

Argumentative Essay: Evidence as Supporting Details

Extended Writing Project Prompt and Directions:

Every day the media run headlines celebrating heroes among us. The firefighter who charges into the burning building to save an infant is a hero. The nurse who risks her own life to help patients with infectious diseases—she’s a hero too. What qualities do all heroes have in common? What makes one person more heroic than another?

Your argumentative essay with research should include:

- **an explicitly stated claim about the individual who you think is the most heroic**
- **a logically organized argument supported by persuasive reasons and relevant textual evidence**
- **information from one unit text and at least one other print or digital source**
- **citations of your sources and a Works Cited page**
- **a conclusion that restates your claim, sums up your reasons and evidence, and leaves your readers with an original thought about the topic**

An effective argument provides readers with supporting details in the form of reasons and relevant evidence. Reasons are statements that answer the question, “Why?” They tell why the writer thinks that his or her claim is true. The writer provides reasons to support a claim, which makes it more believable. Relevant evidence includes facts, details, statistics, definitions, quotations from experts, observations, and examples. Evidence that supports the reasons and the claim is often found through research.

Research can be the key to presenting a successful argument. While researching, the writer deepens his or her understanding of the topic and finds evidence that supports the reasons and the claim. (Just as important—if the writer can’t find enough evidence that supports the claim, then he or she knows it is time to rethink the claim and the reasons.) Without solid supporting evidence, the writer would simply be stating his or her opinion about a topic—and that’s rarely convincing to readers.

Because writers want to convince readers that their claims are true, they carefully select and present the supporting details. A detail is relevant only if it supports the claim and helps build the argument. If the detail does not support the claim or strengthen the argument, it is irrelevant and should not be used.

We’ve done most of this. Now it’s time to pick the best sources from our research!

Practice:

Write your claim. Below it, write some evidence as supporting details for your argumentative essay. Draw on the research you completed earlier in the Extended Writing Project. Then exchange your work with a partner. Use what you have learned about relevant supporting details to evaluate his or her work. Be constructive in your comments.

Use this model to get started with your road map:

Argumentative Essay Road Map

Claim: _____

Paragraph 1 Topic: _____

Evidence #1:

Evidence #2:

Paragraph 2 Topic: _____

Evidence #1:

Evidence #2: