think of evidence in philosophical terms. You consider a claim ("It's the best movie of the year!") and consider the source (is it a friend with similar tastes, a respected film critic, or the movie's leading man?). You watch the trailer online and notice that the movie keeps coming up in conversations around you. Finally, you take a chance and decide to see it for yourself, knowing that you may or may not ultimately agree with the original claim but nonetheless acknowledge that the opinions of others are valid.

We've just described three kinds of evidence that are closely related but not identical to one another. Consider the legal example as the kind of evidence that builds an argument. The second, scientific evidence, rests on

factual information to explain a process. Meanwhile, the third tells a story that is subjective in nature and may or may not be credible to you.

These types of evidence parallel the text types students read and produce in written and verbal forms. The National Assessment of Educational Progress uses different terms to describe the kinds of writing that students do. They write to persuade, explain, and convey experience (National Assessment Governing Board, 2010). These text types map onto the first three standards for writing in the Common Core:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010a, p. 18)

You may be in a region where the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been adopted; even if you aren't, the requirement to use evidence in writing predates them by centuries. Students also produce these text types in discourse as they offer and listen for the use of evidence in classroom discussions.

Watch Kim Elliott talking about the use of evidence at www.reading.org/ ch1_evidence or scan the QR code.

What Are Text Types and Why Do They Matter?

Text types are not synonymous with genres. Genres are a method of classification, such as *nonfiction, mystery, autobiography, speech, essay, business letter, brochure,* and so on. They allow us to group texts by *external* characteristics (Lee, 2001). These categorizations are useful for teachers in discussing the style and form in which a text is written. Text types, on the other hand, describe the *internal* characteristics of a text, especially the purpose. A recipe is a genre, while its text type is to explain a procedure. A debate is a genre, while its text type is to argue a position.

A police report is a genre; its text type is to convey an experience (Lee, 2001). Many genres are a combination of two or more text types, which are mixed and matched in countless ways. We read, we write, and we converse by sharing anecdotes, trading information, and attempting to persuade others to our way of seeing the world.

Students become more proficient at using and combining text types as they learn about organizational structures. Consider how younger and older writers report an event. Sanders and Schilperoord (2006) explain that younger students tend to rely on an action-line structure; that is, they recount an episode in chronological order or list a set of facts, which is produced primarily from drawing on episodic memory (*First I went to the pond and I saw a frog on a lily pad. Then it hopped to another one.*). Older students begin to use property-line structures that draw together a set of characteristics drawn from associative memory (*The green frog had long legs and was tan and spotted on its belly. The lily pads on the pond were a shiny dark green and floated on the water's surface.*).

Each has its strengths: Action-line accounts tend to have a clear organizational structure but not much detail, while property-line accounts have more detail but may lack organization; the researchers liken the latter to brainstorming. More sophisticated speakers and writers intermingle both action-line and property-line structures. "Text structure and discourse coherence…are constituting principles of text; without them, texts would be nothing but a random set of utterances" (Sanders & Schilperoord, 2006, p. 387).

In other words, we organize events, ideas, and arguments in a coherent fashion for a purpose and to meet the needs of an audience. Whether spoken, read, or written, these are organized into three kinds of text types: we convey experiences, we inform and explain, and we persuade (National Assessment Governing Board, 2010). Occasionally, only one text type is used by a speaker or writer; more often, two or more are interleaved to relay a coherent set of ideas using both action-line and property-line structures. Knowing the elements of each assists students in recognizing their use in the texts they read, discuss, and produce.

Conveying Experience, Real or Imagined

Mention writing and most will immediately think of narrative genres, either fictional or biographical. Narrative writing is linked most closely

with novels, short stories, biography, autobiography, memoirs, and poems, as these genres usually consist entirely of one text type—conveying a real or imagined experience to the reader. However, this text type comprises a portion of so many other genres. For example, news accounts often begin by detailing the experience of an individual in order to put a human face on a widespread condition. Skilled writers are able to weave descriptions of the setting, the characters, their interior thoughts, and external dialogue in order to paint a vivid picture for the reader. Consider the opening paragraphs from *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* (Sheinkin, 2012):

> He had a few more minutes to destroy seventeen years of evidence.
>
> Still in his pajamas, Harry Gold raced around his cluttered bedroom, pulling out desk drawers, tossing boxes out of the closet, and yanking books from the shelves. He was horrified. Everywhere he looked were incriminating papers—a plane ticket stub, a secret report, a letter from a fellow spy.
>
> Gold ripped the paper to shreds, carried two fistfuls to the bathroom, shoved them into the toilet, and flushed. Then he ran back to his bedroom, grabbed the rest of the pile, and stumbled on slippers down the stairs to the cellar, where he pushed the stuff to the bottom of an overflowing garbage can.
>
> The doorbell rang. (p. 1)

Can you feel the anxiety as Harry Gold frantically tries to dispose of evidence of his spying? And who is at the door? The author uses a narrative text type to convey the real experience of the unassuming chemist who passed on information about the Manhattan Project to the Soviets. The short sentences, tight dependent clauses, and use of punctuation make our hearts race as Gold's must have in the moments before the FBI agents arrived. The writer begins his book by capturing a memorable moment that sets the stage for discussion about Robert Oppenheimer, the physics of nuclear weaponry, and the political intrigue that marked the Cold War era. Although the genre of the book is expository nonfiction, it is laced with narrative text type passages such as this. Importantly, this passage serves the purpose of providing evidence to the reader of the situation Gold would soon find himself in.

We use narrative text types to convey our experiences in discussion as well. The family raconteur entertains others with a story of the escapades of two young boys, now grown men, at a family picnic held

decades earlier. Nancy helps her grandchildren learn to make cookies by describing the way to gently stir the chocolate chips into the dough. Doug tells a story about a positive experience with a running shoe and uses it as evidence of his reasons for recommending the brand. We use narrative text types in our speech to entertain, inform, or persuade.

Characteristics of Narrative Text Types. Whether featured in a book, in a student's written work, or as part of a discussion, several elements mark this type of text as one that conveys an experience:

- Establish a context for the event, especially through the description of the setting, characters, and circumstances.
- Present the events using a logical sequence so the reader or listener can understand how it unfolds. Signal words and phrases are accurately used to help the reader or listener to understand the sequence and alert him or her when time shifts occur.
- Apply narrative techniques that suit the audience and the purpose, for instance using dialogue, moderating the pace, and furnishing descriptions that contribute to the reader's or listener's understanding of the event.
- Furnish a conclusion that matches the purpose of the narrative account so that the reader or listener can arrive at a similar conclusion.

Although these characteristics coincide with the Common Core writing standards, they are also helpful in considering how oral text is constructed, as well as how a reader understands a written text. Above all, effective speakers and writers construct narrative text when it aligns with the purpose, the audience, and the task. That is, it illustrates and illuminates a condition or idea by drawing on experiences that can be understood by others. Above all, it engages. As Ira Glass, host of NPR's radio show "This American Life," explains, the two building blocks of narrative are anecdotes that raise a question and moments of reflection to ponder them (watch the full interview at www.youtube.com/watch?v=loxJ3FtCJJA).

Learning About Narrative Text Types. In order for students to focus on how a writer crafts a text type, we ask students to engage in repeated

dictation of a short spoken or written passage, no more than one paragraph in length. We read the passage aloud again and again so that students can accurately transcribe the message or play an audio recording of the text. What we don't do is allow them to simply copy it from a written source. They need to *listen* closely to how the writer or speaker builds the anecdote and poses the opportunity for reflection. Take this narrative passage from the short story "Salvador, Late or Early" (Cisneros, 1991):

> Salvador with eyes the color of caterpillar, Salvador of the crooked hair and crooked teeth, Salvador whose name the teacher cannot remember, is a boy who is no one's friend, runs along somewhere in that vague direction where homes are the color of bad weather, lives behind a raw wood doorway, shakes the sleepy brothers awake, ties their shoes, combs their hair with water, feeds them milk and cornflakes from a tin cup in the dim dark of the morning. (p. 10)

The repeated dictation exercise helps students focus on the writer's descriptive language, but it also raises questions. What is "the color of bad weather"? Why doesn't the teacher remember his name? What does Cisneros achieve by constructing an 80-word sentence? We usually have students read the sentence aloud to one another so they can experience the sense of breathlessness that the character feels through his hurried day. We sometimes use this process as part of a close reading of a complex text in order to scaffold student understanding about how the structure of a text matches the author's or speaker's purpose. By examining craft, students can begin to apply similar techniques to their own writing and discussion.

Informing and Explaining

A second text type is explanation to convey information. This is a dominant text type in secondary and postsecondary education, as it is built on a foundation of accuracy. Teachers routinely require the use of explanatory text types in writing and discussion in order to assess the extent to which a student is knowledgeable about a topic. For example, we pose a question about the requirements for moving a bill through legislation, and the student replies using an explanatory text type. Speakers, readers, and writers must draw on what they know about a topic, and in some cases investigate it further to gain new knowledge.

A number of genres feature explanatory text, especially procedural documents and manuals, essays, and summaries. Many of the verbs we associate with Bloom's taxonomy describe this text type: students use it to define, identify, label, list, demonstrate, and examine ideas, events, and phenomena. Topics primarily consist of those that are found in the biological, physical, and social worlds, including those that address scientific, political, and literary concerns.

Accuracy is paramount, and therefore what is shared must be crafted in such a way that it is clear for the reader or listener and does not strategically omit information that can lead them astray. Consider the author's explanation of deafness in *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity*:

> More than a hundred genes for deafness have been identified, and another one seems to be picked up every month. Some kinds of deafness are caused by the interaction of multiple genes rather than a single one, and much deafness that occurs later in life is also genetic. At least 10 percent of our genes can affect hearing or ear structure, and other genes and environmental factors can determine how profound the deafness will be. About a fifth of genetic deafness is connected to dominant genes; the rest emerges when two carriers of recessive genes produce children together. (Solomon, 2012, pp. 60–61)

In these four sentences, the writer informs his readers about the complexity of congenital and acquired deafness, especially through his use of quantitative data to explain genetic expression and prevalence. But as is the case with so many informational texts, Solomon also uses narrative text types at other points in the book to spotlight families with a child who is deaf. These narrative and explanatory text types are interwoven to furnish evidence to support his main argument, namely that children who are unlike their parents face unique challenges in building identity.

Characteristics of Explanatory Text Types. We routinely use quantitative and qualitative evidence in explanatory text types by and arrange them in an order such that our audience (the listener or the reader) can understand them. These may be presented through discussion, as a visual display, or in written text. Explanatory text types require speakers and writers to do the following:

- Use accurate facts, provide examples, quote or paraphrase experts, and cite sources.

- Arrange these using one or more structures to compare and contrast, define and describe, link a cause to an effect, or propose a solution to a problem.

- Use language and vocabulary that matches the purpose, audience, and task, and signals when the speaker or writer is transitioning from one idea to the next.

- Provide a summary or conclusion to assist the listener or reader in retaining the information.

Learning About Explanatory Text Types. The issue of accuracy can be vexing for students, who often want to rely on what they already know (or think they know) rather than take the time to look at sources. "Oh *no*," they groan, "We have to do *research?*" Can't you just hear the collective whine as they slump down in their seats? We have frank discussions with students about the false sense of security that comes from believing you already know something, only to learn that (a) you were wrong, (b) you left out something really important, and (c) no one believes you. We have adapted an exercise suggested by McQuade and McQuade (2006) to make this point. We ask students to perform a simple task—to draw a penny from memory. "So *easy*," they think to themselves, and they happily draw away, delighted that they are doing something fun for a change instead of boring old English. After a few minutes, we pair them up to compare their drawings with others. "Wait a minute," they think to themselves, "how could that guy be so wrong?" Finally, we display the obverse and reverse sides (good vocabulary opportunity) of the coin on the document camera and ask them to write about the differences they observed between what they drew and the actual appearance. More importantly, we ask them to look for the moral of the story. Here's 10th grader Zenaida's response:

> I thought for sure I knew what a penny looked like! I've probably seen one every day of my life. I got the president right and I put a date on it, and I wrote "One Cent" on it. Boy, did I get it wrong! "One cent" is on the reverse. It says "In God We Trust" on the obverse, and the word "Liberty" is there, too. So here's what I think you want us to learn: Even when we're sure we know something, we have to do our fact checking.

Of course, one lesson in drawing a penny is not going to shift students' thinking about conducting research to prepare for discussions, reading, and writing. They have to be taught how to do it well and efficiently. But the use of evidence is elemental when seeking to explain and inform. It contributes mightily to voice and register as it aids in establishing a confident and authoritative tone. As we read and discuss complex text with students, we look for the organizational structures and methods writers use for presenting information. In turn, students use these same means to produce their own verbal and written products.

Watch Kim Dinh talking about the importance of students being able to produce explanatory texts with a stats example at www.reading.org/ch1_explanatory or scan the QR code.

Persuading and Arguing

The purpose of this third text type used in verbal and written text is to persuade others regarding a "point of view, to take action, or to accept… [an] explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010b, p. 23). The architects of the Common Core State Standards distinguish persuasive writing, such as the methods used in advertising and propaganda, from formal argumentation, as defined by Toulmin (1954). This model is used most often in secondary and postsecondary education to teach how a formal argument is crafted:

- *The claim* is the argument's conclusion you wish your listener or reader to agree with: *People with high blood pressure should make changes to their diet and activity levels to reduce the likelihood of heart attack or stroke.*
- *The grounds* include the facts, sources, and evidence that support your claim: *The Mayo Clinic states that high blood pressure over time damages arteries, the heart, and the brain. Lawes, Vander Hoorn, and Rodgers (2008) found that hypertension is responsible for over 7 million early deaths and 92 million disabilities.*
- *The warrant* links the grounds to the claim: *Lowered blood pressure among those who previously had high blood pressure lowered the rate of death for this group.*

- *The backing* is used to further support the warrant especially by invoking tradition, culture, history, or convention: *Although high blood pressure has been described as the "silent killer" because there are often no symptoms, public health campaigns have raised awareness and now more people than ever are being treated.*

- *The rebuttal,* sometimes called the *counterargument,* minimizes or dismisses claims that are in opposition to the one presented: *Long-term lifestyle changes are difficult to maintain, but with proper support can be successful.*

- *The qualifiers* limit the extent to which the claim should be applied: *When deemed necessary by a physician, statins should also be used. But their effectiveness is limited when no lifestyle change occurs.*

Figure 1.1 describes some of the differences between persuasive and argumentative texts.

In preparation for formal debates and essays, students can complete a table laying out their argument. This allows students and their teacher to examine the skeleton of the argument before all the other words obscure it from view. See Figure 1.2 for the argument graphic organizer 11th-grade student Yazmin completed to prepare for a debate in her health class.

Characteristics of Text Types That Argue a Position. The elements of argumentation are similar whether in oral or written forms:

- State a claim that is clear and address possible counterclaims.

- Cite evidence and examples to support the claim, using a structure that links the claim, the evidence, and the examples coherently.

- Remain objective as a speaker or writer and let the robustness of the reasoning used persuade listeners or readers.

- Use conclusions and summaries of evidence that allow the listener or reader to follow the line of reasoning.

Learning About Argument Text Types. We have found that classroom debates assist students in attending to the elements of argumentation. Debates are effective after students have closely read and discussed opposing pieces of text, often on a controversial issue. A debate is a problem task, requiring students to synthesize and analyze arguments

Figure 1.1 Differentiating Between Persuasion and Argument

The subtle, *but significant* differences between
Persuasive & Argumentative Writing

Persuasive Writing	V.	Argumentative Writing
The writer aims to get the reader to agree with him/his perspective.	**GOAL**	The writer aims to get the reader to accept his perspective/his side as truth.
Opinions are blended with facts, all in an attempt to convince the reader that the writer is "right."	**GENERAL TECHNIQUE**	Relevant reasons and credible data are blended to demonstrate the writer's argument as valid.
The writer needs an intended audience to address his request or need to. *Who can give him what he wants?*	**AUDIENCE**	To write an argument, the writer doesn't need an intended audience. The writer is satisfied with simply "putting the truth out there."
Since the writer is communicating directly to a person, group, or organization, it's common to use first-person (i.e., *I*) and second-person (i.e., *you*) point of view.	**POINT OF VIEW**	With no specific audience in mind, this more formal writing addresses the multiple sides of an issue using the more objective third-person point of view.
Persuasive writers "go after" their readers more aggressively. They consider the emotional strategy that will work best on their audience (e.g., manipulation, motivation, inspiration, etc.). Persuasive writing is personal, passionate, and emotional.	**ATTITUDE**	Argumentative writers maintain a tone of fairness and reasonableness. Their attitude is respectful, tactful, and formal.
Persuasion has a single-minded goal— *Get what the writer wants*. It is based on the writer's personal conviction that his way of thinking is the best. Consequently, the writer's viewpoint is typically the only one presented. (See the lopsided scales above.)	**PERSPECTIVES PRESENTED**	Argumentative writing acknowledges opposing views within a pro/con piece. (See the more balanced scales above.) This demonstrates the writer as a fair-minded person and gives him the opportunity to counter these perspectives with more logic, reasoning, and proof.
1. Pick a topic of interest. *(What do you want?)* 2. Choose a side to "fight" for. 3. Start writing.	**STARTING POINT**	1. Conduct initial research on a debatable topic. 2. Align with the strongest side. 3. Continue gathering facts and research.
Persuasive pieces rely almost solely on opinions and feelings. The writer uses his own passion and/or plays off reader emotions to get what he wants. The audience agrees with the writer because of strong emotional appeals.	**SUPPORT**	Arguments rely on logical reasons that are all substantiated by facts, data, expert quotes, and evidence. The audience agrees with the writer because of the strong logical appeals.

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Figure 1.2 Yazmin's Elements of Argument Graphic Organizer

Element	Definition	Example
Claim	The assertion one intends to establish	*Mandatory vaccination programs are necessary to protect the health of schoolchildren and the community at large. Those parents who raise moral, religious, and ethical objections should be required to meet with a physician to discuss the implications first.*
Ground	Sources and facts that support the claim	*Centers for Disease Control report a reduction in infectious diseases among populations with high vaccination rates. A herd immunity condition protects those who cannot be vaccinated.*
Warrant	The way in which the data and the claim are connected	*When vaccination rates have dropped, diseases like whooping cough and measles have rapidly risen. A mandatory vaccination program would reduce or eliminate these occurrences.*
Backing	Cultural beliefs and historical traditions that further support the claim	*Our society has a tradition of considering the common good when making decisions about the protection of an individual's rights and responsibilities. The common good is served when vaccination rates are high.*
Rebuttal	The circumstances under which the claim would not be true or right	*By making it easy for parents to decline vaccinations, the larger community is put at risk and the results can be disastrous.*
Qualification	Setting the limitations for the claim	*A small number of people should not be vaccinated due to a weakened immune system.*

across texts. Teams of four students are organized in either support or opposition to a proposition.

For instance, students in Hilda Alvarado's 10th-grade world history class debated several propositions related to their study of World War II. One team's assigned proposition stated that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was justified because it ended the war with Japan. Each team revisited readings from the textbook, primary source documents, and historical accounts to develop an initial presentation. Importantly, their preparation also included anticipating what the other team might argue. On the day of the debate, the teams followed the accompanying schedule, while audience members and the teacher judged the soundness of the arguments:

Round 1: Initial Presentations
- Five-minute position presentation in favor of the proposal.
- Five-minute position presentation in opposition to the proposal.
    - Five-minute work period for both teams to prepare rebuttals.

Round 2: Rebuttals
- Three-minute rebuttal from the pro team.
- Three-minute rebuttal from the con team.
    - Three-minute work period for both teams to prepare responses.

Round 3: Response to Rebuttals
- Two-minute response to rebuttal from pro team.
- Two-minute response to rebuttal from con team.
    - Two-minute work period for both teams to prepare for summary statements.

Round 4: Summary of Position
- One-minute summary of position in favor of the proposition.
- One-minute summary of position opposing the proposition.

When the teams concluded, Ms. Alvarado reminded her students that they should vote on the validity of the arguments, not on one's personal support or rejection of the proposal. The feedback from their peers and Ms. Alvarado prepared students for their formal argumentative essays on the topic, especially in considering opposing views and addressing them through evidence.

Watch Heather Anderson talking about teaching debate and the importance of using evidence at www.reading.org/ch1_debate or scan the QR code.

The Intersection of Text Types for Discussion, Reading, and Writing

Our communication is intentional—we communicate to convey experience and learn about the experiences of others, to gain or explain information, to persuade others and to in turn be inspired to adopt a different point

of view or be moved to take action. We can't parse our communicative lives according to speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing without losing the reciprocal and iterative effects that each has upon the other. Although the CCSS are categorized in this way, it is only to serve as a system of classification, not a syllabus for your course. Biological life doesn't exist as a taxonomy; birds live in the same biome as reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. The organizational structure of a taxonomy provides us with a common vocabulary for discussing a complex system. To continue the analogy, communication within the walls of the classroom is equally organic. The domains of the CCSS provide a way for us to talk about an equally complex system.

In similar fashion, the Core Standards for the English language arts intersect across text types. We use and combine these text types in a host of ways to achieve a purpose, fulfill a task, and communicate with an audience. A close look at the cross-cutting nature of the Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening standards reveals coherence across these domains. In Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, we have organized select standards according to text types to illuminate the integrated relationship between and among them. In addition, we have bolded key words and phrases that describe specific attributes of the text type.

The relationship between oral language, reading, and writing has been described by many researchers over the decades, but we especially like a phrase introduced by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982), which reminds us that as teachers we should always be moving students "from conversation to composition" (p. 1). Students need to read about and discuss at length complex texts that can be mined for ideas and information, provoke reflection, and persuade through reasoning and logic. As part of what occurs between conversation and composition, we instruct students on the ways others have skillfully blended text types to achieve their purposes. And we need to ensure that students have occasion to write. Michael Graves challenges us to keep our students "in a constant state of composition" (cited in National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003, p. 23). We do so by ensuring that we read, discuss, and write about texts—print, digital, multimedia. And in doing so, we show students how others use evidence, how they can locate evidence, and how they can use evidence in their own verbal and written communication.

Table 1.1 Intersection of Standards for Argument

	Anchor Standards for Reading for Argumentation
1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to **make logical inferences** from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking **to support conclusions drawn from the text.**
3	**Analyze how and why individuals**, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
8	**Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.**
9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to **compare the approaches the authors take.**
	Anchor Standards for Writing for Argumentation
1	**Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.**
9	**Draw evidence** from literary or informational **texts to support analysis,** reflection, and **research.**
10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audience.

Pivotal Speaking and Listening Standards for Argumentation

	Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening
1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3	**Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.**
4	**Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning** and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Note. Bolded standards make specific reference to elements of argumentation.

How Is Evidence Used?

The use of evidence is not confined to writing. Readers look for evidence, logic, and reason to comprehend the texts they consume. Whether literary or informational, these elements provide a structure for readers to follow. Similarly, meaningful discussion is propelled by the use of evidence.

Table 1.2 Intersection of Standards for Informing and Explaining

	Anchor Standards for Reading for Information
1	Read closely to **determine what the text says explicitly** and to make logical inferences from it; cite **specific textual evidence** when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2	**Determine central ideas** or themes of a text and analyze their development; **summarize the key supporting details and ideas**.
7	**Integrate** and evaluate **content** presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
9	**Analyze how two or more texts address similar** themes or **topics** in order to **build knowledge** or to compare the approaches the authors take.
10	**Read and comprehend** complex literary and **informational texts** independently and proficiently.
	Anchor Standards for Writing to Inform
2	**Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.**
7	**Conduct** short as well as more sustained **research projects** based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8	**Gather relevant information** from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9	**Draw evidence** from literary or informational **texts to support** analysis, reflection, and **research**.
10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audience.

Pivotal Speaking and Listening Standards for Informing and Explaining

	Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening
1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3	**Evaluate a speaker's** point of view, reasoning, and **use of evidence** and rhetoric.
4	**Present information, findings, and supporting evidence** such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Note. Bolded standards make specific reference to elements of information and explanation.

Table 1.3 Intersection of Standards for Narration

	Anchor Standards for Reading Narrative
1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2	**Determine** central ideas or **themes of a text and analyze their development;** summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
9	**Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes** or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
	Anchor Standards for Writing Narrative
3	**Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.**
10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audience.

Pivotal Speaking and Listening Skills for Narration

	Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening
1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3	**Evaluate a speaker's point of view,** reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
4	**Present information,** findings, and supporting evidence **such that listeners can follow** the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Note. Bolded standards make specific reference to elements of narration.

A student states a claim and adds, "Because." Another student talks about a text and points to the sentence that transformed his understanding. A team of students engaged in a debate use information to support a line of reasoning. The use of evidence allows readers and listeners to understand.

In writing and discussion, evidence is described in terms of the larger form of discourse known as rhetoric. Because rhetorical principles

matter, we ask young speakers and writers as they prepare: Who is your audience? What is your purpose? Rhetorical discourse provides a framework for telling a story to a theatergoer, explaining a procedure to an athlete, or persuading a listener on a podcast. According to Aristotle, rhetoric is "the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion." He described three main forms of rhetoric: *ethos, logos,* and *pathos* (see Table 1.4):

- *Ethos*—Appeal based on the character of the speaker
- *Logos*—Appeal based on logic or reason
- *Pathos*—Appeal based on emotion

These appeals can be found in narrative, explanatory, and argument writing. Although "persuasive writing" is at times narrowly defined in some curricula, in truth virtually all writing is persuasive. In narrative writing, you are persuading the reader that a character's actions are plausible. Good explanatory writing is valued for its clarity and logical sequence of ideas. And of course argumentation writing relies on formal reasoning and logic. These same appeals are used in discussion in and out of the classroom.

Speakers and writers use an amalgam of appeals in order to persuade. Consider the remarks of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who on the night of April 4, 1968, had to deliver the terrible news to a crowd that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated. His aides feared there would be

Table 1.4 Types of Appeals

Ethos	Logos	Pathos
• Language appropriate to audience and subject • Restrained, sincere, fair-minded presentation • Appropriate level of vocabulary	• Theoretical, abstract language • Literal and historical analogies • Definitions • Factual data and statistics • Quotations • Citations from experts and authorities • Informed opinions	• Vivid, concrete language • Emotionally loaded language • Connotative meanings • Emotional examples • Vivid descriptions • Narratives of emotional events • Emotional tone • Figurative language

a riot. But his impromptu speech used appeals of pathos in the form of empathy (Kennedy, 1968):

> For those of you who are Black—considering the evidence evidently is that there were White people who were responsible—you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge.

As well, his speech contained appeals of logos, using the work of the assassinated leader to reason:

> We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization—Black people amongst Blacks, and White amongst Whites, filled with hatred toward one another. Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand, and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand, compassion, and love.

Most memorably of all, he used the appeal of ethos, which links the speaker's credibility to the message. Robert Kennedy, who had rarely spoken publicly of his brother's death at the hand of an assassin, told the crowd:

> For those of you who are Black and are tempted to fill with—be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all White people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a White man.

He ended this six-minute speech with a message that contained elements of all three:

> But the vast majority of White people and the vast majority of Black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings that abide in our land. And let's dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world. Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people.

It's improbable that any of us will ever say anything that is that is still quoted more than 40 years later. But we all say and write things that influence our students, colleagues, and families. Our audience may differ from the one Kennedy addressed, but the need to tailor the message to the listener or reader remains. Consider a meeting Doug had with members

of a ninth-grade team at a high school. Doug had been asked to work with the school because of low achievement and graduation rates. An analysis of the data illuminated several serious problems. Chief among them was the fact that 67% of the ninth graders at this school carried at least one F from the first marking period. When confronted with this data (*evidence*), the team went on the defense. "They come to us underprepared," one said. "We can't fight the effects of poverty on their learning," said another. "They just don't care," said a third.

Doug wanted teachers to commit to working with students and one another to build a positive school culture. He used an ethos appeal first, describing two successful students who had turned their academic lives around in a culture of caring (*evidence*). He moved on to a logos appeal, citing the research on increased student dropout rates among those with failing grades in the first months of high school (*evidence*). Using a pathos appeal, he reminded them of their commitment to education and asked them why they had chosen teaching as a profession (*evidence*). He concluded with another logos appeal, presenting a detailed plan used successfully at our high school to build a culture of achievement (*evidence*). It's hard to say which appeal did the trick; in all likelihood they affected each member differently. But in the end the team agreed that taking action was necessary. With that, the team settled in for the deeper discussion on how to make it work.

The Audience Shapes the Use of Evidence

Effective speakers and writers use evidence that matters to their audience. The match between audience and evidence is essential for communicating a message. Even the most humble messages are elevated when the audience and evidence align. Writer and high school English teacher Frank McCourt (2006) wrote about his experiences in the classroom in *Teacher Man: A Memoir*, admitting that in the early years of his career he was routinely disappointed by his students' lack of effort, as well as his own. He wrote of the day he reread their excuse notes piled up in a desk drawer:

> While my classes took a test that day I began to read notes I'd only glanced at before. I made two piles, one for the genuine notes written by mothers, the other for forgeries. The second was the larger pile, with writing that ranged from imaginative to lunatic.

I was having an epiphany. I always wondered what an epiphany would be like and now I knew. I wondered also why I'd never had this particular epiphany before.

Isn't it remarkable, I thought, how they resist any kind of writing assignment in class or at home. They whine and say they're busy and it's hard putting 200 words together on any subject. But when they forge these excuse notes, they're brilliant. Why? I have a drawer full of excuse notes that could be turned into anthology of Great American Excuses or Great American Lies. The drawer was filled with samples of American talent never mentioned in song, story or study. (McCourt, 2006, pp. 84–85)

Inspired by their forged notes, McCourt created a new series of writing assignments for his students—excuse notes from the famous and infamous. Excuse notes from Adam and Eve, from Al Capone. He even asked them to write an excuse note from the perspective of the parent of a teenager who is failing English. This creative writing assignment sparked students' interest, and they wrote with zeal.

But here's another analysis of the assignment. While McCourt says that he was simply attempting to engage his students in something— anything—we see also that this great writer was teaching them about the importance of the audience. Without an audience, speaking and writing wither. After all, why produce anything at all if no one is listening? When we teach about audience, we should also be talking about how understanding your listener or reader shapes the selection of evidence. We'll return to Doug's meeting with the ninth-grade team. He subsequently met with school administrators and the parent-teacher organization. In each case, his selection of evidence was influenced by the audience. The administrative team was interested in the nuts and bolts, while the parent-teacher organization wanted information on how it could support and extend the initiative. What's at work here is more than persuasion, at least the way it's conventionally taught. We've already stated that almost all communication is persuasive. What all effective communicators understand is how to match the audience with the evidence that will resonate with them.

Using Evidence Begins With Reading, and Lots of It

Texts underpin the use of evidence in discussion and writing. Students who are not widely read are constrained by the limited amount of text

they have consumed and therefore have less evidence at the ready. We use the word *texts* as an umbrella term to describe the many sources of information available. At the forefront are those print and digital texts that convey experience, inform or explain, or argue a position. More broadly, the term includes networked information and communication technologies (ICT), which have had a growing influence on literacy instruction for 15 years. At the turn of the 21st century, Leu and Kinzer (2000) noted "rapid changes in ICT repeatedly alter the nature of literacy" (p. 117). This statement has become only more apparent in the ensuing years as ICT have taken on primacy in our own professional and true lives. In the same way that we use ICT to remain informed and current, so too must our students.

Texts, both print and digital, drive evidence. Some are seemingly timeless, as when consulting the writings of Galileo Galilei. However, even 500-year-old documents can be understood anew in light of more recent events, as when the Roman Catholic Church issued a 1992 declaration of apology for its opposition to his work. Access to a wide range of texts allows students to build knowledge. That in turn equips them with a growing storehouse of information and ideas to be used as evidence in discussion and writing.

The practice of using evidence in writing begins with learning how to use textual evidence in discussion. Close reading of complex texts builds the critical thinking habits necessary for students to move beyond a surface-level examination in order to locate its underlying structure and meaning (Fisher & Frey, 2013). The questions we pose to students about text determine whether they will dive deeper or skim the surface. For example, consider the following two questions that could be asked of readers studying the Declaration of Independence:

1. If you were present at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, what would you do?
2. What are the reasons listed in the preamble for supporting the authors' argument to separate from Great Britain?

The first question, perhaps an attempt to focus on the ethical decisions of the founding fathers, does not actually require that students read the document to respond. That's not to suggest that these types of questions are never asked, but rather that they are often asked prematurely, before

a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the text has taken place. In order to gain that deeper understanding of the text, students are asked a number of questions that ensure their careful attention to it and what the author(s) offered.

The second question requires that students carefully consider the information presented in the text and provide evidence from the text in their responses. In addition, questions like this create a stronger conceptual foundation from which students can support their answers with specificity and detail. Knowing what you would do in a similar circumstance is vital, but making a difficult ethical decision requires knowing a great deal about the circumstances. The intent of such text-dependent questions during close reading is to build that foundation so that students can eventually answer the former using critical thinking, not just vague and unsupported claims.

Watch students engaged in discussion based on text-dependent questions at www.reading.org/ch1_questions or scan the QR code.

Close reading, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, scaffolds the habit of using evidence in several important ways:

- Supports deep comprehension by explicitly locating the textual evidence under discussion
- Slows the reader down in order to continuously engage with the author
- Promotes intellectual discourse
- Teaches students how writers use evidence
- Builds awareness of what their audiences need from them as speakers and writers

In other words, close reading helps to develop students' abilities to regularly apply the habits of critical thinking. But discussion of complex texts should not be limited to regurgitation and recitation of the text in front of them. It is necessary, but not sufficient, to form a literal understanding of the text. But without analysis, debate, evaluation, and interpretation, *Moby-Dick* is nothing more than a hunt for a white whale.

With the habit of locating evidence in texts comes an appreciation of what their own readers and listeners require of them. Close reading gets students "paying attention to the decisions a writer makes" (Newkirk, 2011, p. 2). They witness how skilled writers incorporate statistics and visual displays of quantitative information into informational and argumentative text types. Students discover how well-constructed summaries help readers frame their understanding of a complex text. They notice how characters, plot points, and details are interwoven to form a cohesive fabric of story. They can even learn how and why direct quotations are used, whether in support of a stance, to capture a memorable turn of phrase, or to separate one's own position from that of another writer (Spatt, 2011). Depending on the discipline, they may also be learning to consider the source of information.

Considering the Source of the Evidence

Wineburg's (1991) comparative study of the cognitive practices of high school history students and historians found that one practice in particular separated the two groups: the ability to source the information in order to properly contextualize what was being read. Sourcing is fundamental for historical interpretation and analysis, as it can expose the bias of the writer. Closely related to sourcing is corroboration; that is, whether the account of a historical event is anecdotal or can be validated through other sources. Although the concepts of sourcing and corroboration are associated with historical thinking, they can be applied to the use of evidence in other disciplines as well.

Students across the disciplines find themselves reading primary sources of information written close to the time in which an event occurred. In history, these include newspaper articles, letters and diaries, maps, and other documents that are first-hand accounts. Secondary sources are those that were developed after the event in question, where the author had no direct knowledge. These can include biographies of deceased individuals and films of historical events. Tertiary sources are those that are compiled, such as history textbooks. The sciences define these somewhat differently, with published research accounting for primary sources, reviews and commentary composing secondary sources, and reference and textbooks considered tertiary.

More broadly, we try to get students to regularly analyze sources, be they primary or tertiary, using a framework for thinking through the sources of evidence they use. The CARS framework, developed by Harris (2010), is useful for considering information provided (see Table 1.5). Although Harris developed CARS with Internet sources in mind, we have found it to be equally sound for discussing print sources.

Similarly, Zhang, Duke, and Jiménez (2011) developed a system for teaching students to think about sources of information. Like Harris, they focused on Internet sources, and we have found it to be useful with a wide range of print and digital texts. Also like Harris, they use a mnemonic, but theirs is WWWDOT, in which students are taught to think about:

- *W*ho wrote this and what credentials do they have?
- *W*hy was it written?
- *W*hen was it written and updated?
- *D*oes this help meet my needs (and how)?
- *O*rganization of website?
- *T*o-do list for the future (such as finding additional sources, corroborating information with other sources, asking questions of others, or sharing information with family members or friends).

Table 1.5 Summary of the CARS Checklist for Research Source Evaluation

Credibility	Trustworthy source, author's credentials, evidence of quality control, known or respected authority, organizational support. Goal: an authoritative source, a source that supplies some good evidence that allows you to trust it.
Accuracy	Up-to-date, factual, detailed, exact, comprehensive, audience and purpose reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy. Goal: a source that is correct today (not yesterday), a source that gives the whole truth.
Reasonableness	Fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, no conflict of interest, absence of fallacies or slanted tone. Goal: a source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably, concerned with the truth.
Support	Listed sources, contact information, available corroboration, claims supported, documentation supplied. Goal: a source that provides convincing evidence for the claims made, a source you can triangulate (find at least two other sources that support it).

Note. From "Evaluating Internet Research Sources," by R. Harris, 2010, *VirtualSalt.* Retrieved from www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm. Reprinted with permission.

Conclusion

It isn't enough to routinely settle for an answer without evidence, any more than it would be expected that a student could write a research paper without using credible sources. Yet students often have little practice in furnishing evidence outside of formal written assignments. One barrier to student use of evidence is that they have limited practice in seeing how evidence is used in discussion and in the texts they read. A focus on text types—narrative, informational, and argumentative—provides students with a means for noticing how skilled speakers and writers use evidence. That intersection of literacies, especially speaking, reading, and writing, can further build students' capacity to locate and use evidence for a variety of purposes. In the next chapter, we explore how close reading can be leveraged to teach students about the use of evidence.