

# Handout 1: definitions of claim, evidence and bridge in an argument.<sup>1</sup>

**Claim** (thesis statement): states what is being argued; what point is being made. A claim must be debatable: reasonable people can disagree. A claim must be narrow: not too big to deal with in writing. A claim must be valid: evidence needs to support the claim.

**Evidence** supports the claim. Evidence is not opinion but information from reliable sources which may include facts, statistics, expert opinion and examples.

**Bridge** (the connection piece): Explains the pieces of evidence and connects them to the claim. A bridge is logical, reasonable, avoids excessive emotion, does not assume and sticks with the evidence.

## Evidence definition and example<sup>2, 3</sup>

**Factual evidence:** truthful statements that cannot be denied; statements that the average person may know or which can be proven.

**Example:** “Cell phone usage among “tweens” has grown rapidly.”

**Statistics or data:** numerical facts; can be presented in raw numbers, percentages, or fractions.

**Example:** “The survey found that almost 60 percent of children ages 8 to 12 already have cell phones.”

**Anecdotes:** real-life situations, events, or experiences that illustrate a position; anecdotal stories that help explain an author’s claim.

**Example:** “Picture the following scenario: You told your fourth-grader that you would pick her up after school, but you are stuck in traffic . . .”

**Expert Testimony:** the observations or conclusions of someone who is considered highly knowledgeable because he/she is an expert in a particular field of study or occupation; someone who has first-hand knowledge and experience.

**Example:** “Psychologists tell us that the period between ages 10 and 12 . . . is a time to teach children about responsibility, and to give them opportunities to earn our trust.”

**Emotional Appeal:** use of sympathy, fear, loyalty, etc. to persuade; manipulates the reader’s emotions.

**Example:** “Providing a 10-year-old with a cell phone . . . gives parents peace of mind.”

## **Example of Argument**

### **Claim:**

An increase in population in City X has caused greater gridlock in that city.

### **Evidence:**

Between 2000 and 2016, the population in City X increased by 20%. During that time, the total miles driven by motorists in City X increased by 40 %. However, the number of miles of highway available to be driven in the city, only increased by 10 % during that time.

### **Bridge**

An increase in population in City X increased traffic there. However, due to a shortage of highway there has been traffic gridlock.

## **References**

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2. Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators. Module: Reasoning through Language Arts [PowerPoint Presentation]. Retrieved from [http://www.floridaipdae.org/dfiles/resources/lessons/GED/RLA\\_Lesson\\_Plans/RLA\\_Looking\\_for\\_Evidence.pdf](http://www.floridaipdae.org/dfiles/resources/lessons/GED/RLA_Lesson_Plans/RLA_Looking_for_Evidence.pdf)
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