

## **OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 AND 10 WRITING/HANDOUT 14**

### **Next Week's Final Assessment**

Please study your handouts and homework from Class 9 onwards. Pay attention to:

- challenging vocabulary words,
- appropriate ways to respond to OSSLT reading comprehension questions,
- new article format,
- comma and semi-colon usage,
- noun, adverb, and adjective clauses,
- apostrophe (to signal possessives),
- simple and compound sentences,
- sentence fragments, and
- opinion essay in the OSSLT.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE IN YOUR ESSAY

1. You may incorporate textual evidence right into the sentence with the use of quotation marks, but your quote from the text must make sense in the context of the sentence.

For example:

**April is so wildly confused that she actually “...hated Caroline because it was all her fault” (page 118).**

2. Another way to introduce textual evidence is to tell the reader you are doing so.

For example:

**According to the author, “Reading and writing are two skills every person will need in the workplace” (page 42).**

Additional examples of this style are listed:

**As noted on page 79,**

**For example,**

**When the author states, “...”**

**An example of this occurs when the main character says, “...”**

**As stated in the text,**

**The author illustrates this point when she states,**

**Toward the end of the story Ken says, “...”**

**For instance,**

**As Zilpha Keatley Snyder points out,**

**In the words of ...**

3. Here is a list of common verbs used to introduce textual evidence:

<b>argues</b>	<b>writes</b>	<b>concludes</b>	<b>reveals</b>	<b>observes</b>
<b>comments</b>	<b>maintains</b>	<b>suggests</b>	<b>insists</b>	<b>explains</b>
<b>counters</b>	<b>states</b>	<b>claims</b>	<b>demonstrates</b>	
<b>notes</b>	<b>implies</b>			

# Types of Evidence in Persuasive/Argument Papers

**Support your position or thesis with evidence.** Remember that your evidence must appeal to reason. The following are different ways to support your argument:

- ◆ Facts
- ◆ Statistics
- ◆ Quotes
- ◆ Examples

1. Using **facts** is a powerful means of convincing. Facts can come from your reading, observation, or personal experience. **Facts** cannot be disputed. This makes them a strong form of evidence. **Note:** Do not confuse facts with truths. A "truth" is an idea believed by many people, but it cannot be proven. For example:

- Grass is green.
- All cats are animals.
- Jumping out of airplanes without a parachute is hazardous.

However, facts can be interpreted or presented in skewed ways, which may result in skewed or erroneous conclusions. Personal opinions (such as "Dustin Hoffman is the best actor who has ever lived") are never facts, they are claims. For example...

- Grass is green. (in the winter?)
- Stalin was a famous man, loved by many people.
- It's a fact that the French are smelly and snobbish.

2. Using **statistics** can provide excellent support for your argument. Arguments employing amounts and numbers are concrete and therefore support claims because they use logic and facts. Be sure your statistics come from good sources, which you will cite. Examples:

- Over 61% of Americans are overweight.
- Unemployment in Illinois is at 5%.
- During each game, Sean Hill of the NY Islanders spent an average of 20:09 minutes on the ice.

3. Using **quotes** from leading experts or authorities in their fields will support your position—this is a logical appeal and is accepted by other academics as a good way to back up your claims.

- Dr. Kenneth P. Moritsugu, U.S. Surgeon General, described long term problems associated with underage drinking: "Research shows that young people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol-related problems later in life."
- Samantha King, a noted forensic specialist, stated that DNA evidence is usually indisputable.

It is EXTREMELY important to make sure that the authoritative information you choose is actually accurate and relevant to your point. Sometimes, so-called authorities are not what they seem or information is misleading.

- My two friends in Florida think that Miami's a better place to visit than Chicago. (Note: these are biased sources.)
- My grandmother, who has property worth over \$2 million, believes that estate tax laws need overhauling. (Note: she's probably not an expert in tax law, and she has a vested interest.)
- Movie critic Eleanor Lyttle writes that *Star Wars Revenge of the Sith* is "wondrous" and "a must-see." (Note: the actual quotation read: "*Revenge of the Sith* is a horrific film. It is a wondrous waste, but it is a must-see if you want to understand what a truly bad movie looks like." In this case, obviously, the quotations are used out of context.)
- Dr. Petrelli endorses energy drinks to boost metabolism. (Note: who is Dr. Petrelli?)

4. Using **examples** or anecdotes from your own experience can enhance your meaning and also engage the reader. Personal examples make your ideas concrete. These real-life examples allow a reader to relate to the issues personally.

- For many years, my best friend's husband beat her—the police did nothing about it; therefore, we need better laws so domestic abusers can be punished more stringently.
- After living in Iceland for a decade, I can honestly say that the people are kind and warm.
- Immigration laws should allow amnesty to illegals—my father came here from Mexico twenty years ago, and he has worked 50 hours a week to support us. If he is deported, he will leave behind his children, who are citizens. I do not think this is fair to all of us.

For personal experience to be convincing, however, it must also be applicable, present reasonable background understanding, show a universal or general situation, and be related to the thesis somehow.

- I've never been to Australia, but it seems from all the movies I've seen about the place that they all like to drink and barbecue.
- My experience in visiting Canada on a high school trip showed me that their medical system is superior to ours.
- Cats are not friendly. My neighbor's cat never comes to me when I call it.

## PRACTICE

Read this article and discuss the types of evidence used. Complete the table that accompanies the article. (As we read the article, pay attention to the underlined words to improve our vocabulary.)

### Why Are Video Games so Gendered?

The chauvinistic gaming world has always been hostile to women. A new book looks at how it got that way.

BY DEIRDRE COYLE

November 1, 2017

When I was in college, I became addicted to a browser-based word game featuring cute animals. I couldn't resist it. I didn't fail any courses, but compulsive play took precedence over studying. At the time I was living with several male roommates, and one of them, a seasoned gamer, scoffed when he saw me playing with the pink elephant in pirate garb on the screen. "Can I find you something to play that's, like ... a *real* game?"

In most conversations you have with gamers, "real" is synonymous with "hardcore." These games have big development budgets and require hours of player dedication to complete; they generally refer to first- and third-person shooters, RPGs, and MMOs. You're a soldier in WWI, or you're a soldier in WWII, or you're a soldier in WWIII, and there are aliens. These games don't have cute animals. Often, they don't even have too many colors: in a hardcore game like the blockbuster first-person shooter *Call of Duty*, the color palette is so dominated by greys and browns that the brightest color you'll see is the red of your enemy's blood after you shoot him.

*Ready Player Two*, the new book by media critic Shira Chess, is not interested in that kind of game. Instead, the book investigates how the game industry perceives and markets **femininity**, with particular attention to what she calls casual games—ones that are “cheap, easy to learn, and can be played for variable amounts of time”—like *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, *Candy Crush Saga*, or *Diner Dash*. From the outset, Chess is clear that while women do play hardcore games, they are “considered **outliers**, **marginalized**, pushing their way into a space not originally intended for them,” And those women who play hardcore games aren’t really Chess’ concern. Rather, *Ready Player Two* looks at games that are designed for women— and because video games are a male-dominated industry, games created *for* women are often designed *by* men. Games’ **gender binary**, Chess argues, is itself a product of design, “often at odds with actual players.”

Chess makes this **dissonance** the topic of *Ready Player Two*, interrogating the very concept of what she calls “Player Two,” the industry’s feminine ideal. Player Two is the hypothetical female consumer, imagined by men, whose tastes drive games’ design and marketing to women. She is a white, straight, cisgendered, able-bodied, middle-class woman who yearns for **domesticity** and **beautification**, and whose leisure time exists in five-minute increments. The Player Two figure, Chess finds, makes a lot of assumptions about women’s lives and leisure: that women don’t have much time for games, for instance, and that the time we *do* have is spent on activities that mirror the emotional labor and domestic duties we’re presumed to perform in daily life.

Last month, I spent \$24.99 on “pearls” in the free-to-play *Sunken Secrets*, a mobile game wherein a blonde princess tells me how to beautify her island. *Sunken Secrets* checks many of the boxes that Chess uses to describe games marketed to women: supernatural themes, **lush aesthetics**, few time constraints, **nonsexualized** characters, and low violence. This is absolutely not one of the “real games” my former housemate had in mind. “Games that are too centered on consumptive mechanics are often dismissed (such as free-to-play or fashion games) and are not accepted as part of the broader (masculine-based) gaming culture,” Chess explains. “Women players are theoretically able to buy their way into video game culture, but they are never able to fully embody the **nuances** of that culture.”

Unlike the more subtle **bigotry** of other creative communities, video game culture wears its **misogyny**, homophobia, and racism on its sleeve. The toxicity of gamer culture sure doesn’t *seem* nuanced: when a popular white male gamer yells racial slurs online, other white men rush to his defense; when white male Gamergaters dox female designers, other white male gamers rush to their defense. These aren’t people I want to be associated with, and they’re not usually people whose opinions of me I would pay much attention to. So why, when someone asks what I play, would I rather chew off my arm than admit to *Sunken Secrets*? I never had a hard time talking about my addiction to *Fallout: New Vegas*, a big-budget role-playing dystopia where you can kill and/or seduce non-player characters.

Trying on Player One’s masculine **mantle** can be a heady exercise in power fantasies for a female gamer, and there’s no shame, as a woman gamer, in admitting that you

like to murder or have sex with **pixelated** bodies. But somehow there *is* shame in admitting that you want to craft **anagrams** to please cute animals, or use sparkly blue magic against a witch who looks like an anorexic Ursula. Fantasies coded as masculine—killing and screwing—are cool. Fantasies coded as feminine—nurturing and beautifying—are boring.

These ideas **manifest** most clearly in the player's **avatar**. Protagonists in hardcore games tend to be muscular, broad-shouldered, alpha male **archetypes**, fulfilling a fantasy that the player is a strong man who can kill a bunch of enemies single-handedly with a comically oversized, phallic weapon. Even casual, short-play mobile games targeted at men feature “action mouth” app icons (also known as “mobile games with an icon of a guy yelling”), suggesting dominance on a smaller screen. If women exist in hardcore games, their designers often have a curious understanding of women's combat needs; a heroine's armor frequently protects her nipples and pelvic floor but little else.

But in games targeting women, avatars have a **conspicuously** different look: “If buxom women are at the heart of games designed for masculine audiences, then slenderness is at the heart of games designed for feminine audiences. The most common visual image in time management games is a slender, ponytailed, white woman.” Indeed, the avatars of time management and fashion games are featureless and sexless, with **monochromatic**, usually white skin and one or two pixels suggesting a nose. Despite being unsexed, they still fall into categories of **conventional** Western hotness: thin, **doe-eyed**, predominantly blonde.



If murdering and yelling are the **apotheosis** of male power in the gaming imagination, inoffensive prettiness is the apotheosis of female power. Women and men alike are **socialized** to understand physical appearance as women's central source of social capital, so perhaps it's natural that "flawlessness" (i.e. featurelessness) is one of the main power fantasies marketed to women by this male-dominated industry. But the **prevalence** of these gendered designs and narratives in gaming raises some disturbing questions. Can this industry, and the men who control it, really only imagine men as angry, violent, hypersexual killers? Can they really only imagine women as pretty, featureless, and into cuddly animals? *Ready Player Two* does not pretend to be a comprehensive diagnosis of all the evils of **patriarchy**, but it does raise the **specter** of how far we haven't come.

Despite some annoying academic **jargon**, Chess's careful articulation works toward **legitimizing** the genre of women's games—because, as game designer Sheri Graner Ray points out, "The game industry does not see women as a market. They see women as a genre." Perhaps I could have defended my collegiate word game addiction if I'd understood why only über-masculine fantasies got classified as "real." Maybe I could have made a better defense of those cute animals.

These days, it's not too common for anyone to harass me about the fashion games on my phone, and when it happens, it's hardly worth my time to explain that I can't play *Left 4 Dead* on the subway. These conversations no longer make me angry, they make me bored. I would like to talk about something else. But discussing why women play what we play, and how we are understood as players, pushes the industry to

treat women not as a genre, but a diverse audience. *Ready Player Two* moves us closer to the mark.

## ANALYSIS

Evidence 1	What kind of evidence is used? How is it persuasive?
Evidence 2	How is the evidence presented? How does the writer use it to support a claim?
Evidence 3	How does the evidence reinforce the writer's message?

Evidence 4	How does the evidence help promote the writer's perspectives?
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