

- 1.) when you order your reasons, you build a logical structure for your argument. to test that structure, you can make a traditional outline or visualize your plan in other ways. you might find it useful to create a chart-like outline known as a “storyboard”.
- 2.) readers will not accept a reason until they see it anchored in what *they* consider to be a bedrock of established fact. the problem is, you don't get to decide that; Your readers *do*.
- 3.) as you build your argument, keep in mind that your evidence will count as evidenced only if your readers accepted without question, at least for the moment.
- 4.) and at a time when so-called experts are quick to tell us what to do and think based on studies whose data we never see, careful readers have learned to view reports of evidence skeptically. Even when you think you have good evidence, be clear how it was collected and by whom.
- 5.) even if you collect your own data, counting rabbits in a field or interviewing the unemployed, your paper can only refer to or represent those rabbits and unemployed in words, numbers, tables, graphs, pictures, and so on.
- 6.) This often-squishy quality of reports of reports is why people who read lots of research are so demanding about the reliability of evidence. If you collect out of yourself, they'll want to know how you did it. If you depend on sources, they'll expect you to use primary sources, and if you didn't, to get as close to primary sources as you can.
- 7.) once you know the kind of evidence your readers expect, you must test the reliability of yours: is it *sufficient and representative*, reported *accurately and precisely* and taken from an *authoritative* source?
- 8.) careful readers are predisposed to be skeptical, so they will seize on the most trivial mistake in your evidence as a sign of your unreliability in everything else. Whether your research argument depends on data collected in the lab, in the field, in the library, or online, record those data completely and clearly, then double check them before, as, and after you write them up
- 9.) readers need more than that to keep such a significant claim. Even if you offer lots of evidence, your readers still expected to be representative of the full range of variation in what's available.
- 10.) different fields define and evaluate evidence differently. If you're a beginner, you'll need time to learn the kinds of evidence that leaders in your field accept and reject. The most painful way to gain that experience is to be the object of their criticism. Least painful is to seek examples of arguments that failed because their evidence was judged unreliable.