

13. Three kinds of evidence

We use evidence to support our thesis statement. Three useful kinds of evidence are *experts' opinions*, *statistics* and *personal experience*. Look at the examples below

expert opinion	statistics/numerical evidence	personal experience
<p>It is often useful to use the writing of experts to support your ideas.</p> <p>This type of evidence is only useful if the expert isn't <i>biased</i> about the subject.</p>	<p>Statistics are only reliable if they come from a reliable source.</p> <p>Statistics can usually be interpreted different ways. Part of the writer's job is to <i>interpret</i> this evidence.</p>	<p>This can be <i>anecdotal</i> evidence (your own experience) or <i>hearsay</i> evidence (someone else's experience).</p> <p>Sometimes this evidence is not considered reliable.</p>

1. What kind of evidence is the following:

It has been reported that 408,800 foreigners visited Japan in February 2009, a 41.3% _____

Morihara states that the government is partially responsible for the bad image of foreigners. _____

At airports across Japan, we can see foreigners being separated from their Japanese families and forced to submit to fingerprinting and photos before being able to enter the country. _____

2. Which kind of evidence do you think is the most reliable? _____

3. Which is the least reliable? _____

4. Which kinds of evidence do you think need a reference? _____

For most essays, the best way to support your arguments is to have a good balance of different kinds of evidence. It is difficult to prove your thesis statement if you rely too much on one type of evidence.

Language Focus: presenting data

The data gathered suggests that...

The data appears to suggest that...

The data yielded by this study provides strong evidence that...

A closer look at the data indicates that...