

1 Claims, evidence, and what counts as support – Part 2

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English

Write it 3 times (English)

claim

Evidence

Commentary

Recall

- You have been asked “how do you know?” and had no answer.
- You know a number can make a statement sound more convincing.
- You have read a paragraph that gave examples but proved nothing.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 What a claim is

A **claim** is a statement that requires support. If nobody could reasonably disagree, it is a fact rather than a claim, and it needs no argument.

Worked example. “The road is 6 km long” is a fact; “the road was a mistake” is a claim.

■ 2 Evidence and its relevance

Evidence supports a claim only if it bears on that claim. Relevant evidence for one claim is decoration for another, and a paragraph full of accurate detail can still support nothing.

Worked example. Traffic figures support a claim about congestion; they do not support a claim about the road's beauty.

■ 3 Commentary

Commentary is the writer's explanation of how the evidence supports the claim. Without it the reader must supply the link themselves, and they may supply a different one.

Worked example. After a statistic, the sentence beginning "this shows that..." is where the argument is actually made.

Watch out: Adding more evidence never repairs missing commentary. Three unexplained facts support a claim no better than one.

Practice

2.1 Define a claim. [1]

2.2 State the test that distinguishes a claim from a fact. [2]

2.3 Explain what makes evidence relevant. [2]

2.4 Define commentary. [1]

2.5 Explain what happens when commentary is missing. [2]

2.6 Explain why adding evidence does not repair missing commentary.

[2]
