Evaluating Evidence in Academic Writing

Introduction to Evidence Types (15 minutes)

Working individually, match each evidence type with its correct description. Then discuss your answers with a partner.

Evidence Matching Exercise

Evidence Type	Description
1. Anecdotal Evidence	
2. Empirical Evidence	
3. Expert Testimony	
4. Statistical Data	
5. Peer-reviewed Research	

Evidence Strength Analysis (20 minutes)

Read the following evidence examples and rate their strength on a scale of 1-5 (1 being weakest, 5 being strongest). Justify your ratings.

Evidence Sample 1:

> "A meta-analysis of 50 studies published in the Journal of Educational Research (2023) demonstrates that active learning techniques increase student engagement by 45% compared to traditional lecture methods."

Rating (1-5): _____ Justification: _____

Evidence Sample 2:

> "My sister's friend said that studying late at night helped her get better grades in college."

Rating (1-5): _____ Justification: _____

Source Credibility Workshop (25 minutes)

Apply the CRAAP test to evaluate source credibility. Work in small groups to analyze each source.

CRAAP Test Evaluation Sheet

Criteria	Questions to Consider	Your Evaluation
Currency	When was it published? Is it up to date?	
Relevance	Does it relate to your topic? Who is the audience?	
Authority	Who is the author? What are their credentials?	
Accuracy	Is it supported by evidence? Can you verify the information?	
Purpose	Why was it created? Is there bias?	

Evidence Building Exercise (20 minutes)

Create an evidence-based argument for one of the following topics. Use at least three different types of evidence to support your position.

Topic Options:

1. Should social media be used as an educational tool?
2. Are traditional examinations the best way to assess learning?
3. Should homework be mandatory in secondary education?

Evidence Organization Template:

Topic chosen: _____ Main argument: _____ Evidence 1 (Type: _____): _____ Evidence 2 (Type: _____): _____ Evidence 3 (Type: _____): _____

Synthesizing Multiple Sources (30 minutes)

Practice combining different sources to create a stronger argument. Complete the synthesis matrix below.

Source	Main Argument	Supporting Evidence	Relevance to Topic
Source 1:			
Source 2:			
Source 3:			

Counter-Argument Analysis (25 minutes)

Identify potential counter-arguments and evaluate their strength. Then develop effective responses.

Topic: The Impact of Technology on Student Learning

Main Argument:

Counter-Argument 1:

Response with Evidence:

Evidence Integration Practice (35 minutes)

Practice incorporating evidence smoothly into your writing using different integration techniques.

Integration Techniques:

1. Direct Quotation
2. Paraphrase
3. Summary

Original Source Text:

"Research conducted by Thompson et al. (2022) at Stanford University revealed that students who engaged in project-based learning showed a 32% increase in critical thinking skills compared to traditional instruction methods. The study, which followed 500 high school students over two years, also found significant improvements in student motivation and engagement levels."

1. Write a direct quotation with proper lead-in:

2. Paraphrase the information:

3. Summarize the key findings:

Evidence Evaluation Rubric (20 minutes)

Use this rubric to evaluate the quality of evidence in academic writing.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Relevance	Directly supports main argument	Mostly relevant	Somewhat relevant	Not relevant
Credibility	Highly credible sources	Credible sources	Mixed credibility	Not credible
Integration	Seamlessly integrated	Well integrated	Somewhat integrated	Poorly integrated

Final Assessment Exercise (45 minutes)

Apply all learned concepts to evaluate and improve an academic paragraph.

Sample Paragraph:

"Many people say that online learning is just as effective as traditional classroom learning. A study I found online shows that some students prefer virtual classes. Also, my cousin did really well in his online courses last semester. Therefore, schools should switch to completely online learning formats."

1. Identify evidence-related issues:

2. Suggest stronger evidence:

3. Rewrite the paragraph with proper evidence:

Reflection and Assessment (15 minutes)

Complete this final reflection to consolidate your learning about evidence evaluation.

Personal Learning Reflection

1. What is the most important thing you learned about evaluating evidence today?

2. Which type of evidence do you think is most valuable for academic writing? Why?

3. How will you apply these evidence evaluation skills in your future work?

Key Takeaways

- Different types of evidence serve different purposes in academic writing
- The CRAAP test is a valuable tool for evaluating source credibility
- Strong arguments combine multiple types of evidence
- Critical evaluation of evidence is essential for academic success