

## Introduction to Convincing Evidence

Over the next few weeks, you'll be working with a group of students to craft an open letter to a world leader convincing them to take action on the controversial topic that we are studying in class. Being persuasive will require that you collect and share a range of different types of evidence in your letter. Use the handout below to begin exploring the characteristics of three main types of convincing evidence.

<b>Introduction to Convincing Evidence</b>		
<b>Type of Evidence</b>	<b>Your Task</b>	<b>Your Response</b>
<p><b>Statistics</b></p> <p><b>Statistics</b> are facts or pieces of information that are expressed in a number or a percentage.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> 80% of Americans are overweight.</p>	<p>Visit the Global Issues website listed below and collect three convincing <b>statistics</b> that could be used in a persuasive piece on poverty.</p> <p><a href="http://snipurl.com/sgzht">http://snipurl.com/sgzht</a></p>	
<p><b>Star Statements</b></p> <p><b>Star Statements</b> are direct quotes from experts, eyewitnesses, world leaders, or popular celebrities.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> “We’ve got to get our kids off couches and into gyms,” said Dr. Jim Petersen, an expert on childhood obesity.</p>	<p>Visit the <i>Washington Post</i> article listed below and find a <b>star statement</b> from President Barack Obama that could be used in a persuasive piece on poverty.</p> <p><a href="http://snipurl.com/sgzmu">http://snipurl.com/sgzmu</a></p>	
<p><b>Stories</b></p> <p><b>Stories</b> share someone’s direct experiences with the topic you are studying. They may explain the impact that your topic has had on an individual or a community, or provide examples of the consequences of your topic in action.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> By the age of 8, Johnny was overweight and lonely. He was teased in the halls, on the bus and at even at home. Obesity was ruining his life.</p>	<p>Visit the Oxfam website listed below, which details the <b>story</b> of one woman working to fight poverty in her own hometown. Copy down three or four convincing sentences that could be used in a persuasive piece on poverty.</p> <p><a href="http://snipurl.com/sgzvx">http://snipurl.com/sgzvx</a></p>	
<p><b>Questions for Reflection:</b></p> <p>Now that you’ve studied three main types of persuasive evidence, which do you think is the most convincing? Why? Which do you think is the least convincing? Would your answer change depending on the audience for your piece? Explain your thinking in three to five sentences below.</p>		

## Evaluating Persuasive Letters

Convincing evidence can make all of the difference when you are trying to be persuasive. Need proof? Then check out the two sample letters design to convince President Barack Obama to take action on global poverty shared below and answer the reflection questions found at the bottom of this page.

<b>Evaluating Persuasive Letters</b>	
<b>Persuasive Letter 1</b>	<b>Persuasive Letter 2</b>
<p>Dear President Obama,</p> <p>Imagine if you had grown up in the same Angolan town as Jonas, a 12-year old boy who is struggling to survive even as we speak. You see, his country has been destroyed by a civil war that has been raging for nearly 25 years.</p> <p>For Jonas, that means a lack of clean water and safe shelter. It means that schools are rarely open and that his father has spent more time away from home fighting than he has with his son. It means fear and hunger and most of all poverty.</p> <p>If you were Jonas, your life expectancy would be 37 years—barely old enough to even run for President here in the US—and there would be a 40% chance that you couldn't even read or write.</p> <p>Is helping people who live in poverty the kind of change you were talking about when you were elected, Mr. Obama?</p> <p>Jonas hopes so...and so do I.</p>	<p>Dear President Obama,</p> <p>Do you realize how lucky you were to be born in the United States of America? After all, you could have been born in a million different countries on a million different continents, and there's not a single place that would have been better than here.</p> <p>Think about it. What would your life be like if you were born somewhere else? Would you be the President? Probably not. Would you be able to read? Probably not.</p> <p>You probably wouldn't even have food to eat or a roof over your head. You certainly wouldn't have the fancy homes and cars that you have now.</p> <p>That's why you should care about poverty. I do.</p>

<b>Questions for Reflection</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Your Response</b>
<p>If you were to rate the two persuasive letters shared above on a scale of one to five—with five representing the highest score possible—what scores would you give? Why?</p>	
<p>Working with a partner, identify and provide an example of each of the different types of convincing evidence—<b>statistics</b>, <b>star statements</b> and/or <b>stories</b>—used in persuasive letter 1. Circle the piece of evidence used in persuasive letter 1 that you think is the most convincing.</p>	
<p>Working with a partner, list three places in persuasive letter 2 where the author could have inserted a <b>statistic</b>, <b>star statement</b> or <b>story</b>. Explain what type of evidence you would have tried to find had you written this piece.</p>	

## Convincing Evidence Tracking Sheet

Now that you have had the chance to explore three of the main types of convincing evidence used in persuasive pieces—statistics, star statements and stories—and to evaluate two persuasive letters written to world leaders on the topic of poverty, it is your turn to begin collecting convincing evidence for your own open letter to a world leader. Use the tracking sheet below to begin organizing the convincing evidence that you find while you are researching:

<b>Collecting Convincing Evidence</b>		
<b>Evidence</b> <i>Copy down the evidence that you plan to include in your persuasive piece. Be accurate with numbers and names!</i>	<b>Type</b> <i>Tracking the type of evidence that you are collecting will ensure that your piece is interesting to readers.</i>	<b>Source</b> <i>Include title, author and page number. If the source is a website, use <a href="http://www.snipurl.com">http://www.snipurl.com</a> to shorten the address.</i>
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<b>Tasks for Reflection</b>		
<p>Now that you have finished collecting a set of convincing statistics, star statements and stories, spend a few minutes completing the following reflective tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rank your evidence</b> in order from the most convincing to the least convincing. Explain your thinking.</li> <li><b>Generate a list of evidence</b> that you'd still love to find. What <i>statistics</i>, <i>star statements</i> or <i>stories</i> would make your letter even more convincing?</li> <li><b>Rank your list of sources</b> in order from the most valuable to the least valuable. Which sources should you return to first if you need to find more convincing evidence to add to your persuasive letter? Why?</li> <li><b>Have a peer or a partner check your ranked lists.</b> Do they agree with you? Why or why not?</li> </ol>		