

Exercise walk-through

Identifying claims and evidence ■ 3.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- identify the claim a piece of evidence is intended to support
- state the assumption that must hold for the link to work
- notice where evidence supports a weaker claim than the one made
- distinguish sufficient from merely relevant evidence

Method — The hidden assumption

Every move from evidence to claim rests on an unstated assumption. “Test scores rose after the new curriculum” supports “the curriculum worked” only if nothing else changed. Naming that assumption is the sharpest analytical move available.

Method — Weaker claim than made

Evidence often supports something true but smaller than what the writer concludes.
Data showing a correlation supports “these vary together”, not “one causes the other”.
Say what the evidence actually earns.

Method — Relevant against sufficient

Evidence can be genuinely relevant and still not enough. One case study is relevant to a national claim and nowhere near sufficient for it.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State what every move from evidence to claim depends on.

Solution 2.1

Method: The hidden assumption

Worked steps

an unstated assumption connecting them **B1**, which must hold for the evidence to support the claim **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the difference between relevant and sufficient evidence.

Solution 2.2

Method: Relevant against sufficient

Worked steps

relevant evidence bears on the claim **B1**; sufficient evidence is enough to establish it **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A writer notes that crime fell after more officers were hired and concludes that hiring caused the fall.

- (a) State the assumption.
- (b) State the claim the evidence actually supports.

Solution 2.3

Method: Weaker claim than made

Worked steps

(a) that nothing else that could affect crime changed at the same time **B1**. (b) that the fall followed the hiring — a coincidence in time, not a cause **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

A correlation between two variables supports the claim that

- A** one causes the other
- B** the two vary together
- C** neither is real
- D** the sample is biased

Solution 3.1

Method: Weaker claim than made

A one causes the other

B the two vary together 

C neither is real

D the sample is biased

Worked steps

B. correlation establishes co-variation only.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

One detailed case used to support a national claim is

- A** sufficient but irrelevant
- B** relevant but insufficient
- C** both sufficient and relevant
- D** neither

Solution 3.2

Method: Relevant against sufficient

A sufficient but irrelevant

B relevant but insufficient 

C both sufficient and relevant

D neither

Worked steps

B. it bears on the claim but cannot establish it.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A passage argues from a survey of its own readers to a claim about the country.

- (a) Name the problem.
- (b) Explain what would be needed instead.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) an unrepresentative sample **B1**. (b) a sample drawn to represent the national population **B1**, since readers of one publication differ systematically from the country **B1**.