



Foundations of Modern Biology

Writing a TCQC Short Answer

Short answers should be substantive, well-defended claims. A **TCQC Short Answer** includes

1. **Topic Sentence:** This is a brief summary of your answer to the question. This summary should identify all key points covered by your answer, expressed by topical subgroups (subtopics) that categorize your **evidence** (your quotations and/or paraphrases).
2. **Context (of a Quotation or Paraphrase):** This is a sentence or more that introduces the **evidence** that defends your answer. Help the reader understand where this **evidence** appears in the reading by mentioning the page number and relevant background information. Here is a sample sentence of context: “On page 17 the author discusses how Darwin’s theory was challenged by *(here insert your evidence)*...”
3. **Evidence: Quotations, Paraphrases, and/or Summary:** This is proof defending your topic sentence using two types of examples: direct quotation or original paraphrase. If you quote the text, copy the quotation exactly. If paraphrasing, reword and reorder those words within each sentence while keeping the same order of facts. If summarizing, paraphrase only relevant facts while paraphrasing. For all evidence, include in-text citation (MLA-style documentation). Quotations serve well when the text is precise, unique, and memorable. Paraphrases serve well when only brief facts and key points are needed; summaries, when a large chunk of content must be explained.
4. **Commentary:** This is the elaboration on evidence where you explain how it proves your topic sentence. Connect any words from the quotation or paraphrase back to the topic sentence. Analyze denotation and connotation; make connections to other ideas and lessons; identify related research and current events. Commentary must stay focused on the topic sentence yet expand the significance of evidence in a larger context of science as a discipline.

