

**OLYMPIDAD SCHOOL/GRADE 9 AND 10 WRITING/HOMEWORK 14****NAME (FIRST AND LAST):**\_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE:**\_\_\_\_\_**How to Write an Evidence Based Essay**Adapted from <http://www.inspiration.com/blog/2013/02/guest-post-writing-an-evidence-based-essay/>

At various times in your high school career, you will be asked to write an evidence based essay. This may sound like a difficult task; however, it isn't as daunting as the name implies.

*1. Why is Evidence Important?*

When you write an evidence based essay, the main purpose is to take a position on a topic and persuade your readers to accept your claim. You use evidence to support that position and convince readers of your argument's validity. Evidence is also used to lead the reader through your reasoning, taking them from smoothly from Point A to Point B. However, in order for your essay to be a success you must choose your evidence wisely. It is important to use the right kind of evidence, have a satisfactory amount and use your chosen evidence effectively.

*2. What Type of Evidence Should I Use?*

There is no hard and fast answer to this question. The type of evidence you use will change from class to class. For example, you won't use the same type of evidence for your chemistry mid-term that you would for your American history group project.

Double check the assignment before you begin researching. Did your teacher give you any clues? If you are unsure, ask for clarification. Also, be advised that longer papers will require more evidence.

*3. Where Can I Find Evidence?*

There are countless types of evidence to use. Consider the following:

- *Print and Electronic sources* – Books, journals, websites, newspapers, magazines, etc. (Click[here](#) if you would like assistance evaluating the credibility of a print source.) Also, the school librarian can help if you don't know where to find reliable and relevant sources.
- *Observation* – You might be able to directly observe the topic you are writing about. For example, you could watch, listen to, touch, taste, or smell something that would count as evidence.
- *Interviews* – This is a good way to collect information you can't obtain via any other type of research. Also, you can get expert opinions, biographical information, and/or first-hand observations.
- *Surveys* – Surveys will help you determine what a group of people thinks about your topic. However, this research method is quite challenging; designing an effective survey

and interpreting the data is a science in itself. Before embarking on a survey, contact your teacher and find out if it is an effective tool for your particular project. If so, perhaps your teacher can help you formulate the survey and interpret the findings.

- *Experiments* – These are the primary form of scientific evidence.

#### *4. How Can I Help Readers Interpret My Evidence?*

The main purpose of an evidence-based essay is to take a position on a topic and persuade your readers to accept your claim. Therefore, you'll want to make that claim very easy to understand. To do this you'll need to write a thesis.

A thesis is the chief claim you are trying to prove. This provides the controlling idea for the entire essay. Your concise argument (one or two sentences) will tell readers what to expect while reading the rest of your paper.

Here are some things to consider while writing your thesis:

- Your thesis statement should not be completely obvious. For example, "World hunger is a major problem," is not an original idea.
- Make sure your thesis is assertive, arguable, and takes a stand on a specific topic. Don't leave it weak or vague.
- Use your thesis statement to help you organize your essay and develop your argument.
- Keep your thesis statement narrow enough to express just one main idea. If you present too much information, you'll confuse your readers.
- If you must share two ideas, find a way to connect them. A clear and engaging thesis statement might contain words like "because," "since," "so," "although," "unless," and/or "however."

#### *5. How Do I Provide Citations for my Evidence?*

It is very important to properly cite your evidence. This distinguishes other writers' information from your own ideas, and thus you want to give credit to the source of the evidence. Additionally, as you write you'll need to include in-context citations. Check these online APA and MLA style guides for assistance.

The last page of your essay will be a works cited page. [Click here](#) for examples of APA, MLA, Chicago, and CBE/CSE works cited pages. If you are unsure which style guide to use, ask your teacher.

#### *5. How Can I Evaluate my Essay?*

After you have written your paper, ask yourself these questions:

- Did I include enough evidence to prove each claim I made?
- Was I specific? Did I show exactly how my chosen evidence backs up my idea? Or was I too general?
- Did I properly cite each quotation and paraphrase?

Don't be intimidated by the prospects of writing an evidence based essay; embrace it! The process will be a great learning experience that will help you both now as a student and later in life. Everyone can benefit from the ability to make a well-reasoned argument.

In closing, stick to the basics: consider a topic you would like to discuss. Establish a concise, arguable thesis statement. Locate credible sources and take the time to find plenty of relevant evidence. Be sure to properly cite the evidence you use. In the end, you'll have a nicely researched essay that will effectively prove a point you want to make.

## **Reading Comprehension and Writing Skills**

### **Reading Selection 1**

From [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/09/06/social-exclusion\\_n\\_1861560.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/09/06/social-exclusion_n_1861560.html)

#### **Social Exclusion: Why Do Kids Leave Out Others?**

**The Huffington Post Canada**

Posted: 09/06/2012 3:30 pm EDT Updated: 11/12/2012 2:07 pm EST

When a child gets left out from activities or cliques, we can all guess at the pain that's going through his or her mind. But what about the kids who do the excluding?

A new study searching for less harmful alternatives to social exclusion found kids had a wide range of experiences when excluding their peers. Therefore, believes Holly Recchia, Concordia University assistant professor and the study's first author, adults need to find different ways to approach these cases.

"The most useful interventions will be the ones that allow kids to weigh different goals, across different kinds of situations," she said. "This flexibility would allow them to handle exclusion in ways that minimize harm to other people while still recognizing their own legitimate desires and perspectives."

In Recchia's research, kids noted all kinds of reasons for excluding others, and even categorized them as good or bad. For instance, exclusion due to poor work compatibility was a good reason, while exclusion resulting in hurting someone's feelings was a bad one. In some cases, children would look for alternatives to exclusion, showing researchers an opportunity to change their behaviour.

The study asked 84 kids from ages seven to 17 to recall a time when they intentionally left out another kid (instead of creating hypothetical situations, like in studies past). Older children in their teens took more responsibility for excluding peers, while younger children mainly felt they excluded others for reasons beyond their control, such as peer pressure. This could indicate the possibility for exclusion alternatives based on age, researchers found.

When finding alternatives to social exclusion, another variable may include gender, as girls tend to exclude others in different ways than boys, PBS notes.

Some parents encourage social inclusion by getting kids to engage in more than one social group, develop solid social skills and value inclusive communities.

- i. What evidence does the article use? What point does the evidence support?

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- ii. How does the evidence help the writer present a persuasive discussion? Why is the evidence persuasive? Analyze the evidence.

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## Reading Selection 2

From Canadian Council of Social Development's website

[http://www.ccsd.ca/resources/CrimePrevention/c\\_exclusion.htm](http://www.ccsd.ca/resources/CrimePrevention/c_exclusion.htm)

### Social Challenges: Social Exclusion

Social exclusion means a lack of belonging, acceptance and recognition. People who are socially excluded are more economically and socially vulnerable, and hence they tend to have diminished life experiences.

The causes of social exclusion have been attributed to the economic and social changes in free-market economies, and to weaknesses in government policies and services. Because people who are socially excluded are vulnerable, some may choose to assert themselves or to push back in inappropriate ways. A study in the United Kingdom found that a disproportionate number of crimes are committed by people who are socially excluded.

But social exclusion can happen to anyone. As our society speeds forward to new technological and economic heights, it elevates some people – and leaves others behind. Individuals who belong to underprivileged groups or minority social groups are at higher risk of facing social exclusion.

Poverty is one of the key factors in exclusion. The CCSD report, *The Progress of Canada's Children 2002*, found that children living in poor families are less likely to have positive experiences at school, and they are less likely to participate in recreation. As well, children who live in persistent poverty are twice as likely to live in a "dysfunctional" family, they are twice as likely to live with violence, and more than three times as likely to live with a depressed parent – all risk factors for social exclusion and eventual criminality.

Unfortunately, child poverty in Canada shows no signs of diminishing. While the rate decreased slightly in the latter half of the 1990s, the latest figures indicate a child poverty rate of 15.6% – nearly one in six children. That is even higher than the rate of 15.2% recorded in 1989 when the House of Commons unanimously committed to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Instead, the number of children going hungry and the number of families becoming homeless increased substantially throughout the 1990s, further excluding these Canadians.

As the gap between the rich and the poor grows, concentrated areas of deprivation and exclusion are also growing in Canada's urban centres. Poverty by Postal Code, a CCSD study commissioned by the United Way of Metropolitan Toronto, found that the number of very poor neighbourhoods had grown at an alarming rate in just 20 years. The 2001 Census data showed that certain groups were at particularly high risk of being socially excluded and resigned to these deprived areas – in particular, new immigrants, young workers, and Aboriginal people.

As noted earlier, the UK study found that social exclusion and deprivation consistently emerge as underlying factors in the over-representation of certain visible minority groups in the criminal justice system. In Western countries, members of disadvantaged minority groups are more likely to be arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for violent crimes, property crimes, and drug-related crimes.

Canada is no exception. Data from Ontario correctional facilities reveal a prison admission rate of 705 per 100,000 population for Canadians of European ancestry, and a rate of 3,686 per 100,000 for Canadians of African ancestry. Aboriginals are also significantly over-represented in the Canadian criminal justice system.

Ethnic disparities in the correctional system seem to be the result of both discrimination and biases in the system, as well as disproportionate offending within certain populations. However, research shows that those minority groups which are disproportionately involved in offending are those which are economically and socially disadvantaged, in many cases as a result of historical discrimination.

In the UK, a social inclusion approach that was adopted in 1997 seems to have already helped to substantially diminish the risk factors for criminality. Their Social Exclusion Unit was launched as a multi-sectoral way to try to tackle poverty, housing, health, and crime issues. It aimed at stopping people from "falling through the cracks" in social services, and reintegrating those who had already fallen behind.

As a parallel to the Social Exclusion Unit, the UK's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit was created to narrow the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. Since the launch of these initiatives, there has been a 66% reduction in people sleeping on streets at night, a 33% reduction in the number of children excluded from school, and the successful placement of over 17,000 disaffected youth into school, training or employment.

- i. What is the main point of the article above?

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- ii. What evidence does the writer use?

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- iii. How does the evidence help the writer present a persuasive argument? Why is the evidence persuasive? Analyze the evidence.

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## GRAMMAR

### VOICE OF VERBS

#### Key Information

An action verb is in the **active voice** when the subject of the sentence performs the action.

The student **sharpened** her pencil.

An action verb is in the **passive voice** when its action is performed on the subject.

The pencil **was sharpened** by the student.

In general, you should choose the active voice over the passive, because it is more expressive and less wordy. However, if you cannot or do not want to identify the performer, use the passive voice.

The stolen goods **were returned**.  
[You may not know or wish to identify who returned them.]

#### ■ A. Identifying the Active and Passive Voices

Above each verb in the following sentences, write whether it is *active* or *passive*.

1. The vaccine for polio was developed by Dr. Jonas Salk.
2. American researchers are continuing to explore alternative energy sources.
3. The defense attorney will file her motion for dismissal early this morning.
4. The Academy Award nominees are announced early each spring.
5. The student council's plan was praised by a majority of faculty members.

#### ■ B. Changing the Voice of Verbs

Rewrite each of the following sentences by changing the active voice to passive or the passive voice to active.

1. The candidates for class president were introduced by the principal.

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2. An immature act of vandalism damaged the football field before the big game.

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3. The band performed three encores.

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4. My family has been invited to a dinner by our neighbors the Mendozas.

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5. My friend's bike tire was punctured by a sharp rock yesterday.

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## AGREEMENT WITH LINKING VERB

### Key Information

Do not be confused by a predicate nominative that differs in number from the subject. Only the subject affects the number of the linking verb.

The biggest expense **was** the new math books. [The singular linking verb *was*

agrees with the singular subject *expense*, not the plural predicate nominative *books*.]

The monster trucks **were** the main attraction. [The plural linking verb *were* agrees with the plural subject *trucks*, not the singular predicate nominative *attraction*.]

### ■ A. Making Linking Verbs Agree with Their Subjects

Underline the subject in each of the following sentences. Then underline the form of the verb in parentheses that agrees with that subject.

1. The two king cobras (was/were) a highlight for me at the zoo.
2. The book club's monthly feature (is/are) three stories by Zora Neale Hurston.
3. Keesha's three favorite music groups (is/are) the subject of the cable special.
4. The candidate's downfall (was/were) his ignorance and his bad temper.
5. The declining test scores (have/has) been a cause for alarm for educators.
6. Halogen headlights (was/were) last week's sale special at the auto store.
7. As usual, my mail (is/are) mostly promotional items and sweepstakes forms.
8. New test tubes (is/are) usually the chemistry department's biggest expense.
9. For some people a symphony's movements (is/are) a source of joy.
10. The power outage's cause (was/were) the two crossed high-tension wires.

### ■ B. Writing Sentences with Linking Verbs

Write five original sentences that each include a linking verb. Be sure that each linking verb agrees with its subject.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

THE END