# How Good Is It? How to Rate Your Evidence and Claims

### Minimum Requirements

Each claim must have a minimum of three pieces of evidence that support the claim and a minimum of one piece of evidence that opposes the claim.

### Rating the Quality of Your Evidence

In literature, just as in life, we must evaluate whether what we're being told is the truth. Part of that evaluation is considering whether we can trust the source, plus how accurate and credible we believe the information is. When reviewing and rating your evidence, use the following rubrics.

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| The evidence is simply someone's opinion without any basis to back it up.<br>The evidence is hearsay. | Circumstances do seem to indicate that the evidence could be true, but what is claimed is outside of what the source or reader could possibly know. | It appears that the evidence is true, but there are not enough facts or details to really know for sure.<br>The source of the evidence appears to be credible and trustworthy, but not enough is known about the source.<br>The action or result may be correct, but the stated motive may not necessarily be true. | There is a small amount of room for interpretation, but basically the evidence appears to be accurate and the source is credible. | The action is "seen" or the dialogue "heard" firsthand by the reader and is undisputable. |

### Rating How Well Your Evidence Supports or Weakens the Claim

The rating above is just to determine whether the evidence is true and reliable. This rating is to show how well the evidence supports or weakens the claim—where we determine the strength of the evidence in relation to the claim. For this rating, put aside any concerns about whether or not the evidence is true or valid. If the evidence is true, how well does the evidence support or weaken the claim? Is the evidence central to your argument?

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| The evidence has little effect on the determination of whether the claim is true or valid. | The evidence seems to support the claim, but there are still significant uncertainties as to whether that support really proves the claim is true. | There are other elements that come into play so that this evidence is not terribly important, but it does help to build the case. | There is a small amount of room for interpretation or other variable, but basically the evidence is strong in its support of the claim. | Considering for the moment that the evidence is true, it makes a very strong case for the claim. |

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| The evidence has little effect on the determination of whether the claim is not true or valid. | The evidence does seem to weaken the claim, but there are still significant uncertainties as to whether that opposition really proves the claim is false. | There are other elements that come into play so that this evidence is not terribly important, but it does help to build the case against the claim. | There is a small amount of room for interpretation or other variable, but basically the evidence is strong in its opposition of the claim. | Considering for the moment that the evidence is true, it makes a very strong case against the claim. |

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## Rating Your Claim

After you have collected, evaluated, and attached your evidence to a claim, you must determine whether the claim is actually true or valid or not. In literature, as in life, things are rarely black or white. A rating scale is provided in the *Showing Evidence Tool* to help you communicate how strongly you believe all the evidence together supports or opposes the claim.

| (no stars) | ★ | ★★ | ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Considering all of the evidence and the quality of that evidence, this claim has absolutely no merit and has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to be untrue. | Although there are elements of truth in this claim, the evidence casts such considerable doubt as to the truth of this claim, that it is fairly clear that the claim is not true and/or valid. | Circumstantial or minor evidence does seem to support this claim, but not enough to make a determination. "Reasonable doubt" exists. | The evidence provided does support the claim, but there are still uncertainties as to whether that support really proves the claim is true. This rating is the result of a "hung jury." | There is a small amount of room for interpretation or other variable, but considering all of the evidence and the quality of that evidence, the claim is strongly supported and is most likely true and/or valid. | Considering all of the evidence and the quality of that evidence, it is quite obvious that this claim is true and valid. |

## Conclusion

The conclusion section is to be used when you have multiple claims to consider. Weigh the merits of each claim and explain your reasoning as to which claim or claims are more true or valid than the others, if that is your finding.

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