

Evidence Under Pressure

Trace claims, test support, and spot faulty reasoning.

9-10R8 "Delineate and evaluate an argument and specific claims in a text, assessing the validity or fallacy of key statements by examining whether the supporting evidence is relevant and sufficient. (RI&RL)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the proposal's main claim and each piece of evidence. Circle two statements that do not logically prove a claim, then number a reason each statement is weak in the margin.

Should Riverton Add Refill Stations?

- ① At next month's council meeting, I will support installing bottle-refill stations in Riverton's three busiest parks. The proposal would cost money, but it could cut the number of disposable bottles left in bins and on trails. During two sunny July weekends, park employees counted 418 plastic drink bottles in trash and litter at those parks. This count is relevant because it identifies a kind of waste the stations might reduce. Still, two weekends of counts cannot show how much waste appears during colder months, after events, or across an entire year. The council needs broader records before predicting savings.
- ② Some supporters cite a survey in which 146 of 180 visitors said they would use a refill station. That response supports the claim that many visitors may want one, and the survey asked people who actually use the parks. However, the survey was offered only near the main entrance from noon to 2:00 p.m. on one Saturday. It may have missed morning walkers, families at other entrances, and visitors who did not stop. The result is useful evidence, yet it is not sufficient by itself to prove that stations will be used often enough to justify their maintenance.
- ③ Opponents should be evaluated carefully, too. One flyer says, "Every modern city has refill stations, so Riverton must install them." Whether other cities have stations does not prove that Riverton's parks need or can afford them. Another speaker argues that anyone who questions the proposal does not care about clean parks. This attacks people's motives instead of examining costs or results. A stronger decision would compare year-round litter records, installation and maintenance costs, and usage data from a short trial. Those sources would directly test whether stations reduce waste enough to be worth the expense.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the author’s main claim about Riverton’s parks?

2 How does the count of 418 plastic bottles support the proposal? Why is that evidence not sufficient to predict savings?

3 Evaluate the visitor survey. Give one reason it is relevant and one reason it is limited.

4 Explain why each statement in paragraph 3 is fallacious: the claim about “every modern city” and the claim about people who question the proposal.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one possible change at your school. Write exactly four sentences: state a claim, give two specific pieces of relevant evidence from sources you could check, and explain whether the evidence would be sufficient for a decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the proposal's main claim and each piece of evidence. Circle two statements that do not logically prove a claim, then number a reason each statement is weak in the margin. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's main claim about Riverton's parks?	Riverton should install bottle-refill stations in its three busiest parks.
2	How does the count of 418 plastic bottles support the proposal? Why is that evidence not sufficient to predict savings?	It is relevant because refill stations might reduce disposable bottle waste. Two sunny July weekends do not represent colder months, events, or an entire year.
3	Evaluate the visitor survey. Give one reason it is relevant and one reason it is limited.	It is relevant because it asked park visitors whether they would use a station. It is limited because it was offered at one entrance, during only two hours, on one Saturday.
4	Explain why each statement in paragraph 3 is fallacious: the claim about "every modern city" and the claim about people who question the proposal.	Saying every modern city has stations is an appeal to common practice, which does not prove Riverton needs or can afford them. Saying questioners do not care about clean parks attacks their motives instead of addressing evidence.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add covered bike racks near the east entrance. A count of bicycles left outside during ten school days could show how many riders need protection from rain. A facilities office price quote could show the cost of buying and installing the racks. These sources are relevant, but the school should also survey riders who use other entrances before deciding the evidence is sufficient.

Accept equivalent descriptions of relevance, sufficiency, and faulty reasoning when students support them with details from the passage. For Part 3, accept varied school changes if the response has exactly four sentences and includes a claim, two checkable evidence sources, and a reasoned sufficiency judgment.