Reasons & Evidence: Overview

- Using reasons to plan your argument
- Distinguishing evidence from reasons
- Distinguishing evidence from reports of it
- Selecting the right form to present your evidence
- Evaluating your evidence
  - Report evidence accurately
  - Be appropriately precise
  - Provide sufficient representative evidence
Using Reasons to Plan Your Argument

Readers evaluate reasons to

- Decide whether to believe the claim
- To understand the structure of the paper

Reasons outline the logic of a paper

- Often a reason serves as the theme of a section or paragraph
- Reasons can have sub-reasons that are grounded in evidence

Distinguishing Reasons from Evidence

Reasons are ‘thought up’ by the author & structures an argument

Evidence is to be accepted as fact

- Readers could question the truth of the evidence you advance ("How do I know that?")

  This effectively makes your evidence similar to a reason — part of your argument that needs to be sourced/supported

  This will require you to provide further evidence to back up your statement
Distinguishing Evidence from Reports of It

Reports or papers rarely report ‘raw data’ — they report their analyses of it.

This implies that all ‘evidence’ are subject to interpretation and analyses.

This also implies that the sources you cite contain interpretation and analyses of data.

You have to evaluate the veracity of the evidence you provide.

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Selecting the Right Form for Presenting Evidence

When you do your own studies you need to present your evidence in a way that makes sense to your readers.

This may be in the form of quotations, images, charts, tables, statistical reports etc.

Use presentation formats that your field accepts.
Evaluating Your Evidence

- Report evidence accurately
- Be appropriately precise
- Provide sufficient representative evidence