

EVIDENCE IS LIKE Seasoning



NAME: _____

OBJECTIVE:

I can include relevant, credible supporting evidence in my writing.

Can you remember a meal that tasted bland? Perhaps French fries with no salt? Bread without butter? Meat without any salt or pepper?

Without the right seasoning, food just tastes plain. Boring. Maybe even gross. And when you don't add any supporting evidence to a paragraph, it's the same result: ideas that don't fully make sense or are not appealing. You could lose the readers' attention, cause them to disagree, or even make them accuse you of plagiarism (since you didn't cite anything).

Informative AND persuasive writing really comes to life when you have a VARIETY of evidence types and a "just right" AMOUNT of it to help support your ideas.

Check out these examples: How does the writer really PROVE her point?

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY (BODY PARAGRAPH):

Certain items are necessary in an essay, and without them, the writing appears messy and ineffective. English textbooks, MLA writing guides, and college professors always taught me to include a specific structure: an introduction with background information and a thesis; body paragraphs with topic sentences, evidence, and a transition sentence; and a conclusion paragraph that restates all of the previously made points using new synonyms to not sound boring. In fact, the Common Core state standards expect 8th graders to be able to use transitions, evidence, and structure in a "formal style". In my personal experience in high school, college,

and graduate school, I found this structure to be successful for both myself, and my friends who were not English majors. It's true that this list is more of a minimum; many writers choose to add to this list, or bend the rules with techniques such as delayed thesis statements, more subtle transitions, and even advanced forms of logic that are based on the strategies of Greek philosophers. However, even the writers who hate the standard "five paragraph essay" can typically agree that learning it is a necessary step to graduating from it.

Stop & Discuss:

What do you notice about...

- The frequency of evidence?
- The timing/location of evidence within a paragraph?
- What the author says immediately BEFORE stating a fact?
- What the author says immediately AFTER stating a fact?
- How it cites the information?

Stop & Evaluate:

How could this paragraph do an even BETTER job of proving its point?

EVIDENCE IS LIKE *Seasoning*

NAME: _____



Here's your Spice Rack:

1. Butter=Text evidence: Butter can make a LOT of foods taste better, and citing another text (like an article, report, or even literature) makes almost any paragraph sound better since you're making connections!
2. Garlic= Quotes from other experts: Also called testimonials, quoting an expert's opinions adds credibility to your argument. (Just make sure that you don't overdo it; you need your own ideas too.)
3. Sugar= Statistics & Data: It's really hard to argue with numbers, so including data makes your writing sweeter (and harder to resist!)
4. Salt= Proven facts/examples: Salt can go on almost anything, and examples are always a good idea, too, since they make your writing specific and help illustrate your point to the reader.
5. Pepper= Personal stories & opinions: Pepper can't go on everything, but it does improve the flavor of certain foods. Biased personal reasons are sometimes great evidence, but it depends on the audience.

WORDS OF CAUTION...

- Don't overdo it. There IS such a thing as putting too much garlic or salt on something...
- Don't skip it completely. Remember, without "seasoning", your paragraph will turn off a reader.
- Spread it out. Don't just cram all of your facts into ONE body paragraph; sprinkle them THROUGHOUT your writing!
- Don't put garlic on ice cream. Make sure the seasoning (evidence) matches the food (genre of writing).

Your turn! Write ONE paragraph from your draft below.
Put a STAR (*) in every spot where you could probably add in some sort of evidence to EXPLAIN or PROVE your point.

Does my paragraph...

- Have a focused topic sentence that makes a new point about the thesis?
- Have multiple sentence of reasons and evidence that prove the topic sentence?
- Ended with a conclusion of that paragraph and/or a transition leading into the next one?

EXIT TICKET:

Explain in your own words WHEN we should use evidence in writing.