

KINDS OF SUPPORT

In general, there are two kinds of material which you can use to support your point: material which makes the point clear; and material which proves your point. Both help to get your idea accepted by the listener. Listed below are some of these types of support

1. **EXTENDED EXAMPLE:** Give a detailed description of an actual object, specimen, situation, or event, which shows that your point is a true and accurate statement about something that exists. This is the most valuable form of support because, if accurate, it cannot be denied. (Its meaning or significance can, however, be interpreted differently.) It is also called an “illustration,” “narrative,” and “anecdote.”
2. **BRIEF EXAMPLE:** You can mention additional examples without elaborating the details. These examples are also called “specific instances: When they follow an extended example, specific instances reinforce the extended example, and “add fuel to the fire.” They provide good support. They can be used singularly, or together with other examples.
3. **HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE:** A hypothetical example tells a story that *could* have happened or probably will happen. It must be reasonable and consistent with known facts. Its principle use is to make an abstract explanation vivid and concrete. Be sure that it is clear to the audience that the example is imaginary.
4. **STATISTICS:** When instances become so numerous that they have to be referred to in numerical terms, they are statistics. These include percentages, averages, ratios, proportions, etc. They are based on actual things, and if accurate, provide a strong proof.
5. **TESTIMONY:** Many facts cannot be observed or interpreted by the speaker because he/she has had no opportunity to view them, or doesn't possess the training to interpret them. The speaker can, however, use the conclusions reached by those competent observers who have seen and interpreted the information. These people are “authorities” or “experts” and quoting their opinions can strongly influence an audience. The expert must, however, be a person whom the audience trusts.
6. **EXPLANATION:** Make clear what you mean by your point through defining, describing, recalling instances, interpreting, identifying, elaborating, or amplifying. Be sure to explain technical terms or phrases.
7. **LITERAL COMPARISON:** (Sometimes this is called a factual analogy.) One way of helping the listener understand what you want him/her to accept is to show how your desired point or plan is similar to something with which he/she is already familiar. For example, a plan which you advocate for your city can be compared with the plan already in operation in a nearby city.
8. **FIGURATIVE COMPARISON:** For purposes of clarity you can compare your idea with something which is completely different in kind, but similar in principle or feeling such as: “God is like a *rock*.” “government is like a *ship on the sea*” etc. Figurative comparisons include similes, metaphors, analogies, parables, and fables.
9. **CONTRAST:** You can show what you mean by explaining how that which you are advocating *differs* from the situation with which the audience is familiar.