**Wiens \_ ELA8 \_ Paper/Digital \_ Week 3 Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_P.\_\_\_**

**Textual Evidence**

**Define:**

Any time you’re explaining something about a text, you need to cite, or point out, textual evidence to support your ideas. Textual evidence may be a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph that led you to make an inference or draw a conclusion. When you cite textual evidence, someone else can look back at a particular part of a text you read and understand how you came to your inferences or conclusions.

When you make inferences while reading or analyzing a text, you use the text and your own background knowledge to make logical guesses about what is not directly stated by the author. When you are explaining these inferences to someone else, it is important that you use textual evidence to show how and why you analyzed a text in the way that you did.

For example, an analysis of Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken,” in which the speaker describes coming to a fork on a forest path and having to choose which one to take, might state:

The difficulty of making choices is an important theme of Frost’s poem.

The same analysis is strengthened by going on to cite textual evidence:

Frost establishes this theme in the first few lines. “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,” the speaker begins, “and sorry I could not travel both / and be one traveler, / long I stood . . . .” Immediately, we see that the speaker is faced with a tough choice: which way to go.

Whether you’re making inferences from a short passage or drawing conclusions based on an entire text, textual evidence is the most important tool for helping you explain your ideas.

**Identification and Application:**

* Inferences are logical guesses about what is not directly, or explicitly, stated by the author. To make an inference:
	+ Read closely and critically. Consider why an author gives particular details and information.
	+ Think about what you already know. Use your own knowledge, experiences, and observations to help figure out things that the author doesn’t state directly in the text.
* Readers should cite the specific words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from a text that led them to make an inference. This is the textual evidence that supports their inference.
	+ Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Model:**

*Sorry, Wrong Number* is a drama, so the author does not describe the plot events in great detail. Instead, the reader must use clues from the stage directions and the characters’ dialogue to make inferences about what is happening. By letting readers make inferences about the characters and events, the author builds tension and suspense.

The setting of the play sets the stage for the events that follow, so it is wise to pay close attention to it. From a simple description of the setting, readers can already begin to make inferences about the main character. Here is how the author describes the setting as the curtain rises on Act One:

**Expensive, rather fussy furnishings.** A large bed, on which MRS. STEVENSON, **clad in bed jacket is lying.** A night-table close by, with phone, lighted lamp, and **pill bottles.** A mantle, with clock, right. A closed door, right. A window, with curtains closed, rear. The set is lit by one lamp on a night-table. **It is enclosed by three flats.** Beyond this central set, the stage, on either side, is in darkness.

MRS. STEVENSON is dialing a number on the phone, as curtain rises. She listens to phone, slams down receiver in irritation. **As she does so, we hear sound of a train roaring by in the distance.** She reaches for her pill bottle, pours herself a glass of water, shakes out pill, swallows it, then reaches for the phone again, dials number nervously.

Based on this description of the setting, the reader can use textual evidence to make several inferences. For example, the expensive, fussy furnishings tell us that Mrs. Stevenson is probably wealthy and, well, fussy, or hard to please. She is likely to be a character who is overly concerned with small details. The pill bottles and the fact that Mrs. Stevenson swallows a pill, suggest that she may be sick or in poor health. Finally, the stage directions indicate that the bedroom setting is “enclosed by three flats.” Flats, short for scenery flats, are pieces of theatrical scenery which are painted and positioned on stage to give the appearance of buildings or other background. In this case, the flats block off the rest of the stage indicating to readers that only the bed, night table, and mantle are visible to the audience. Because the lamp is lit, readers can infer that this scene in the play takes place at night. The dark, lonely setting and Mrs. Stevenson’s apparent helplessness immediately create a feeling of suspense.

Readers can also make inferences from dialogue in a play. As Mrs. Stevenson attempts to make a local phone call, she overhears part of the following conversation, although the two men on the phone are not aware she is on the line:

Okay. You know the address. **At eleven o’clock, the private patrolman goes around to the bar on Second Avenue.** Be sure that all the lights downstairs are out. There should be only one light visible from the street. **At eleven fifteen a subway train crosses the bridge.** It makes a noise in case her window is open and she should **scream.**

Mrs. Stevenson has just overheard some very frightening information. Certain details in this bit of dialogue also reveal more information about the setting. The caller mentions a subway train that crosses a bridge, so the play must take place in a city, although the author of the play does not name the city or otherwise state this directly. Careful readers may note that in the opening description of the setting the author mentions that, as Mrs. Stevenson slams down the phone in irritation, “we hear sound of a train roaring by in the distance.” Could this be the same train that the man on the phone is referring to? Readers know that Mrs. Stevenson has a window with a single, lighted lamp. She has expensive furniture, so she probably lives in a wealthy neighborhood that may have a private patrolman. Based on the word *scream,* it is reasonable to guess that “she”— whoever “she” might eventually turn out to be — might be scared or hurt in some way.

Tension builds as the audience and Mrs. Stevenson both know something that the criminals do not—that she has overheard their plan. The imbalance between what Mrs. Stevenson—and the readers—know and what she can do about it creates suspense.

**Your Turn:**

**Reread this section from Sorry, Wrong Number and use textual evidence to make an inference about the text.**

FIRST MAN: Make it quick. As little blood as possible. Our client does not wish to make her suffer long.

GEORGE: A knife okay, sir?

FIRST MAN: Yes. A knife will be okay. And remember—remove the rings and bracelets, and the jewelry in the bureau drawer. Our client wishes it to look like a simple robbery.

[SOUND: A bland buzzing signal.]

MRS. STEVENSON [clicking phone]: Oh! [Bland buzzing signal continues. She hangs up.] How awful! How unspeakably—

1. **Based on the passage, what is most likely to happen to the woman? Circle your answer.**

She will be murdered.

She will be frightened by a robbery.

She will have to report a murder to the police.

She will suffer greatly when she loses her jewelry.

1. **Which sentence or phrase from the passage best supports your answer? Circle your answer.**

And remember - remove the rings and bracelets, and the jewelry in the bureau drawer.

Our client wishes it to look like a simple robbery.

Our client does not wish to make her suffer long.

How awful! How unspeakably--