

1.2 Identifying claims and evidence

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 11 marks**

KEY WORDS evidence 证据 • claim 主张 • audience 受众

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on identifying a **claim** 主张 and its **evidence** 证据.

You must be able to:

- tell a claim from a fact and from an opinion without support
- identify the evidence attached to a given claim
- state what kind of evidence a passage uses
- explain why unattached evidence weakens an argument

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ What makes a claim

A **claim** is a statement that could be disputed and that the writer is undertaking to support. “The river is 40 km long” is a fact; “the river has been mismanaged” is a claim.

■ Finding the evidence

Evidence is whatever the writer offers so that a reader who doubts the claim might accept it: data, examples, testimony, precedent, anecdote. The test is the question *why should I believe that?* — the answer is the evidence.

■ Naming the kind

Say **what kind** of evidence it is, not just that there is some: statistical, anecdotal, expert testimony, historical precedent, direct observation. The kind is what makes it fit or unfit for the audience.

2 Practice

2.1 State the difference between a claim and a fact. [2]

2.2 State two kinds of evidence a writer might use. [2]

2.3 A writer states: “Our libraries are failing. Visits fell 30% in five years.”

(a) Identify the claim. [1]

(b) Identify the kind of evidence. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Which of these is a claim rather than a fact? [1]

- **A** The bridge was built in 1932.
- **B** The bridge carries 12,000 vehicles daily.
- **C** The bridge should be replaced.
- **D** The bridge is 400 metres long.

3.2 A paragraph gives three vivid personal stories and no figures. Its evidence is best described as [1]

- **A** statistical
- **B** anecdotal
- **C** expert testimony
- **D** historical precedent

3.3 A passage presents striking data and then moves to a new topic without comment.

(a) State what is missing. [1]

(b) Explain why the argument is weaker for it. [2]

Solutions

2.1 a fact can be verified and is not in dispute; a claim could be disputed and the writer undertakes to support it.

2.2 any two of: statistics, anecdote, expert testimony, historical precedent, direct observation.

2.3 (a) “our libraries are failing”. (b) statistical.

3.1 C. it is disputable and requires support.

3.2 B. personal stories without figures are anecdotal evidence.

3.3 (a) the link between the evidence and the claim — commentary. (b) the reader must supply the connection themselves, and may draw a different conclusion from the same data.