

# REASONS AND EVIDENCE: HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS POINTS

**RI.5.8. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).**

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## CONTENTS

### TEACHER NOTES

A brief discussion describing the progression depicted in the Learning Map Tool documents with research-based recommendations for focusing instruction to foster student learning.

### LEARNING MAP TOOL

An overview of the standards, the learning map, and the nodes addressed in the lesson set.

### INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR LESSONS 1–3

Detailed walkthroughs of each lesson.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

A worksheet that gives students an opportunity to independently practice the skills from the lessons, intended to be completed following the lesson set.

### PASSAGE

A passage that accompanies the Student Activity.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

A feedback tool to use with the independent Student Activity.

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# REASONS AND EVIDENCE: HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS POINTS

## TEACHER NOTES

RI.5.8, Lessons 1–3

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### UNIT SUMMARY

In these lessons, students begin to determine what the author thinks is most important by using discourse and inquiry to find the main points in a text. Then students learn how an author structures a text with key points, reasons, and evidence and work together to decide how the author supports the specific points in a text.

**Lesson 1:** This lesson begins with an overview of text features found in informational texts. Then students brainstorm about the author’s purpose in an informational passage and the class collaborates to discover the text’s main point.

**Lesson 2:** This lesson opens with a discussion of points, reasons, and evidence and how they relate to the author’s purpose. Next, the class labels these elements in a paragraph to create a model text. Then students collaborate in small groups to identify the point, reasons, and evidence from a paragraph in the Lesson 1 text.

**Lesson 3:** In this lesson, student pairs take turns explaining to each other how the author uses reasons and evidence to support the point of one paragraph from a new text. Students summarize their partners’ explanations and then create a one-sentence summary of the author’s use of points, reasons, and evidence.

As students proceed through the activities of collaboration and inquiry, they progress from identifying main points to explaining how an author develops points with specific support and describing how a reason or piece of evidence is related to the point the author is making.

### Research Findings

When classroom instruction centers around active learning that supports students using metacognition and discourse, students move from declarative knowledge to having the ability to reason and reflect on what they are learning.  
(Duschl & Osborne, 2002)

### Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities

Throughout the unit, students learn to explain their thinking about how an author develops an informational text with key points, reasons, and evidence. Notetaking, class discussions, and small-group collaboration help students construct their own knowledge about a text.

<p>Creating a classroom of inquiry focused on identification and analysis of text will give students more hands-on learning experiences than the traditional reading-for-comprehension approach.</p> <p>(Leland &amp; Bruzas, 2014)</p>	<p>In these lessons, students practice deconstructing informational texts to identify the points and their supporting reasons and evidence.</p>
<p>When students are collaborating with their peers and the teacher, they cultivate higher-order thinking, which increases motivation and achievement.</p> <p>(Brookhart, 2010)</p>	<p>These lessons include activities that foster an environment where students listen respectfully to one another as well as to the teacher. Every student is encouraged to express their ideas and participate in interpreting the text.</p>

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# REASONS AND EVIDENCE: HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS POINTS

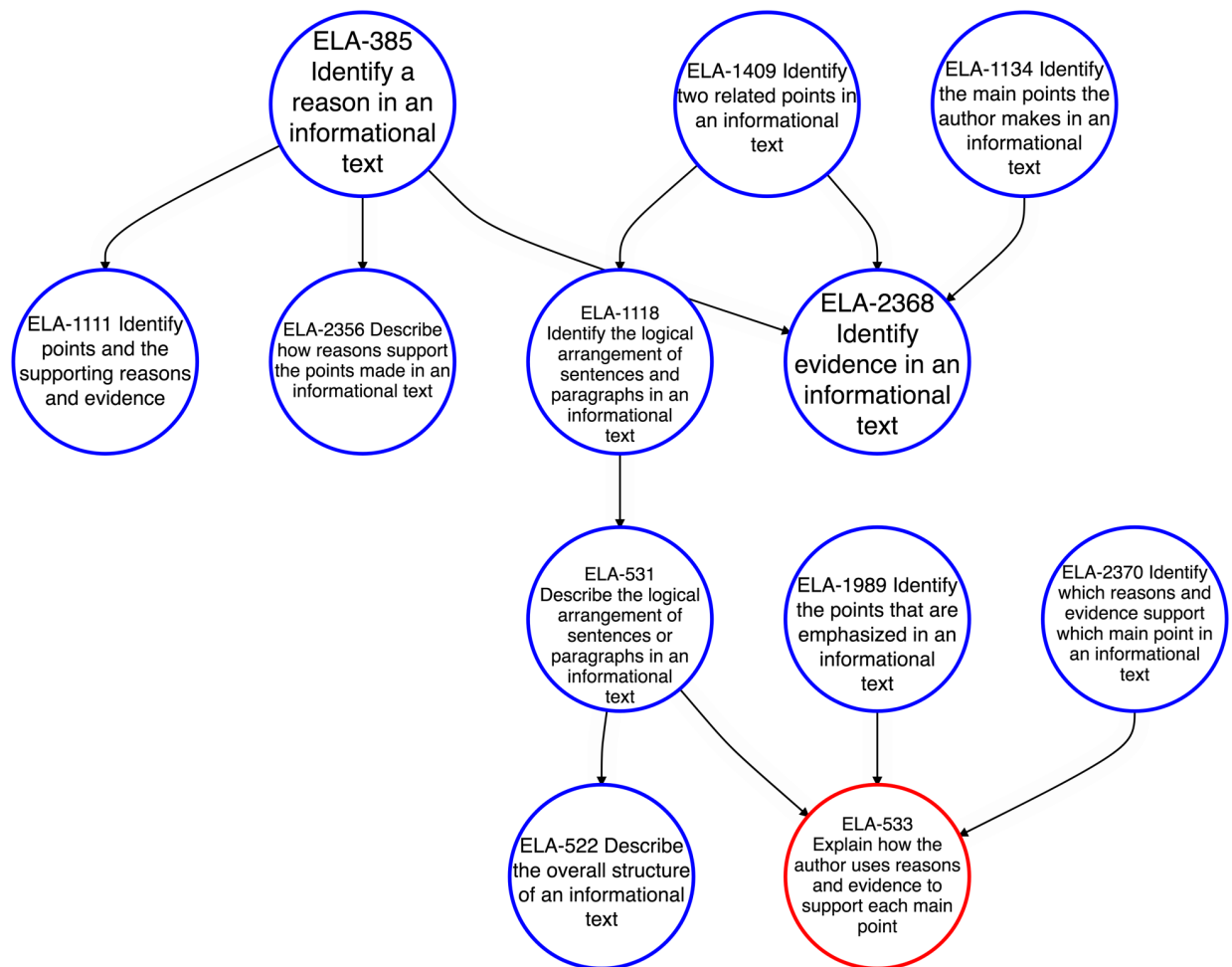
## LEARNING MAP TOOL

RI.5.8

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### STANDARD

**RI 5.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).



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*\*Learning map model for RI.5.8.*

Node ID	Node Name	Node Description
ELA-385	IDENTIFY A REASON IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify a reason used by an author of an informational text to support a point made about a topic.
ELA-522	DESCRIBE THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF INFORMATIONAL TEXTS	Describe the overall text structure (for example, procedural, description, compare and contrast, cause and effect, or problem and solution) used in an informational text to communicate the relationships between the information.
ELA-531	DESCRIBE THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SENTENCES OR PARAGRAPHS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe how specific sentences or paragraphs in an informational text are logically linked (for example, comparison, cause and effect, and sequence relationships).
ELA-533	EXPLAIN HOW THE AUTHOR USES REASONS AND EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT EACH MAIN POINT	Explain how the author supports each point made in an informational text by providing reasons and evidence relevant to that specific point.
ELA-1111	IDENTIFY POINTS AND THE SUPPORTING REASONS AND EVIDENCE	Identify points and both reasons and evidence (examples) an author uses in an informational text.
ELA-1118	IDENTIFY THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Determine how specific points made by an author in an informational text relate to the reasons supporting the points.
ELA-1134	IDENTIFY THE MAIN POINTS THE AUTHOR MAKES IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Determine which of the points that the author makes in an informational text are the most important.
ELA-1409	IDENTIFY TWO RELATED POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Find two points made by an author of an informational text that relate to each other.
ELA-1989	IDENTIFY THE POINTS THAT ARE EMPHASIZED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Determine the points that the author of an informational text considers important and emphasizes.
ELA-2356	DESCRIBE HOW THE REASONS SUPPORT THE SPECIFIC POINTS MADE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe how the author of an informational text supports the specific points he or she makes by providing specific reasons.
ELA-2368	IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify evidence which provides indirect factual support for a point made in an informational text. (At this time, readers may be unable to identify the points which the evidence directly supports.)
ELA-2370	IDENTIFY WHICH REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT WHICH MAIN POINT IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Determine how specific main points are supported by specific reasons and evidence in an informational text.

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# FINDING A MAIN POINT

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.5.8, Lesson 1

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn how to identify and explain what points an author makes and why they are important to the structure of an informational text.

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### STANDARD

**RI.5.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select a short science or social studies informational text. The text should have several paragraphs with strong points, reasons, and evidence.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ informational text
- ▶ paper for an anchor chart
- ▶ notebook paper

Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can find and explain the most important points an author makes in an informational text.”

**Review** the elements of an informational text and the structure of a paragraph. Be sure to point out the significant text features used in science and social studies texts. Explain that certain features will help determine what the author is saying. For example, bold words, boxes, charts, and graphs show what the author thinks is important. Also remind students that an author has a purpose for writing a text, and the purpose helps the author establish the main points about the topic.

**Pass out** the informational text to each student. **Read** the text aloud while students follow along.

**Ask** students to turn to a neighbor or think-pair-share partner and verbally summarize what the article is about and why the author chose to write this piece. **Call on** pairs to share what they have discussed with the class.

**Tell** students to draw a star next to the most important point in the text. **Ask** them to provide support for their answer in the margin next to the point.

In whatever order you prefer, **ask** each student to share the point they identified as the most important point and to explain their choice. **Record** every answer on an anchor chart, providing encouragement that all thoughts are valid and worth recording. If students repeat a point, place a hash mark next to the point. Most students will select points the author makes, but some may select reasons or evidence. **Ask** the Checking for Understanding questions as students share.

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if the student can **IDENTIFY THE MAIN POINTS THE AUTHOR MAKES IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-1134)**:

- ▶ How does this idea connect to the topic of the article?

After every student has shared, **analyze** the responses on the anchor chart with the class and **emphasize** patterns in student thinking. If students are coming up with mostly reasons or evidence, review paragraph structure and text features. **Use** the Checking for Understanding questions as a guide.

### CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if the student can **DESCRIBE THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SENTENCES OR PARAGRAPHS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-531)**:

- ▶ Are any of the responses evidence instead of the main point?

Determine if the student is ready to **DESCRIBE THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF INFORMATIONAL TEXTS (ELA-522)**:

- ▶ How can you tell the difference between a main point and a piece of evidence or reason?

To close the lesson, **instruct** students to take out a piece of paper and complete the following sentence: At first I thought the main point was \_\_\_\_\_; now I think the main point is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Collect** the responses to evaluate students' understanding before the next lesson.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.



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# IDENTIFYING PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.5.8, Lesson 2

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn how points shape the structure of an informational text and that specific points have reasons and evidence that support them.

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### STANDARD

**RI.5.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, create sentence strips from the text used in Lesson 1. Using a large font, re-type the text so that the main point and each reason and piece of evidence appear on a separate line. Number each excerpt according to the paragraph it appears in. (If the excerpt comes from the first paragraph, place a 1 at the top; if the excerpt is in the second paragraph, place a 2, and so on.) Cut the strips apart and mix them, so that they are no longer in sequence.

Also identify an informational paragraph with a clear structure of main point, reasons, and evidence. Prepare to display the paragraph for the class.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ informational paragraph
- ▶ sentence strips of the Lesson 1 text
- ▶ note cards or sticky notes

Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

## IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can explain how the author uses reasons and evidence to support points in the text.”

**Review** what the students discussed about main points in the previous lesson. **Describe** how the text structure created by the main point, reasons, and evidence presents and supports the author’s ideas about a subject.

If students are not familiar with reasons and evidence, provide definitions and examples.

- ▶ A point is a main idea that the author includes about a topic.
- ▶ A reason is a supporting idea or detail that is related to the main idea or point.
- ▶ Evidence is an example that supports the main idea or point. Evidence is concrete; it is a fact not an opinion.

**Display** the paragraph.

As a class, **label** the main point and the reasons and evidence in the paragraph. **Explain** that the students can use this paragraph as an example during the lesson.

**Pass out** the sentence strips. **Direct** students to find the other students whose strips have the same number. **Explain** that the strips for each group form a paragraph of the last lesson’s text.

**Direct** students to take turns reading their excerpt aloud to their group. After the group members have read their strips, each student will determine if their excerpt is a main point, a reason, or a piece of evidence. Next, the groups will determine the order of the sentences in the paragraph based on the structure in the model paragraph.

As students work, **walk around** and **ask** questions to check for understanding.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
<p>Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY A REASON IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-385):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How does this reason support the topic? Explain. Tell me more.</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can to <b>IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2368):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What does this piece of evidence show about the topic? How?</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-1118):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How do you know that the sentences are in the correct order?</li></ul>

To close the lesson, ask students to respond to the following question on a note card or sticky note: How does your paragraph relate to the main topic of this article?

**Collect** and review the responses.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

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# HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT POINTS

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.5.8, Lesson 3

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn to explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support the main points of an informational text.

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### STANDARD

**RI.5.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select a new informational text on a science or social studies topic similar to the topic in the Lesson 1 text. Make sure the text has clear points, reasons, and evidence. Arrange to display the text for the class. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ informational text, displayed
  - ▶ notebook paper
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support the main points of a text.”

To review paragraph structure, **ask** students to recall the parts of an informational paragraph. **Remind** students that the point is the main idea of the paragraph. A reason is a detail that adds more information to the main idea. Evidence is true information that supports the main idea of the paragraph.

**Read** the text aloud to the class.

**Divide** students into pairs. **Assign** a paragraph from the text to each pair. Some of the paragraphs may be repeated; just make sure groups with the same paragraphs are separated enough to not easily overhear each other's conversations.

**Provide** instructions for the activity. Student 1 will act as the "teacher," using reasons and evidence to explain how the author develops the main point in the assigned paragraph. Student 2 will be the "learner" and will write a one-sentence summary of the most important thing that Student 1 says. After that, the students will switch roles. Student 2 will become the "teacher" while Student 1 writes a one-sentence summary of what is most important from Student 2's explanation.

**Ask** students to read their assigned paragraph again and determine how the author uses reasons and evidence to support the main idea. Give the students five minutes to develop their "lesson." Have them write ideas of what they want to say to their partner on blank paper.

**Direct** Student 1 to begin to "teach" their partner. After a few minutes, **give** Student 2 the opportunity to repeat what the "teacher" said and ask if the summary is correct. Then **direct** Student 2 to be the "teacher" using what they originally wrote down during the five-minute preparation. After Student 2 "teaches," **have** Student 1 share her or his notes and ask if that is what Student 2 said.

Throughout the activity, **circulate** and **ask** the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING	
Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY THE POINTS AND THE SUPPORTING REASONS AND EVIDENCE (ELA-1111)</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How is the reason related to the main point?</li><li>▶ How does the evidence support the main point?</li></ul>	Determine if the student is ready to <b>IDENTIFY THE POINTS THAT ARE EMPHASIZED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-1989)</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Which ideas does the author think are the most important?</li></ul>

After the pairs have shared and exchanged notes with one another, **instruct** them to write a one-sentence summary of how the author develops the main point with reasons and evidence.

**Direct** pairs to share with each other their one-sentence summaries.

While students are working, **circulate** and **ask** the Checking for Understanding questions.

To close the lesson, **ask** students to share their one-sentence summaries with the class. **Point out** students that clearly explain how the author develops a main point using reasons and evidence.

**Ask** students to give a fist to five fingers to show how well they understand the author's use of reasons and evidence in the assigned paragraph (a fist represents no understanding and five fingers represent full understanding). If students struggled with this lesson, repeat the process with just one paragraph as a class and have the strongest pairs of student "teachers" explain their thinking to the class as a model.

For further practice, have students complete the [STUDENT ACTIVITY](#) with the provided passage and student feedback guide.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

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## HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS A POINT

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

RI.5.8

**Directions:** Read the passage, *Recycling*. Then complete the handout.

Write the sentence that shows

#### **The Main Point**

#### **A Reason**

Explain how this reason is connected to the main point.

#### **A Piece Of Evidence**

Explain why the author uses this specific piece of evidence.

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## STUDENT ACTIVITY PASSAGE

### **Recycling**

by Harmony Hanson

Human activity affects the health of our environment. Every day, people make choices that either benefit or harm Earth. Recycling is one way that many people choose to improve the health of our environment. Benefiting the Earth through recycling is becoming more convenient than ever. Many communities include recycling centers that offer curbside pickup or drop-off stations for recyclable materials. Tossing metal, like soda cans, into the recycling bin may have the largest impact when it comes to recycling. Metal recycling saves more energy, water, and greenhouse gas emissions than any other type of recycling. Even small decisions, like using the recycling bin instead of the garbage can, have a significant effect on the world in which we live.

#### Bibliography:

*Environmental Benefits of Recycling*. Sydney South, Australia: Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/warrlocal/100058-benefits-of-recycling.pdf>.



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# HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS A POINT

## STUDENT ACTIVITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

RI.5.8

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### 1. THE MAIN POINT

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#### CORRECT ANSWER

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Recycling is one way that many people choose to improve the health of our environment.

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#### ERRORS, MISCONCEPTIONS, AND MISSING KNOWLEDGE

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Example Error	Misconception	Missing Knowledge
Human activity affects the health of our environment.	does not understand the difference between the topic and the main point of the text	IDENTIFY THE MAIN POINTS THE AUTHOR MAKES IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT
Metal recycling saves more energy, water, and greenhouse gas emissions than any other type of recycling.	does not understand the difference between a point and evidence	IDENTIFY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POINTS AND THE REASONS AND EXAMPLES SUPPORTING THEM IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT

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### 2. A REASON

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#### POSSIBLE CORRECT ANSWER

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Benefiting the Earth through recycling is becoming more convenient than ever.

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## ERRORS, MISCONCEPTIONS, AND MISSING KNOWLEDGE

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Example Error	Misconception	Missing Knowledge
Many communities include recycling centers that offer curbside pickup or drop-off stations for recyclable materials.	does not understand the difference between reasons and evidence	IDENTIFY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIFIC POINTS AND REASONS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT

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### 3. A PIECE OF EVIDENCE

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## CORRECT ANSWER

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Sentences will vary. Possible responses include the following:

Many communities include recycling centers that offer curbside pickup or drop-off stations for recyclable materials.

Tossing metal, like soda cans, into the recycling bin may have the largest impact when it comes to recycling.

Metal recycling saves more energy, water, and greenhouse gas emissions than any other type of recycling.

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## ERRORS, MISCONCEPTIONS, AND MISSING KNOWLEDGE

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Example Error	Misconception	Missing Knowledge
Student selects another reason instead of evidence.	does not understand the difference between reason, point, and evidence	IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT

See the chart below for ways to expand this lesson set.

If students struggle to. . .	Provide students with. . .	Ask these types of questions. . .	Use these texts and topics. . .
IDENTIFY A POINT MADE BY THE AUTHOR IN A FAMILIAR TEXT	an informational text that contains a clear five-paragraph structure	What is the first/second/third point the author makes about the topic?	a science or social studies article on one topic, such as honeybees
DESCRIBE THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF INFORMATIONAL TEXTS	a generic outline of an expository essay to fill in as they read	Which elements can you name in the structure of this article?  Which elements are repeated in each paragraph?	speeches that explain one idea, such as global warming or pollution
DESCRIBE THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF SENTENCES OR PARAGRAPHS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	an informational paragraph in which students can find similar sentences about the same main point	What patterns do you see in how the paragraph is structured?	informational science articles
IDENTIFY THE KEY POINTS THE AUTHOR MAKES IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	a graphic organizer like a brace map that explains a part-to-whole relationship to help students see the overall connection to the author's purpose	What is the purpose of the article?  What ideas help support that purpose?  Is there a pattern to where those points are located in the paragraph?	literary nonfiction or expository texts
IDENTIFY TWO RELATED POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	a Venn diagram or double bubble organizer that shows a relationship between the main points	What ideas are repeated in the text?  How are the repeated ideas explained?  What evidence or reason supports that particular point?	expository texts that explain how something works or its connections and relationships