Giving evidence

Achieving Level 5+

Providing evidence in your writing
Giving evidence

It is crucial that you PEE in your writing to make it as accurate as possible.
But what is the evidence?

The evidence you need to use is anything from the text. If you make a point then you need to refer back to the text to show where you’re getting your ideas from and that you’re not just making them up.

Look at the following text from Act 2, Scene 1. Find the words and phrases that tell us where Benedick found Count Claudio, what mood Claudio was in, and what information Benedick gave him.
Reminder! Find the words and phrases that tell us where Benedick found Count Claudio, what mood Claudio was in, and what information Benedick gave him.

BENEDICK

Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the good will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

Finding the evidence is one thing - but how do we write it?
Giving evidence

Paraphrasing

This means taking what is said in the text and putting it into your own words. You do need to make sure that you keep the meaning the same.

I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

becomes

Leonato tells the others that Don Pedro has written to him and that he will arrive that evening.
The Messenger, who has been asked by Leonato how many men were killed in the recent battle, tells him that no-one important was killed and that only a few common soldiers were lost.

Remember that the more information you include, the more you are showing that you understand the text.
Quoting

This means taking the exact words that are used in the text. You must always use quotation marks (single speech marks). You must make sure that the sentence still makes sense.

The Messenger tells Leonato about Don Pedro’s view of Claudio. He tells him that Claudio has acted ‘above the promise of his age’. Although he looks like ‘a lamb’, we hear that he has acted like ‘a lion’.

The quotations are only short but make your point and link what you say back to the text. You do not have to include whole lines but should choose selected phrases.
Your turn ...

Look at the extract below: Act 2, Scene 1, lines 212-216. Write a sentence, including quotations, which explains what Beatrice had told Benedick and how he reacts.

‘She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince’s jester, that I was dullest than a great thaw – huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me.’

Beatrice had told Benedick that he was the ‘Prince’s jester’ and was ‘duller than a great thaw.’ Benedick tells Don Pedro that she threw so many jokes at him that he ‘stood like a man at a mark’, an easy target for all the jokes hitting him.
Sometimes your quotation will not fit into the sentence. This is usually true if you want to use a longer quotation.

If this is the case, you will put the quotation on a new line. Do try to avoid this as you don’t very often need to include the whole quotation.

In Act 1, Scene 1, Leonato informs the Messenger:

‘You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there’s a skirmish of wit between them.’

He makes it clear that although Beatrice seems to hate Benedick, this is just how they act towards each other and that they always quarrel when they meet.
Giving evidence

Putting it all together

You’ve now looked at various extracts from the play and used the different ways of giving evidence.

If you want to achieve a Level 5 or higher in this year’s SATs, it is crucial that you remember to include quotations in your answers.