

Name: _____ Date: _____

How to Answer a Constructed Response Question

Step 1: State your claim.

Your claim is your answer to the question. Your claim should . . .

- **echo the question. In other words, it should turn the question into a statement.**

Example A: Imagine you are answering the question, “According to the article, what is the best way to eat chocolate?” Your answer should start like this: “According to the article, the best way to eat chocolate is . . .”

Example B: Imagine you are answering the question, “Does the author think it’s ever okay to lie?” If your answer is yes, your answer could start like this: “The author thinks that sometimes it’s okay to lie . . .”

- **include reasoning or explanation. So if you are answering a yes-or-no question, you need to do more than say yes or no—you also need to provide some explanation or reason for your answer. If you are answering an open-ended question, you need to provide a brief summary or explanation of your ideas. Your reasoning or explanation should be one to three sentences.**

Example A: According to the article, the best way to eat chocolate is take your time and enjoy the chocolate with all five of your senses.

Example B: “The author thinks that sometimes it’s okay to lie, if you are lying to make someone feel good and no harm will come from your lie.”

Step 2: Provide text evidence with commentary.

Text evidence is details from the text that support your claim—in other words, details from the text that show why your claim is true.

Commentary is where you explain WHY the text evidence supports your claim. Your commentary should include key words from your claim. Text evidence . . .

- **can be in the form of a direct quotation or paraphrase.**
- **should be cited. In other words, you need to make it clear to the reader where the quote or paraphrase came from. Give the page number and, if it’s not obvious, the author’s name and/or the name of the article.**

Here are two examples of text evidence with commentary:

Example A (using a direct quote): “Before you bite the chocolate, take a moment to look at it,” the author writes on page 5. “Admire its glossy shine. Then lift it to your nose and take a deep inhale. What do you notice?” (p. 5) Here, the author is telling readers to take their time before biting into the chocolate, and to use their senses of sight and smell to enjoy the chocolate.

For more on using text evidence, see Scope’s “How to Use Text Evidence” reference sheet.

Example B (using a paraphrase): According to the author, it's okay to tell your friend you're sure no one at the party noticed the spinach stuck between her teeth, because there is nothing to be done about it now and maybe you can relieve some of your friend's embarrassment (p. 14). Here, the author is saying that it's OK to tell a small lie that makes someone feel better and doesn't do any harm.

Step 3: Write a conclusion.

A conclusion is 1-3 closing sentences that leave your reader with an insightful thought. A conclusion could . . .

- **state whether you agree or disagree with the author's point of view, and why.**
- **state whether you think the author's reasoning is sound or unsound, and why.**
- **tell how the topic you've been writing about connects to your life.**

Here are two examples of text evidence with commentary:

Example A: Perhaps eating chocolate in the slow, thoughtful way the author suggests could lead to a deeper enjoyment of it—but eating chocolate this way would also require an awful lot of patience and self-control!

Example B: Is the author right? I think so. Being completely honest about everything at all times is very likely to lead to some hurt feelings, and why hurt someone's feelings if it's not necessary?

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How to Use Text Evidence

When you write about something you have read, you need to use **text evidence**—that is, details from the text—to support the points you are making. You can use text evidence in the form of a direct quotation (the author’s exact words) or a paraphrase (a restatement of what the author wrote). You also need to explain WHY that text evidence is relevant.

Here are some tips for using text evidence:

1. Quote or paraphrase.

When using a **direct quote**, copy down the exact words from a sentence. Surround a direct quotation with quotation marks.

To **paraphrase** is to put something written or spoken by someone else into your own words. You don’t change the meaning of what the other person wrote or said, just the wording. A paraphrase is not surrounded by quotation marks.

2. Make it clear where your evidence comes from.

Identify who wrote or said what you are quoting or paraphrasing. This is called “**citing your source**.” Include a page number.

Words to help you:

*according to (the author),
(the author) claims,
suggests, states, writes,
reports, describes, implies,
explains, argues, declares,
observes, notes, reveals,
remarks*

3. Explain why your text evidence is relevant.

Include a sentence that makes it clear how the text evidence supports your idea. Reread the information you quoted or paraphrased and ask yourself, “So what?”

Words to help you:

*(the author) says this
because, this proves that,
this exemplifies how, this
confirms, demonstrates,
describes, explains,
illustrates, implies,
suggests*

Now let's look at two sample paragraphs. The first uses text evidence correctly.
The second uses text evidence incorrectly.

SAMPLE 1

Riding the world's tallest and fastest roller coaster, Kingda Ka, is a unique experience. According to author Mario Martinez in his book Roller Coasters of the World, Kingda Ka accelerates to 128 miles per hour in less than three seconds, going straight up at a 90-degree angle (18). "I have ridden hundreds of coasters," he writes. "But none of them were as terrifying as this one" (20). This suggests that Kingda Ka stands out among roller coasters as particularly intense.

This paragraph looks great! There are quotation marks around the direct quote, the writer tells us where the paraphrase and the quote came from, and the writer explains how her text evidence supports her statement that riding Kingda Ka is a unique experience. Hooray!

SAMPLE 2

Riding the world's tallest and fastest roller coaster, Kingda Ka, is a unique experience. According to Mario Martinez, Kingda Ka accelerates to 128 miles per hour in less than three seconds, going straight up at a 90-degree angle. "I have ridden hundreds of coasters. But none of them were as terrifying as this one."

In this paragraph, neither the quote nor the paraphrase is cited correctly. Who is Mario Martinez? Which page in what book or article did the paraphrase and quote come from? The writer also fails to explain how her text evidence supports her statement that riding Kingda Ka is unique. She just plopped her text evidence into her paragraph.

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Constructing a Response

Directions: Read "Could This Dragon Save Your Life?" and complete the activity on page 25. Then follow the steps below to write a response to the question on page 25.

→ See *Scope's* "How to Answer a Constructed-Response Question" for tips and information about how to complete this activity.

Question from page 25:

How can studying animals lead to improvements in human health?

Step 1: Write your claim.

Complete the sentence below to write your claim in response to the question.

Studying animals can lead to improvements in human health by _____

_____.

Step 2: Provide text evidence with commentary.

Write two details from the article that support your claim. You can write them in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. Include a citation for each detail. Explain how each detail supports your claim.

Detail 1: _____

Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim: _____

Detail 2: _____

Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim: _____

Step 3: Write a conclusion.

Wrap it all up. End your paragraph with a strong sentence that will give your readers something to think about. One option is to refer to your central claim. Or come up with an idea of your own!

Now it's time to put it all together. And guess what? You've already done the hardest part! All that's left is to take what you just wrote and put it together into one flowing paragraph. Write your final response on a separate sheet of paper.

Remember to:

- Use transitions between sentences.
- Read your paragraph to make sure your ideas are clear. Revise as needed.
- When you are satisfied with your paragraph, read it again to make sure there are no spelling or punctuation mistakes.

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Vocabulary:

"Could This Dragon Save Your Life?"

1. **antibiotic (an-ti-bahy-OT-ik)** *noun*; An antibiotic is a type of medicine used to kill or slow the growth of harmful bacteria—that is, bacteria that make us sick—and cure infections. Antibiotics work only for infections caused by bacteria; they do not fight infections caused by viruses, such as colds or the flu.
2. **carcass (KAHR-kuhs)** *noun*; A carcass is the dead body of an animal.
3. **immune system (ih-MY00N SIS-tuhm)** *noun*; Your immune system is a system of cells, tissues, and organs in your body that protects it from infection and disease and helps you stay healthy. If you do get sick, your immune system helps you get well again. (Sometimes, though, your immune system is not able to fight off an illness; that's when you might need antibiotics or some other type of medicine.)
4. **paralyzed (PAIR-uh-lahyzd)** *adjective*; The verb *paralyze* means "to make something unable to move or function." Someone who is paralyzed is unable to move. An illness or injury might cause an entire body or part of a body to become paralyzed. People can also be paralyzed by an emotion. If Nate is paralyzed with fear, he is—at least at that moment—so scared that he can't move.
5. **robust (roh-BUHST)** *adjective*; A person who is robust is strong and healthy. A thing that is robust is well-built and unlikely to fail or weaken.

A misstep can also be a slip or error in judgment—an action or decision that is a mistake. Sarah might realize that handing out birthday invitations at recess was a misstep; some kids who weren't invited were upset.
6. **venom (VEN-uhm)** *noun*; Venom is a poisonous fluid produced by certain animals such as snakes, spiders, and jellyfish. Animals inject venom into their prey and their enemies, usually by biting or stinging. Strong feelings of anger and hatred are sometimes called venom too, as in "Jill's comments were full of venom."

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“Could This Dragon Save Your Life?” Quiz

Directions: Read “Could This Dragon Save Your Life?” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which line best expresses a central idea of the article?

- (A) “Even a paper cut that became infected could be life-threatening.”
- (B) “Komodo dragons are among the most robust creatures on the planet.”
- (C) “Yet as dangerous as a close encounter with a Komodo dragon might be, scientists believe that these creatures could hold the key to saving human lives.”
- (D) “Nearly 700,000 people die every year from antibiotic-resistant infections . . .”

2. Author Maggie Pierce develops the idea that the Komodo dragon is a fierce predator in all the following ways EXCEPT by

- (A) describing the dragon’s sharp teeth.
- (B) describing the dragon’s strong immune system.
- (C) explaining that a dragon’s bite is venomous.
- (D) mentioning that humans have been attacked by dragons.

3. Pierce writes that the discovery of infection-fighting chemicals in a Komodo dragon’s blood “could not have come at a more critical time.” The word *critical* tells you that this discovery was

- (A) urgently needed.
- (B) not surprising.
- (C) inconvenient.
- (D) shocking.

4. Pierce writes, “Nearly 700,000 people die every year from antibiotic-resistant infections . . .” She probably included this statistic to

- (A) explain how antibiotics work.
- (B) support the idea that infections are no longer the problem that they used to be.
- (C) refute the idea that the Komodo dragon could play a valuable role in improving our health.
- (D) support the idea that superbugs are a serious threat to human health.

5. The section “Wonder Drugs”

- (A) explains that all dangerous creatures can help save human lives.
- (B) gives examples of other dangerous animals that, like the Komodo dragon, may play a role in future medical treatments for humans.
- (C) explains that the scorpion could be more valuable than the Komodo dragon.
- (D) tells you that scientists are no longer interested in the Komodo dragon.

6. Which idea is NOT supported by information in the article?

- (A) The Komodo dragon is a dangerous creature.
- (B) Antibiotics are important medications.
- (C) Infections are no longer a problem for humans.
- (D) Komodo dragons have strong immune systems.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. According to the article, what caused scientists to begin studying the Komodo dragon? Support your answer with text evidence.

8. Is it important for scientists to continue developing new medicines to treat infection? Why or why not? Support your answer with text evidence.

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“Could This Dragon Save Your Life?” Quiz

Directions: Read “Could This Dragon Save Your Life?” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which line best expresses a central idea of the article?

- (A) “Komodo dragons rarely attack humans . . .”
- (B) “The Komodo dragon isn’t the only fierce creature that scientists are studying.”
- (C) “Yet as dangerous as a close encounter with a Komodo dragon might be, scientists believe that these creatures could hold the key to saving human lives.”
- (D) “Nearly 700,000 people die every year from antibiotic-resistant infections . . .”

2. Which detail supports the idea that the Komodo dragon is a fierce predator?

- (A) Komodo dragons’ wounds rarely get infected. (p. 24)
- (B) Komodo dragons are venomous. (p. 24)
- (C) Scientists at George Mason University began studying the Komodo dragon in 2012. (p. 25)
- (D) Komodo dragons have a lot of germs in their mouths. (p. 24)

3. The author writes that the discovery of infection-fighting chemicals in a Komodo dragon’s blood “could not have come at a more critical time.” In this sentence, what does *critical* mean?

- (A) important
- (B) frightening
- (C) interesting
- (D) difficult

4. Consider this statistic from the article: “Nearly 700,000 people die every year from antibiotic-resistant infections, so-called superbugs . . .” This statistic helps readers understand

- (A) why superbugs don’t affect Komodo dragons.
- (B) how antibiotics work.
- (C) why superbugs don’t respond to antibiotics.
- (D) that many people could benefit from the development of new types of medicines.

5. The section “Wonder Drugs”

- (A) explains that all dangerous creatures can help save human lives.
- (B) gives examples of other dangerous animals that may play a role in improving human health.
- (C) explains that the scorpion could be more valuable than the Komodo dragon.
- (D) tells you that scientists are no longer interested in the Komodo dragon.

6. Which of the following statements can be supported by information in the article?

- (A) Scientists don’t pay enough attention to dangerous creatures.
- (B) Bacterial infections are no longer a problem for humans.
- (C) Antibiotics are important medications.
- (D) Komodo dragons make good pets.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. According to the article, what caused scientists to begin studying the Komodo dragon? Support your answer with text evidence.

8. Why is it important for scientists to continue developing new medicines to treat infection? Support your answer with text evidence.