Chapter 7 - Evidence
Evidence

Evidence – the support for a claim that the arguer discovers from experience or outside authority: examples, statistics and testimony

– Sphere dependent on:
  - What “counts”
  - Most significant
Credible Sources?

- The OU Post
- U.S. Department of Energy Report
- Journal of the American Medical Association
- Playboy Magazine
Evidence

- Examples
- Statistics
- Testimony
- Principles for Using Evidence
- Evaluating Evidence
Examples

1) undeveloped instances used in an argument by generalization

– Ex. There are many benefits to getting an advanced degree: increased knowledge, higher pay, more marketability to name a few.
Examples

2) an extended instance that illustrates a general principle (also known as an illustration)
Ex.: What is it like to be homeless?
Once you've been homeless, it's easy to explain. But when you’ve never been out there on the street and stayed out there all night for months and winters and summers and over and over and over... you don’t know what it’s like to be out there. No money. Nowhere to stay. Nobody gonna feed you. You got nothing. And it’s cold as hell out there. Thirty-two degrees. A big storm. Where you gonna go? Can’t go back to momma. Can’t go to you're girlfriend. I’m homeless. I’m cold. So cold you could scream. The first thing is shelter. If you’re outside somewhere, you get frostbite. Get you something to eat. Get you a weapon. You don’t want to be homeless with no knife. Because you ain’t the only one out there homeless and the homeless feed off the homeless. You got a nice coat and you go to sleep? You wake up and I got your coat. You drink too much? I got your boots. That’s how they do it on the street. I’ve seen it happen. I saw a guy damn near killed for his coat. They took the coat and then they just started stabbing him. I say “Damn you got the coat. Why you stabbing the dude?” They left him for dead. It’s not nice out. It’s not nice being homeless. (Timothy)
Examples continued…

- Should have characteristics of good stories
- Should ring true for audience
- Characters, motives, outcomes that make sense
- Real examples should be used whenever possible (limit hypothetical examples)
Statistics

- Numerical compacting of examples
- Can talk about large number of examples without citing each one
  - Raw Numbers
  - Central tendencies
  - Probabilities
  - Trends
Raw Numbers

- Self-explanatory. Just the numbers.
  - Ex. The United States Department of Defense FY 2007 base budget is $439.3 billion dollars (www.whitehouse.gov).
  - In comparison, The United States Department of Education FY 2007 tentative budget is 54.4 billion dollars. (www.ed.gov) + 9 billion dollars in mandatory spending.
Central Tendencies

What is normal in a larger population. Often called averages.
– Mean, Median, Mode
– Mean = average value across population
– Median = middle number
– Mode = most frequently occurring number
Probability

In terms of statistics, probability generally relates to frequency.

- Ex. Fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva, or FOP, strikes about one in 2 million people — so rarely that most physicians misdiagnose the disorder, often prescribing treatments that worsen the condition. About 600 patients are known.
Trends

- Compare a situation over time.
Testimony

Testimony is the statement of another person or agency used to support a claim
- Testimony of fact
- Testimony of opinion
General Principles

- Use representative instances
- Use a sufficient number of instances (Rule of 3)
- Account for negative instances
- Give the value characteristics
General Principles

- Use details
- Use current examples and statistics
- Carefully consider statistical measures
Evaluating Evidence

- Reliability
- Expertise
- Objectivity
- Consistency
  - External
  - Internal
Evaluating Evidence

- Recency
- Relevance
- Access