

Evidence

Definition of Evidence

Evidence is a type of literary device that appears in different [categories](#) of essays and theses, in the form of [paraphrase](#) and quotations. It is presented to persuade readers, and used with powerful arguments in the texts or essays.

It is factual information that helps the reader reach a conclusion and form an opinion about something. Evidence is given in research work, or is quoted in essays and [thesis](#) statements, but is paraphrased by the writer. If it is given as it is, then it is quoted properly within quotation marks.

In [rhetoric](#), when a person makes a [claim](#) or presents an [argument](#), he needs to present evidence in support of his claim or argument, in order to establish the veracity of his statements. If there is no evidence, the claim stands quashed. The same is true with a case in law, where a case or litigation is quashed if there is no evidence to support the claim. However, literary evidence is only used in literature, essays, and research papers for [persuasion](#) and convincing purposes.

Examples of Evidence in Literature

Example #1: *The Bluest Eye* (By Tony Morrison)

“I talk about how I did not plant the seeds too deeply, how it was the fault of the earth, our land, our town. I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live.”

Morrison evidently analyzes the environment, as it has powerful effects on people. She provides strong evidence that the Earth itself is not fertile for the marigold seeds. Likewise, people also cannot survive in an unfriendly environment.

Example #2: *The Color of Water Juliet* (By James McBride)

” ‘...while she weebled and wobbled and leaned, she did not fall. She responded with speed and motion. She would not stop moving.’ As she biked, walked, rode the bus all over the city, ‘she kept moving as if her life depended on it, which in some ways it did. She ran, as she had done most of her life, but this time she was running for her own sanity.’ “

McBride supports his arguments and understanding of a mother as an individual who keeps moving in her life and does not stop to think about what is happening and why something is happening. Since the movement offers a solution, which though temporary, preserves her sanity.

Example #3: Educational Paragraph (By Anonymous)

An effective use of evidence in a quotation:

“Today, Americans are too self-centered. Even our families don’t matter as much anymore as they once did. Other people and [activities](#) take precedence. In fact, the evidence shows that most American families no longer eat together, preferring instead to eat on the go while rushing to the next appointment (Gleick 148). Sit-down meals are time to share and connect with others; however, that connection has become less valued, as families begin to prize individual activities over shared time, promoting self-centeredness over group identity.”

This is a best example of evidence, since the evidence is effectively incorporated into the text, as the author makes the link between her claim

Function of Evidence

When writing something about literature, or writing about a particular text, a writer needs to strengthen his discussion by providing powerful answers from the text as evidence of the questions he raises. It is not enough to just simply drop in quotations around the text and expect their relevance and importance of his arguments to be self-evident.

The fact is that simply making a claim and making an argument does nothing to convince the [audience](#). The audience will only believe what the writer or the [speaker](#) has to say if he proffers strong evidence to back up his arguments. Therefore, evidence not only helps the writer convince his readers, but also persuades them to feel sympathy, or to support his argument. Mostly political speakers, research writers, and editorial writers use evidence extensively to turn public opinion for or against some issue.