

# EXPLAINING HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT POINTS

**RI.4.8. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.**

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# EXPLAINING HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT POINTS

## TEACHER NOTES

RI.4.8, Lessons 1–3

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### UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit, students learn to explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support specific points in an informational text. As students proceed through the lessons, they will progress from identifying reasons and evidence related to a given point for a specific topic to identifying a point, reasons, and evidence in an informational text. Students will learn to identify the relationship between a point, reasons, and evidence and to explain how reasons and evidence support a point made in the text.

**Lesson 1:** In this lesson, students review the difference between a point, a reason, and a piece of evidence. The class will discuss the difference between an opinion, such as a point, and a fact, such as a piece of evidence. Students learn that a reason supports a point and a piece of evidence provides factual support for a reason. You demonstrate the relationships in an informational paragraph by brainstorming points, reasons, and evidence related to a familiar topic. Then students practice generating their own points, reasons, and evidence about the topic.

**Lesson 2:** This lesson extends students' understanding of points, reasons, and evidence to informational text. Students identify the point in a paragraph and locate reasons and evidence to support the point in the text and images.

**Lesson 3:** This lesson gives students the opportunity to practice identifying points, reasons, and evidence with a new informational text. Students also learn to describe how the reasons and evidence support the paragraph's point.

Throughout the lessons, students will gain experience in identifying points, reasons, and evidence and in determining and describing the relationship between a point and its supporting reasons and evidence in a text.

Research Findings	Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities
<p>Authors use individual points to provide the foundation for their claims on a topic. The point is typically in the main idea position of a paragraph, usually the first sentence.</p> <p>(Chambliss, 1995)</p> <p>To understand a point and its supporting material in argumentative texts, readers must first be able to differentiate between facts and opinions.</p> <p>(Wallace, Hand, &amp; Yang, 2004)</p>	<p>In Lesson 1, students gain understanding that a point is the author's opinion on the text's topic.</p>
<p>Fourth grade students have difficulty identifying text structure and thus typically recall information from these elements as a list of details.</p> <p>(Coté, Goldman, &amp; Saul, 1998)</p> <p>When students gain the ability to identify text structure, they use the text structure to better comprehend the information.</p> <p>(Chambliss &amp; Murphy, 2010)</p> <p>Effective strategies for teaching about argumentative texts focus on analyzing text structure.</p> <p>(Meyer, Brandt, &amp; Bluth, 1980; Meyer &amp; Freedle, 1984; Meyer &amp; Rice, 1982)</p>	<p>Throughout the unit, students deconstruct text to understand how points, reasons, and evidence in an informational paragraph are related.</p>
<p>To understand the structure of an informational paragraph, readers need to locate the factual evidence and reasons in the text.</p> <p>(Wallace, Hand, &amp; Yang, 2004)</p>	<p>In Lessons 2 and 3, students identify the reasons and evidence that support a paragraph's point.</p>

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# IDENTIFYING POINTS, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE RELATED TO A TOPIC

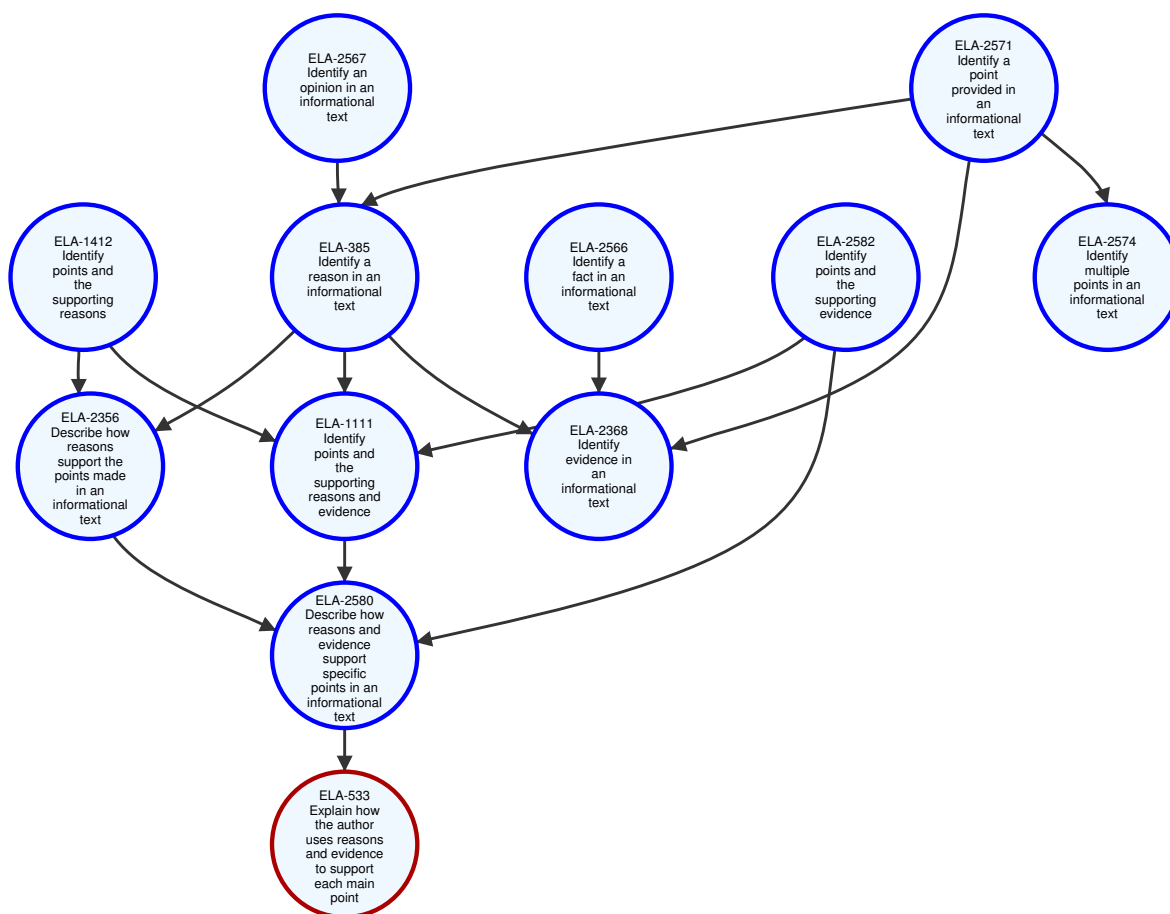
## LEARNING MAP TOOL

RI.4.8

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.



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*\* A section of the learning map model for RI.4.8.*

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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-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-1412	IDENTIFY POINTS AND THE SUPPORTING REASONS	Identify points the supporting reasons made by an author in an informational text.
ELA-2356	DESCRIBE HOW REASONS SUPPORT THE POINTS MADE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe how the author of an informational text supports specific points by providing specific reasons.
ELA-2368	IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify evidence that provides indirect factual support for a point made in an informational text. (At this time, students may be unable to identify the point the evidence directly supports.)
ELA-2566	IDENTIFY A FACT IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify a fact in an informational text that relates to the topic of the text.
ELA-2567	IDENTIFY AN OPINION IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify an opinion in an informational text that relates to the topic of the text.
ELA-2571	IDENTIFY A POINT PROVIDED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify the author's point related to a specific topic in an informational text. For example, in an informational text, identifying that removing vending machines from school is the author's point.
ELA-2574	IDENTIFY MULTIPLE POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify the multiple related points an author makes in an informational text.
ELA-2580	DESCRIBE HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT SPECIFIC POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Describe how reasons and evidence combine to support specific points in an informational text.
ELA-2582	IDENTIFY POINTS AND THE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	Identify points and the supporting evidence (examples) made by an author in an informational text.

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# IDENTIFYING POINTS, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE RELATED TO A TOPIC

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.8, Lesson 1

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn how to identify a point and relevant reasons and evidence.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, identify two topics that are familiar to your students, for example, honeybees, dress codes, or whether schools should increase the length of recess. Both topics must have at least two sides from which they can be viewed. For each topic, prepare a list of reasons and evidence supporting each side.

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### HANDOUTS & MATERIALS

- ▶ list of reasons and evidence supporting different viewpoints of two familiar topics
  - ▶ whiteboard
  - ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: REASONS AND EVIDENCE](#)
  - ▶ notebook paper
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify points, evidence, and reasons related to a topic.”

**Review** the difference between points, reasons, and evidence.

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- ▶ A *point* is a main idea or a person's opinion on a topic (for example, The United States should continue to explore space).
- ▶ A *reason* is what a person uses to justify or explain a point (for example, There is a possibility of life on other planets).
- ▶ *Evidence* is relevant information, facts, or details that a person uses to support reasons related to a point (for example, Astronomers have identified planets that are similar to Earth).

**Introduce** the first selected topic by writing it on the board. **Provide** a short summary of the topic.

**Draw** a T-chart below the topic name, and **write** a main point related to the topic above each column.

**Explain** how each point is a main idea or an opinion on the topic and how the two points are different from each other.

**Model** the process of producing a reason related to one of the points, and **explain** how the reason supports the point. **Write** the reason in the appropriate column of the T-chart.

**Ask** students to volunteer reasons supporting each of the points. When a student volunteers a reason, **pose questions** such as “Which point does this reason support?” and “How does this reason support the point?” **Write** each reason in the appropriate column.

After enough reasons have been collected, **model** the process of producing evidence. **Explain** how evidence is based on facts, how facts differ from opinions, and how evidence supports reasons. **Write** the piece of evidence next to the reason it supports.

**Ask** students to volunteer evidence supporting the identified reasons. When a student volunteers evidence, **pose questions** such as “How does this evidence support the reason?” **Write** each piece of evidence next to the appropriate reason.

**Introduce** the second selected topic by writing it on the board. **Provide** a short summary of the topic.

**Ask** students to identify points which could be made about the topic. **Write** the points on the board.

**Model** producing a reason and a piece of evidence that support one of the points. **Write** the reason and evidence next to the point on the board.

**Group** students in pairs, and **pass out** the [STUDENT HANDOUT: REASONS AND EVIDENCE](#).

**Direct** student pairs to choose one of the points and to write the topic and their selected point on the first page of the handout. Next, students will write down three reasons and three pieces of evidence that support the point they chose.

**Circulate** and check for understanding as students write reasons and evidence.



CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
<p>Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY A POINT PROVIDED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2571)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What is a point someone could make on this topic?</li> </ul>	<p>Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY A REASON IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-385)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What is a reason someone could use to support the point on this topic?</li> </ul>	<p>Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2368)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What is a piece of evidence someone could use to provide a fact to support this reason?</li> </ul>

When the activity is over, **ask** student pairs to share the point they used and to provide the reasons and evidence they used to support it. **Discuss** how the reasons justify the point while the evidence provides a factual foundation for the reasons.

As students share, **facilitate** a class discussion by asking the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING
<p>Determine if students can <b>DESCRIBE HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT SPECIFIC POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2580)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How do your reasons and evidence relate to the point?</li> <li>▶ How do your reasons and pieces of evidence support the point?</li> </ul>

To close the lesson, have students write on an exit slip an explanation of points, reasons, and evidence and how they are different from one another. **Collect** the exit slip and the handouts.

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

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## REASONS AND EVIDENCE

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Point: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Reasons	Supporting Evidence
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

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# IDENTIFYING POINTS, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE IN TEXTS WITH GRAPHICS

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.8, Lesson 2

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn to identify a point in an informational text and to explain how the reasons and evidence in the text, including graphs, charts, and illustrations, support the point.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, identify three separate informational paragraphs that include graphics or illustrations from science or social studies texts that are familiar to your students. Each paragraph should present a single point and have reasons and evidence that support the point. Prepare to display the paragraphs with their graphics. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS

- ▶ three paragraphs with images, displayed
  - ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: REASONS AND EVIDENCE IN TEXT AND GRAPHICS](#)
  - ▶ sticky note for each student
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify points, evidence, and reasons in informational texts that include graphics.”

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First, **review** the difference between points, reasons, and evidence.

**Explain** that today you will examine how images in an informational text help support the point the author is trying to make. Images in a text can be graphics, charts, or illustrations.

**Group** students in pairs or small groups. **Display** the paragraphs and assign one to each group. Each group should work with a different paragraph from those nearest them. **Pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: REASONS AND EVIDENCE IN TEXT AND GRAPHICS](#) to each student.

**Ask** students to read the paragraph and write down the point of the paragraph at the top of the handout. Next, **direct** groups to discuss what reasons or evidence in the paragraph support the point, including details in the image. **Instruct** students to write three reasons and three pieces of evidence from the text and image that support the point.

**Circulate** and check for understanding as groups discuss and write the point, reasons, and evidence.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY A POINT PROVIDED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2571):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What point does this paragraph make?</li></ul>	Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY A REASON IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-385):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Why does the author use this image to support the point?</li></ul>	Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2368):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What evidence does the author include in this image to provide factual support for the reason?</li></ul>

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NOTE: To extend the activity, have groups repeat the exercise with a second paragraph.

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When the activity is over, **call on** students to state the point made in their paragraph and the reasons and evidence supporting it. **Ask** them to explain how the graphic, chart, or illustration supports the point. As students share, **facilitate** a discussion by asking the Checking for Understanding questions.

## CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if students can **DESCRIBE HOW REASONS SUPPORT THE POINTS MADE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2356)**:

- ▶ What reasons and evidence support the point made in the paragraph?

Determine if students can **DESCRIBE HOW REASONS AND EVIDENCE SUPPORT SPECIFIC POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2580)**:

- ▶ How does the image support the paragraph's point?

To close the lesson, **hand out** a sticky note to each student. **Instruct** students to write one question for the author based on the information they read today. Then **ask** students to place the sticky notes on chart paper or the whiteboard. **Share** some of the questions with the class as a reflection.

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

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## REASONS AND EVIDENCE IN TEXT AND GRAPHICS

### STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 2

Point: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Reasons	Supporting Evidence
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

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# IDENTIFYING POINTS, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE IN INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RI.4.8, Lesson 3

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students learn how to identify multiple points, reasons, and evidence in informational texts and to explain how the reasons and evidence support specific points.

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### STANDARD

**RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, identify three consecutive informational paragraphs from science or social studies content. Each paragraph should present one explicitly stated point in its first sentence, and the three points should combine to form a main point. Each paragraph should contain several reasons and pieces of 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

- ▶ three paragraphs from an informational text, displayed
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS A POINT](#)
- ▶ whiteboard
- ▶ notebook paper

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## IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify multiple points in an informational text and the reasons and evidence that support the points.”

**Explain** how informational texts include multiple points on the topic and how these points combine into a main point.

**Group** students in pairs. **Display** the text and **assign** one of the paragraphs to each group. Then **pass out** the [STUDENT HANDOUT: HOW AN AUTHOR SUPPORTS A POINT](#) to each student.

**Explain** that students will become “text experts” on their paragraph. **Ask** pairs to discuss and write their paragraph’s point, reasons, and evidence on the handout.

Next, **pair** each group with another group. **Direct** each partner team to explain their findings to the other team of students. The listening group will give feedback on whether the “text experts” explained the point, reasons, and evidence clearly. **Instruct** both groups to take turns sharing; then rotate pairs so that each group of students hears from at least two pairs of “text experts.”

**Walk around** and **ask** the Checking for Understanding questions as students discuss.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY MULTIPLE POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2574):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How is this point similar to the others in the text?</li></ul>	Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY A REASON IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-385):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What is a reason the author uses to support the point in the text?</li></ul>	Determine if students can <b>IDENTIFY EVIDENCE IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2368):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What evidence does the author use to provide support for each point in the text?</li></ul>

**Ask** for volunteer pairs to share out the point, reasons, and evidence in their paragraph. On the board, **collect** a list of the points students identified for each paragraph. **Ask** students to explain the similarities in what they wrote on the handout and what they heard from other pairs.

As pairs share, **facilitate** a discussion by asking the Checking for Understanding questions.



## CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if students can  
**IDENTIFY A POINT PROVIDED IN  
AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-  
2571):**

- ▶ What is the main point of the text?

Determine if students can  
**DESCRIBE HOW REASONS AND  
EVIDENCE SUPPORT SPECIFIC  
POINTS IN AN INFORMATIONAL  
TEXT (ELA-2580):**

- ▶ How are the reasons and evidence in the paragraph related to the paragraph's point?

Determine if students can  
**EXPLAIN HOW THE AUTHOR USES  
REASONS AND EVIDENCE TO  
SUPPORT EACH MAIN POINT  
(ELA-533):**

- ▶ How does the author use the reasons and evidence to support the points made in the text?

To close the lesson, **instruct** the class to write a one-sentence summary that describes how all the paragraphs are related. **Collect** the summaries.

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 HANDOUT

Lesson 3

**Directions:** Read the paragraph and fill in each box below.

Point of the Paragraph



Two Reasons Supporting the Point



One Example of Supporting Evidence