**Definitions**

**Evidence**: Any factual information presented to support a claim. Evidence may be strong or weak. Evidence is weak when it can be shown to lack **validity** or **relevance**.

**Validity:** the degree to which something is well-founded, true, or accurate.

**Relevance:** the degree to which something relates or is connected to a topic

**What makes a piece of evidence VALID?**

A piece of evidence is **VALID** when it is **accurate** and **reliable**. Someone can question whether valid evidence is relevant to your argument, but they **cannot deny that it’s true**.

**VALID EVIDENCE CHECKLIST**

When considering if your evidence is valid, consider:

* **Who is the source? Is the source well-informed about the topic?**
* **What, if any, research is cited?**
* **Does your evidence include specific and proveable facts?**

Deciding whether or not evidence is valid depends on the subject you are working on.

* **MATH:**You can assume that the following mathematical evidence is valid:
* Accurate, numerical data(which is to say, it can be proven by mathematical calculations)
* Established mathematical theorems
  + - *Example*: “She owns *lots* of shoes” is not a valid mathematical statement, since we valueprecisionin math. If we know that she owns *15* pairs of shoes, this is valid evidence. It can be proven by counting.
* **SCIENCE*:*** Scientific evidence is considered valid when it:
  + Is accurate (eg, precise measurements and established formulas), AND
  + Has been established as true by rigorous scientific testing, experimentation, or observation
    - *Example:* “Cell phones cause brain cancer” would not be considered valid evidence, because no scientific studies have proven that this is true. The statement, “Cigarette smoking increases your chances of getting lung cancer” is considered valid because this has been rigorously tested using the scientific method.
* **HISTORY*:*** Historical evidence is considered valid when it is:
  + Historically accurate
    - *Example:*“Abraham Lincoln was a Democrat” is not accurate; he was a Republican. I
  + Comes from a reliable source
    - *Example:* If you read in a published biography of Abraham Lincoln by a well-known scholar that he wrote several drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation, you can assume that this is valid, since it comes from a reliable source. If you saw a movie that portrays Lincoln as a vampire hunter, you cannot assume that this is valid, since the film is a work of fiction.
* **ENGLISH**: Literary evidence is considered valid when it comes directly from the work of literature you are studying.