

6.6 Using words and syntax for tone and style

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 14 marks

KEY WORDS credible 可信

Objective

Build the skills to use style to make your own argument **credible** 可信.

You must be able to:

- choose diction that does not overstate your evidence
- use qualification in the sentence as well as in the thesis
- vary syntax to mark the weight of a claim
- avoid a style that promises more than the argument delivers

1 Worked examples

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

■ Diction matched to evidence

“Suggests”, “indicates”, “shows”, “proves” are not interchangeable. Using the strongest available verb for weak evidence costs credibility the moment a reader checks.

■ Qualification at sentence level

“In the two districts studied, attendance rose” is more credible than “attendance rose” when only two districts were studied — and it costs one clause.

■ Syntax and weight

Put the claim you most want believed in a short, plain sentence. Complex syntax around a central claim can read as evasion, however well constructed.

2 Practice

2.1 State why “proves” and “suggests” are not interchangeable. [2]

2.2 Explain what sentence-level qualification adds. [2]

2.3 Sentence: “Everyone knows that this reform has completely failed.”

(a) State two weaknesses. [2]

(b) Rewrite it. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Using “proves” for evidence that only suggests costs the writer [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** length
B credibility
C coherence
D unity

3.2 A central claim is usually best expressed in [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** the longest sentence available
B a short, plain sentence
C a rhetorical question
D a subordinate clause

3.3 Write two sentences making a claim whose diction matches evidence of moderate strength. [4]
