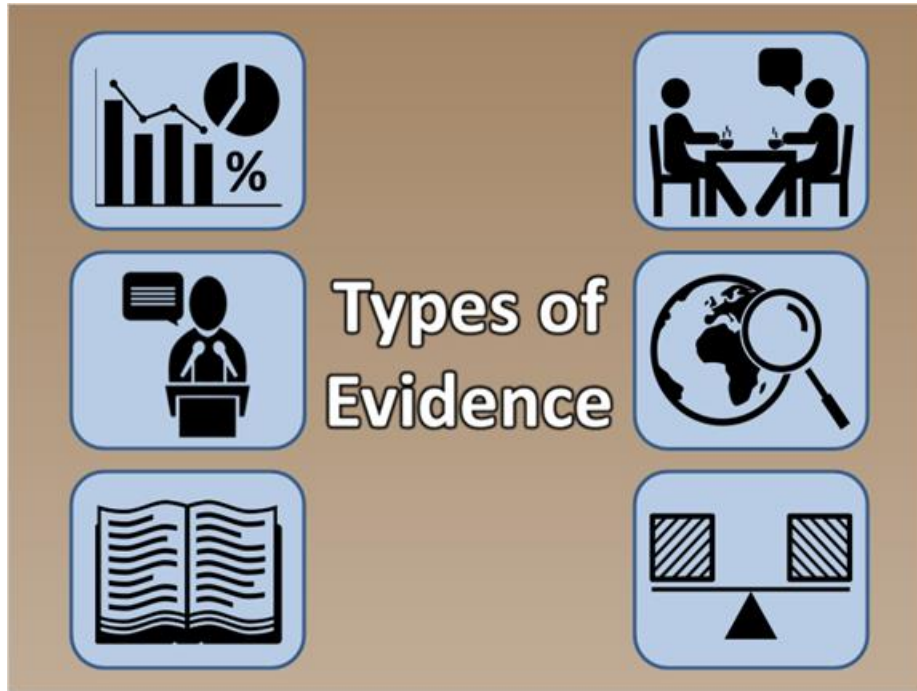


## Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice

### Topic 5 Content: Types of Evidence

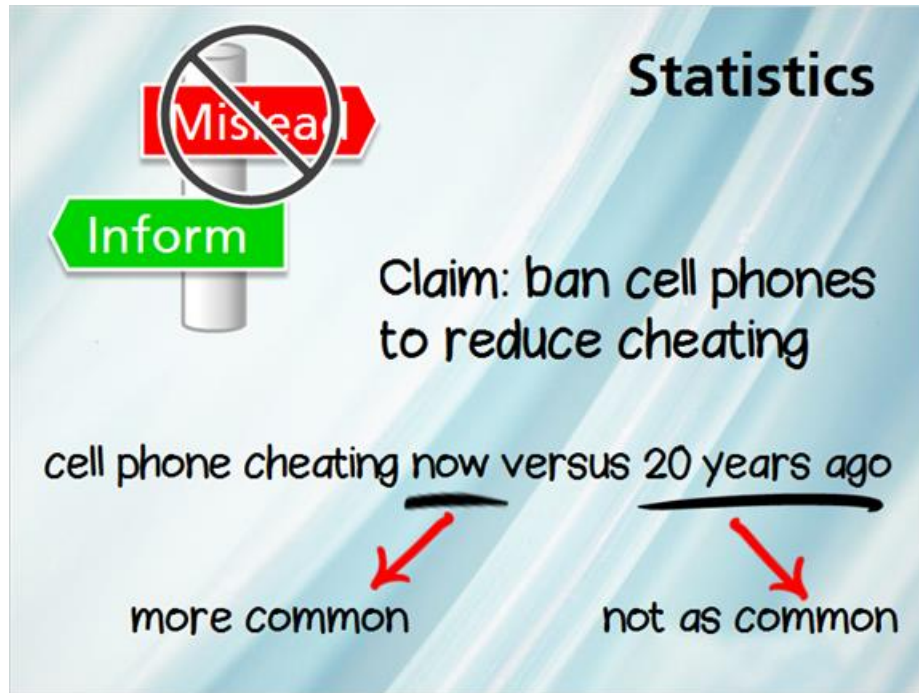
#### Introduction



The purpose of your research paper is not only to inform readers about an issue but also to persuade them to accept your position and take action based on your recommendation. While the thesis is the foundation of your argument, it cannot support the entire argument alone. To persuade your readers, you must provide supporting evidence, or proof of the strength and validity of your argument. You will find this supporting evidence as you research information, but before you begin, take a moment to consider possible types of evidence that you may want to use to support your claims. Click one of the icons to learn more.

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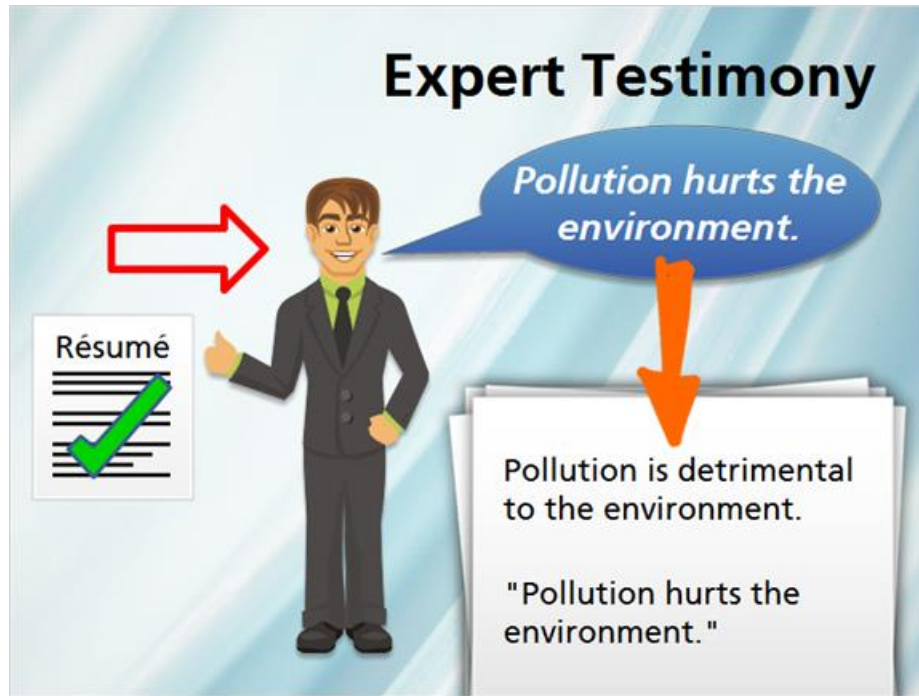
**Statistics**



Statistics are the hard numbers that support your argument, and they take the form of percentages or numbers. They are intended to give strong support to your argument, but you should use them sparingly and take care to use statistics from reliable sources. Also, do not try to intentionally mislead your audience with statistical evidence. For instance, suppose you claim that banning cell phones in public schools will reduce the incidence of cheating. You decide to support this claim with a statistic regarding the number of students caught using cell phones for cheating now versus twenty years ago. However, this evidence is misleading because it is likely that the number of people cheating with phones was lower twenty years ago since cell phone usage was not as common among children and teenagers as it is now.

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**Expert Testimony**



An invaluable type of evidence is expert testimony, or statements by an expert or authority in a field directly related to your issue. You can "borrow" the credibility of your quoted source in the form of paraphrases or direct quotations to bolster your own credibility. However, you need to be careful when selecting your source. Be sure to check the credentials of your experts and the validity of their research.

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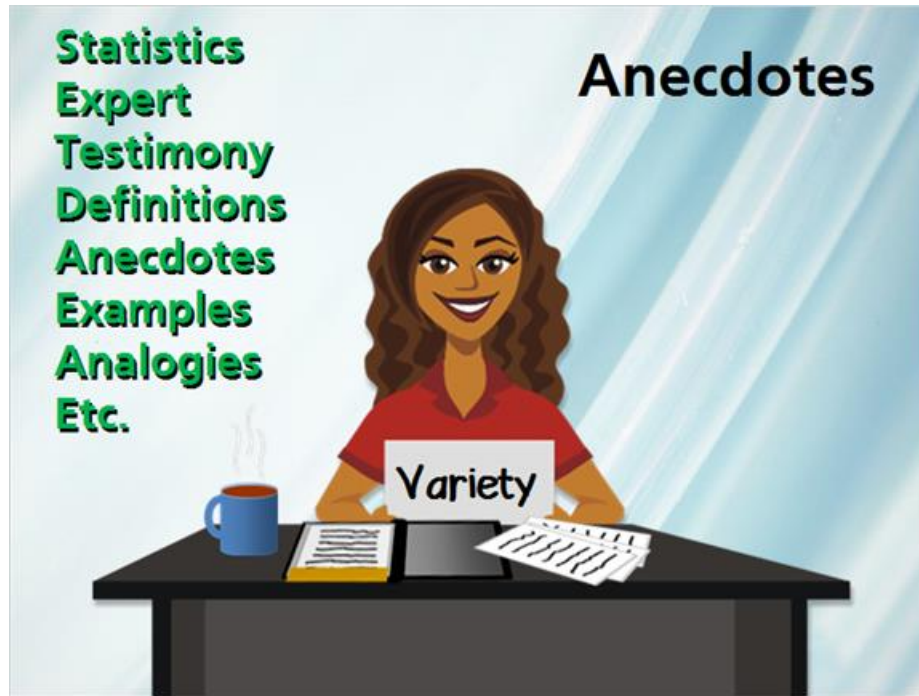
#### Definitions



A good argument is only as strong as the words you use to make the argument. Defining words and terms that are relevant to an argument is a good tool to use in supporting your claim. For instance, when arguing for or against organic farming, it is a good idea to define that term. Sometimes a definition alone can weaken an opponent's argument. However, like statistics, definitions should be used sparingly and only when they will give your argument a strong boost. Using definitions as support in every paragraph of your essay will get tedious for you readers and can hurt your argument in the long run.

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**Anecdotes**



Using personal or anecdotal experience as evidence in support of your claim can help your reader form an emotional connection to your argument. Anecdotal stories can add a touch of humanity to an argument as well as make an argument more engaging. However, you cannot rely solely on personal stories to prove your claim, so you must use anecdotes judiciously and in combination with a variety of other types of evidence.

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#### Examples



If a claim is the foundation of a good persuasive paper, then examples are the cornerstones upon which your evidence is built. Examples help your reader see your point on a meaningful level. Nearly every point you make in support of your claim should have a specific or concrete example. For instance, take the topic of healthcare, an important issue in political and social arenas. A politician supporting government-mandated healthcare may claim that lack of access to health insurance for millions of Americans is problematic. However, this is just a claim with no evidence provided. That politician could illustrate how lack of health insurance is problematic by providing examples that illustrate how people without health insurance delay going to the doctor, visit emergency rooms for routine healthcare, or go without treatment for illness or disease. These specific examples offer supporting evidence that lack of access to health insurance is problematic.

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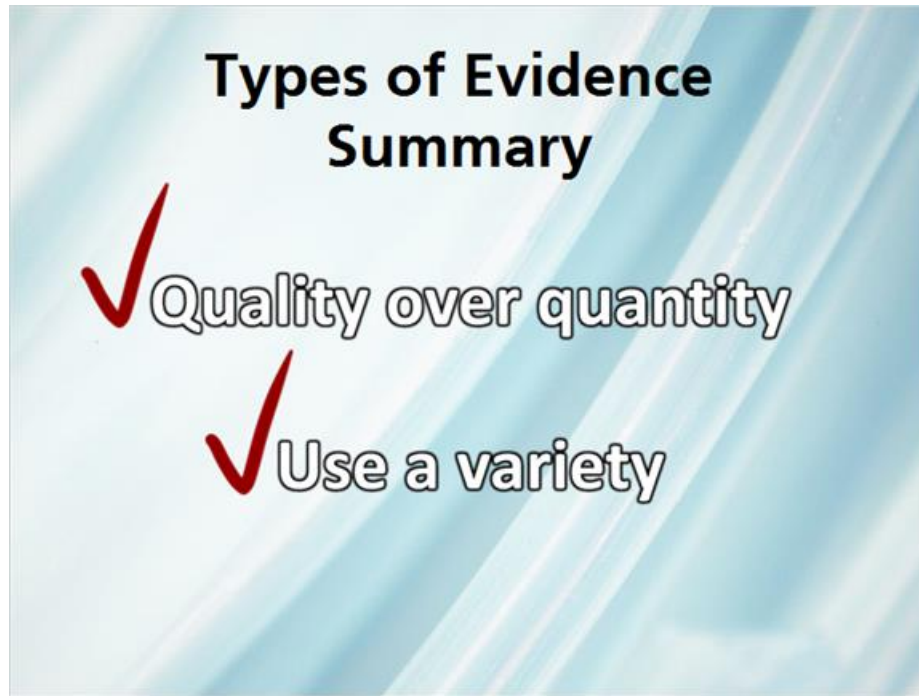
#### Analogies



Another effective way to convince readers is to use analogies, or comparisons that make connections to issues, facts, and examples that readers already know to be true. For example, imagine you are trying to persuade readers to help women who are victims of human rights violations in a given country. You might use analogies to compare the plight of the women to the plight of Jewish prisoners in concentration camps during World War II, or you might compare the country's government militia to the Nazis. By connecting these groups of people, you are encouraging readers to transfer feelings and opinions they may hold about the Holocaust to these victims or their abusers.

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**Summary**



When selecting evidence to include in support of your claim, remember to choose quality over quantity and to use a variety of evidence. For instance, you might use an example and a definition to support one point, an analogy to illustrate a second point, and a direct quotation and a statistic to support a third point.