

Exercise walk-through

Identifying claims and evidence ■ 6.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- notice what evidence a passage does not mention
- assess whether evidence is representative
- identify a source and judge its standing
- state what a fuller body of evidence would change

Method — Absent evidence

A passage arguing a scheme succeeded that never mentions cost has left something out. Naming the omission is a legitimate and strong critical observation.

Method — Representativeness

Three examples chosen by the writer are not a sample. Ask whether the cases could have been chosen for fitting the claim; if so, they cannot test it.

Method — Sources

Who produced the figure matters: a body with an interest in the answer is not disqualified, but its standing is part of the evidence. Say who, not only what.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State why noticing absent evidence is a legitimate criticism.

Solution 2.1

Method: Absent evidence

Worked steps

what is omitted may bear directly on the claim **B1**, so the argument may hold only because the omission was made **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the question to ask about a writer's chosen examples.

Solution 2.2

Method: Representativeness

Worked steps

could these cases have been chosen because they fit the claim **B1**; if so, they cannot test it **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A figure is attributed to an industry association arguing for its own sector.

- (a) State whether the figure is disqualified.
- (b) State what should be said about it.

Solution 2.3

Method: Sources

Worked steps

(a) no **B1**. (b) that the source has an interest in the answer, which is part of how the figure should be weighed **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Three examples selected by the writer to support a claim

- A** constitute a representative sample
- B** cannot test the claim they were chosen to fit
- C** prove the claim
- D** are irrelevant

Solution 3.1

Method: Representativeness

- A constitute a representative sample
- B cannot test the claim they were chosen to fit 
- C prove the claim
- D are irrelevant

Worked steps

- B. selection for fit removes the possibility of disconfirmation.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Naming the source of a statistic matters because

- A** long names are impressive
- B** the producer's interest is part of the evidence
- C** sources are always unreliable
- D** it lengthens the essay

Solution 3.2

- A long names are impressive
- B the producer's interest is part of the evidence** 
- C sources are always unreliable
- D it lengthens the essay

Worked steps

- B.** an interested source is weighed differently, though not dismissed.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A passage arguing a policy succeeded gives outcomes but no costs.

- (a) Name the weakness.
- (b) Explain what a full evaluation would need.

Solution 3.3

Method: Absent evidence

Worked steps

(a) selective evidence — outcomes without costs **B1**. (b) both the benefits and the costs, on comparable measures **B1**, since a policy that produced the outcome at any cost has not been shown to be worth adopting **B1**.