

Evaluating a Speaker's Reasons and Evidence

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

A strong speaker gives REASONS and supports each one with EVIDENCE. As a listener, ask: (1) WHICH point does this evidence support? (2) Is the evidence STRONG (specific, factual, sourced) or WEAK (vague, opinion, anecdote)? (3) Are any reasons MISSING evidence?

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Speech transcript - Lin urging the school to add a daily 20-minute reading block

Our school should add a 20-minute silent reading block right after lunch every day. I have three reasons. First, daily reading practice improves student reading levels. A 2022 report from a national education group followed 1,200 fifth graders and found that students who read silently at school for at least 15 minutes a day gained an average of half a grade level more than students who did not.

Second, a quiet block right after lunch helps students settle for the afternoon. Our school nurse, Mrs. Cohen, told me that more than 60% of the visits to her office in the last month happened in the hour right after lunch - the loudest, most active part of the day. A calm reading block could help.

Third, students enjoy choosing what they read, and choice builds motivation. I think kids will love it because reading is just really fun and amazing for everybody.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the speech transcript below to answer the items.

- Which of Lin's points is supported by the STRONGEST evidence?
 - The first reason - improved reading levels - supported by a 2022 study of 1,200 students.
 - The second reason - calmer afternoons - supported by data from the school nurse.
 - The third reason - choice builds motivation - supported by Lin saying reading is just really fun and amazing for everybody.
 - All three reasons are supported equally well.
- WHICH point does the nurse's data (60% of visits in the hour after lunch) DIRECTLY support?
 - The first point: daily reading improves reading levels.
 - The third point: choice builds motivation.
 - The second point: a calm block right after lunch helps students settle.
 - It does not support any of Lin's points.



3. WHICH point has the WEAKEST support?
 - A. Point 1, because the study is too small.
 - B. Point 2, because school nurses are not credible.
 - C. Point 1, because reading is not really helpful.
 - D. Point 3, because Lin only offers an opinion (reading is just really fun and amazing for everybody) and no actual evidence.
4. Which sentence in Lin's speech is OPINION presented as evidence?
 - A. Students gained an average of half a grade level more after reading silently 15 minutes a day.
 - B. Reading is just really fun and amazing for everybody.
 - C. More than 60% of nurse visits in the last month happened in the hour after lunch.
 - D. A 2022 report followed 1,200 fifth graders.
5. What would BEST STRENGTHEN Lin's third reason (choice builds motivation)?
 - A. Citing a study or a teacher survey showing that students who choose their own books read more pages or more often.
 - B. Repeating the same reason in different words.
 - C. Saying it more confidently and louder.
 - D. Adding a personal story about her favorite book.
6. Lin says, *A 2022 report from a national education group...* Why is this MORE CREDIBLE than just saying 'experts say'?
 - A. It uses bigger words.
 - B. It is longer.
 - C. It NAMES THE YEAR, the KIND of source, and what the report STUDIED - making it possible to check.
 - D. It mentions students.
7. What is a CLARIFYING QUESTION a careful listener could ask Lin to evaluate her FIRST reason?
 - A. Why don't you like math class?
 - B. Which national education group published the 2022 report, and how big was the difference between the two groups of students?
 - C. How long is your speech going to be?
 - D. Can we talk about something else now?
8. Which question would BEST help a listener EVALUATE Lin's evidence in point 1?
 - A. What color was the cover of the 2022 report?
 - B. How much did each book cost in the study?
 - C. Did Lin write the report herself?
 - D. Which national education group conducted the study, and was the result statistically meaningful?



9. Pick ONE of Lin's three points and write ONE sentence describing whether the evidence is STRONG or WEAK and WHY.

10. Suggest ONE PIECE of evidence Lin could ADD to make her speech more convincing. Be specific.



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9
- 10

Explanations


1. A	A names the strongest evidence: a recent, large, sourced study (1,200 students, named year, named organization). B is also evidence-based but is a single school's data. C is opinion, not evidence. D is wrong because the supports are clearly different in quality.
2. C	The nurse data is about WHEN students get sent to the office (right after lunch), so it backs Lin's claim that AFTER LUNCH is the time when calm is most needed. A is unrelated to office visits. B is about choice, not afternoon energy. D is wrong - it clearly supports Lin's second point.
3. D	Point 3 has NO real evidence - only Lin's opinion that reading is fun and amazing. That's a missing-evidence problem. A is wrong (1,200 students is a large study). B is wrong (school staff are credible for school data). C is contradicted by point 1's study.
4. B	B is a sweeping personal opinion - not a fact, not a measurement, not a study. A, C, and D are factual statements (a study finding, a percentage, a study description).
5. A	A replaces opinion with evidence (a study or survey) - exactly what point 3 is missing. C doesn't add support. B just repeats. D is anecdote, which is weaker than data for an evidence claim.
6. C	C names the real reason: specific, checkable details (year + source type + what was measured) make the claim verifiable. 'Experts say' is vague. A, B, and D are not credibility markers.
7. B	B asks for the SOURCE and the SIZE of the effect - exactly what makes evidence verifiable. A, C, and D do not engage with the speaker's evidence.
8. D	D zeroes in on the two things that make a study trustworthy: WHO did it and HOW BIG the effect actually is. A is irrelevant detail. B is unrelated. C misunderstands the source.
9.	Answer: Examples: (1) Point 1 has STRONG evidence because Lin cites a recent, large study (1,200 fifth graders, 2022) with a specific finding (half a grade level gain). (2) Point 2 has FAIRLY STRONG evidence because Lin uses real school data (60% of nurse visits) from a credible source (the school nurse), though the data is from only one school. (3) Point 3 has WEAK evidence because Lin gives an opinion (reading is just really fun and amazing) instead of any data, study, or survey to support the claim that choice builds motivation. Accept any single sentence that (a) names ONE of the three points, (b) judges its evidence as STRONG or WEAK, and (c) gives a SPECIFIC reason that fits the actual evidence (study, school data, or opinion). NOT acceptable: a vague answer like 'it's good' with no reason.



10. **Answer:** Examples: (1) Lin could survey her own school's fifth graders, asking how many of them read for fun outside of school, to show how much choice already matters to students. (2) Lin could cite a published study showing that students who pick their own books read more pages per week than students who are assigned books. (3) Lin could ask the school nurse for last year's monthly data so she can show the after-lunch pattern is not a one-month fluke. Accept any specific addition that (a) directly supports one of Lin's points and (b) names a TYPE of evidence (a study, a survey, more data, an interview, a published source). NOT acceptable: 'talk louder,' 'add more pictures,' or any non-evidence improvement.



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