

6.1 Identifying claims and evidence

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 17 marks**

KEY WORDS contested or selective 有选择的

Objective

Build the skills to identify claims and evidence where the evidence is **contested or selective** 有选择的.

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

1 Worked examples

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

■ 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.

■ 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.

■ 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.

2 Practice

2.1 State why noticing absent evidence is a legitimate criticism. [2]

2.2 State the question to ask about a writer's chosen examples. [2]

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

(a) State whether the figure is disqualified. [1]

(b) State what should be said about it. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Three examples selected by the writer to support a claim [1]

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

3.2 Naming the source of a statistic matters because [1]

- **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

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

(a) Name the weakness. [1]

(b) Explain what a full evaluation would need. [2]

3.4 Full free-response task. A think-tank report claims that a city's new cycle lanes

have “made the roads safer”, citing a 40% fall in reported cycle collisions in the year after installation. The report does not state how many people cycled before or after, and the collision figure counts only incidents reported to the police.

Write an essay that analyses how the report's use of evidence shapes its argument, and evaluates how far the evidence supports the claim.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A — Thesis (1)**, **Row B — Evidence and Commentary (4)**, **Row C — Sophistication (1)**.

[6]

AP English Language and Composition • 6.1 Identifying claims and evidence 4

Solutions

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.4 Row A — Thesis (1). A defensible claim about **the evidence’s fitness for the conclusion**. **Earns it:** “The report’s figure is almost certainly true and almost certainly cannot bear the claim it is asked to carry, because a fall in collisions measures the roads only if the number of cyclists held still.” **Does not:** “The report uses statistics to persuade the reader.”

Row B — Evidence and Commentary (0–4). Full marks require naming what the evidence **omits** and explaining why each omission matters. The missing denominator is the central one: without exposure data, a 40% fall is equally consistent with safer roads and with 40% fewer people cycling. The reporting threshold is the second: police-reported collisions undercount, and the rate of under-reporting can itself change when infrastructure changes. A third line worth developing is the word “*safer*”, which silently converts a count of one harm into a claim about a road’s overall condition. Responses that call the statistic “biased” without identifying the mechanism cap at 2.

Row C — Sophistication (1). Earned by refusing the easy verdict — recognising that selective evidence is not the same as false evidence, and that the report would be strengthened, not undermined, by the very data it leaves out. Sustaining that even-handedness while still reaching a judgment is what the point rewards.