A TCQC Short Answer contains the following elements, just like a great sandwich:

1. **Topic Sentence**: This is the summary of the answer you give to the question. It is a general statement that sums up your answer. Sometimes it is a good idea to do this step last, since you may need to first look at your evidence (your quotation or paraphrase) before you summarize them.

2. **Context (of a Quotation or Paraphrase)**: This is a sentence or more that introduces the evidence that defends your answer. You are helping the reader understand where this evidence appears in the reading by mentioning the page number and describing the situation. Here is a sample sentence of context: “On page 17 we see how Mimi was challenged, and she chose to (here insert your evidence).”

3. **Evidence: Quotation or Paraphrase**: This is your examples to prove your answer. You can quote the text directly or paraphrase it. If you quote, copy the quotation exactly and provide the page number where you found that quotation in parentheses. If you paraphrase, use your own words and write them in a different order than the original text. Then put a page number in parentheses right after your paraphrased sentence. Whenever you quote or paraphrase, you have to avoid plagiarism, which is dishonesty. In other words, give credit to the original author of the text. You can use more than one quotation and/or more than one paraphrase.

4. **Commentary**: This is the elaboration on this quotation or paraphrase where you explain how your evidence proves your topic sentence. Connect any words from the quotation or paraphrase back to the topic sentence, or main idea, of this short answer paragraph.