

# Poe and The Fall of the House of Usher

“The Fall of the House of Usher” is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1839. Poe is considered a master of Gothic fiction, which centers on dark and terrifying stories. Poe focuses on psychological terror, as his characters often show madness.

Below is a passage from the opening of “The Fall of the House of Usher.” The narrator has just arrived at the home of his childhood friend, Roderick Usher. It is a description of the Usher’s house. A tarn is a mountain lake.

**S**haking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

## Part I

Using the context of each word or a dictionary, write what you think the underlined word means.

1. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation

\_\_\_\_\_

2. ...there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones

\_\_\_\_\_

3. reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer

\_\_\_\_\_

5. discovered a barely perceptible fissure

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part II

1. Write an example of personification in the passage.

2. Write a metaphor from the passage.

3. Write an alliteration from the passage.

# What's on the ACT Reading Test?

There are four reading passages of about 800 words each, always in this order:

1. prose fiction
2. social science
3. humanities
4. natural science

After each passage, you'll answer 10 questions that test you on what was directly stated as well as what meanings were implied in the text.

	<b>What it is</b>	<b>What you can expect</b>
<b>Prose Fiction</b>	Excerpts from novels or short stories  Most passages are contemporary, emphasize diversity, and often center on family relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Setting, atmosphere, and the relationships between characters are more important than facts</li><li>• Questions likely to involve identifying the implied meanings vs. what was directly stated</li></ul>
<b>Social Science</b>	Topics: anthropology, archaeology, biography, business, economics, education, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organization flows logically with clear topic sentences and well-chosen transitions to develop the main idea</li><li>• Author may have a point of view on the subject or may simply deliver informative facts in a neutral tone</li></ul>

<p><b>Humanities</b></p>	<p>Nonfiction passages—usually memoirs or personal essays</p> <p>Topics: architecture, art, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, music, philosophy, radio, television, and theater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative may use a more organic development instead of a linear one</li> <li>• Tone will be more personal and perhaps more emotional</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Science</b></p>	<p>Topics: anatomy, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, ecology, geology, medicine, meteorology, microbiology, natural history, physiology, physics, technology, and zoology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of details and sometimes very technical descriptions</li> <li>• Linear organization with clear topic sentences and transitions to develop the main idea</li> <li>• Author may or may not have an opinion on the topic</li> <li>• Questions usually track the text pretty closely and require you to make few inferences</li> </ul>

# How to Tackle the ACT Reading Test

Now that you know what to expect, here are six ACT reading strategies that will help you approach any passage:

## 1. Choose Your Own Adventure

On the ACT Reading Test, you only have 35 minutes to answer 40 questions. To earn your best possible reading score, you have to invest your time where it will do the most good. Always choose your own order, working first the passages that are easiest for you and leaving for last the most difficult. Learn more [ACT strategies](#) for working questions out of order.

## 2. Get Plenty of Practice

The best way to determine which categories you tend to ace is through repeated practice tests. Do you consistently do the best on social science? What types of questions do you find easy or difficult? Try some [ACT reading practice](#) or take a full-length [ACT practice test](#).

## 3. Read the Questions First

Reading actively means knowing in advance what you're going to read. So, before you start in on the passage, take a look at the questions. You'll know what important details to look for, and you won't waste time on details that never appear in a question.

## 4. Keep Moving

If you read something you don't understand, do not reread it. Just keep going, and worry about it later only if you have to. Learn more about finding the right [ACT pacing](#) for you.

**LESSON 5**

## Common, Proper, Singular, and Plural Nouns

A **noun** is a part of speech that names a person, place, idea, or thing. In this lesson, you'll learn about the different kinds of nouns and what they name.

**EXAMPLES**

- people**     Stephan, editor, aunt, actor
- places**     homeland, Wrigley Field, St. Peter's Basilica
- ideas**     prejudice, subtraction, boredom, plot, Romanticism
- things**     volleyball, song, trajectory, candle, Liberty Bell

Type of Noun	Definition	Examples
common noun	names a person, place, idea, or thing	mother, garage, plan, flower
proper noun	names a specific person, place, or thing; begins with capital letter	John Adams; Washington DC; Monroe Doctrine
concrete noun	names a thing that can be touched, seen, heard, smelled, or tasted	ruler, mirror, giggle, speech, banana
abstract noun	names an idea, a theory, a concept, or a feeling	approval, philosophy, Marxism, faith
singular noun	names one person, place, idea, or thing	governor, tree, thought, shoe
plural noun	names more than one thing	governors, trees, thoughts, shoes
possessive noun	shows ownership or possession of things or qualities	Roger's, Mrs. Pan's, women's, mass's
compound noun	made up of two or more words	staircase, picnic table, brother-in-law
collective noun	names groups	staff, platoon, team

### Common and Proper Nouns

The two basic kinds of nouns are *common nouns* and *proper nouns*. A **common noun** names *any* person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns are usually not capitalized.

**EXAMPLES**

- common nouns**
- any person**     A **guide** will give us a tour of the museum.
- any place**     The **park** was crowded with holiday campers.
- any thing**     A **key** opened the old, rusty **lock**.
- any idea**     Her **scheme** to take over the company failed.

A **proper noun** names a *specific* person, place, or thing, and begins with a capital letter.

EXAMPLES

**common nouns**

reporter, bridge, state

**proper nouns**

Sarah Smith, Golden Gate Bridge, Michigan

## EXERCISE 1

### Identifying Common and Proper Nouns in Literature

Identify the underlined nouns in the passage below as either common or proper. Write *common* or *proper* above each noun.

Lili did not reply. Old Mrs. Pan had unknowingly touched upon a wound in her heart. No man had ever asked her to marry him. Yet above all else she would like to be married and to have children. She was a good social worker, and the head of the Children's Bureau sometimes told her that he would not know what to do without her and she must never leave them, for then there would be no one to serve the people in Chinatown.

from "The Good Deed," page 88  
Pearl S. Buck

## EXERCISE 2

### Understanding Common and Proper Nouns

For each common noun listed, write two proper nouns.

EXAMPLE

author (*Edgar Allan Poe, Judith Ortiz Cofer*)

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. journal _____    | 6. family _____              |
| 2. ballplayer _____ | 7. fictional character _____ |
| 3. region _____     | 8. ocean _____               |
| 4. county _____     | 9. island _____              |
| 5. movie _____      | 10. poet _____               |

## EXERCISE 3

### Using Common and Proper Nouns in Your Writing

Write a paragraph to a pen pal, describing a place you would like to visit. Include some specific sites that interest you. Underline and label five common nouns and five proper nouns in your description. Notice how the use of proper nouns helps to make your description more specific. Use your own sheet of paper for this exercise.

## Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns that represent one person, place, idea, or thing are called **singular nouns**. Nouns that represent more than one person, place, idea, or thing are called **plural nouns**.

Most nouns can be made plural simply by adding *-s* to the end of the word. The spelling of some nouns changes slightly when the words are made plural, depending on how the word ends. Some nouns, such as *rice* and *moose*, have the same spelling in both the singular and the plural forms.

### EXAMPLES

#### plural nouns

For most nouns, to form the plural add *-s* to the end of the word.

camel → camels      path → paths      tray → trays

If a noun ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *z*, add *-es*.

lass → lasses      tax → taxes      scratch → scratches  
sash → sashes      blitz → blitzes

If a noun ends in *o* preceded by a consonant, add *-es*.

tornado → tornadoes      portico → porticoes

If a noun ends in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*.

fairy → fairies      penny → pennies

For some nouns that end in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* or *-s*.

elf → elves      life → lives

## EXERCISE 4

### Identifying Singular and Plural Nouns in Literature

Underline the nouns in the following passage. Write above each noun whether it is singular or plural.

She longed to see the bright persimmon dotting the barren trees beside the thatched roofs, to see the fields of golden rice stretching to the mountains where only last fall she had gathered plump white mushrooms, and to see once more the maple trees lacing their flaming colors through the green pine.

*from "Tears of Autumn," page 99*  
*Yoshiko Uchida*

## EXERCISE 5

### Correcting Singular and Plural Nouns

For each singular noun in items 1–10, write the correct plural form. In items 11–20, correct any error in the plural nouns listed. Write *correct* if the plural form is correct. You may need to use a dictionary to check your answers.

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. player _____   | 10. noose _____      |
| 2. bush _____     | 11. sopranoes _____  |
| 3. tomato _____   | 12. platitudes _____ |
| 4. echo _____     | 13. reef _____       |
| 5. fairy _____    | 14. canarys _____    |
| 6. pharmacy _____ | 15. shelves _____    |
| 7. leaf _____     | 16. partys _____     |
| 8. wife _____     | 17. sheep _____      |
| 9. wolf _____     | 18. mooses _____     |

## EXERCISE 6

### Using Singular and Plural Nouns in Your Writing

Write a paragraph about the first day of summer vacation. Use at least five singular and five plural nouns.

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## Inclement Weather Math Packet #5

DO YOUR FIGURING HERE

1. Shannon walked  $1\frac{2}{3}$  miles on Wednesday and  $2\frac{3}{5}$  miles on Thursday. What was the total distance, in miles, Shannon walked during those 2 days?
  - A.  $3\frac{5}{8}$
  - B.  $3\frac{2}{5}$
  - C.  $4\frac{4}{15}$
  - D.  $4\frac{1}{3}$
  - E.  $5\frac{1}{3}$
  
2. Mr. Wilk is a high school math teacher whose salary is \$33,660 for this school year, which has 180 days. In Mr. Wilk's school district, substitute teachers are paid \$85 per day. If Mr. Wilk takes a day off without pay and a substitute teacher is paid to teach his classes, how much less does the school district pay in salary by paying a substitute teacher instead of Mr. Wilk for that day?
  - A. \$57
  - B. \$85
  - C. \$102
  - D. \$114
  - E. \$187
  
3. A student has earned the following scores on four 100-point tests this marking period: 63, 72, 88, and 91. What score must the student earn on the fifth and final 100-point test of the marking period to earn an average test grade of 80 for the five tests?
  - F. 79
  - G. 86
  - H. 89
  - J. 94
  - K. The student cannot earn an average of 80.

DO YOUR FIGURING HERE

4. The oxygen saturation of a lake is found by dividing the amount of dissolved oxygen the lake water currently has per liter by the dissolved oxygen capacity per liter of the water, and then converting that number into a percent. If the lake currently has 6.4 milligrams of dissolved oxygen per liter of water and the dissolved oxygen capacity is 9.5 milligrams per liter, what is the oxygen saturation level of the lake, to the nearest percent?
- A. 64%
  - B. 67%
  - C. 70%
  - D. 89%
  - E. 95%
5. A rectangular lot that measures 125 feet by 185 feet is completely fenced. What is the length, in feet, of the fence?
- E. 310
  - G. 435
  - H. 620
  - J. 740
  - K. 1,240
6. The expression  $a[(b - c) + d]$  is equivalent to:
- A.  $ab + ac + ad$
  - B.  $ab - ac + d$
  - C.  $ab - ac + ad$
  - D.  $ab - c + d$
  - E.  $a - c + d$
7. If  $6x - 3 = -5x + 7$ , then  $x =$ ?
- E.  $\frac{4}{11}$
  - G.  $\frac{10}{11}$
  - H.  $\frac{11}{10}$
  - J.  $\frac{1}{2}$
  - K. 10

## DO YOUR FIGURING HERE

8. What two numbers should be placed in the blanks below so that the difference between the consecutive numbers is the same?

13,     ,     , 34

- A. 19, 28  
B. 20, 27  
C. 21, 26  
D. 23, 24  
E. 24, 29
9. The formula for the volume,  $V$ , of a sphere with radius  $r$  is  $V = \left(\frac{4}{3}\right)\pi r^3$ . If the radius of a baseball is  $1\frac{1}{3}$  inches, what is the volume to the nearest cubic inch?
- A. 6  
B. 8  
C. 10  
D. 14  
E. 15

10. If a gumball is randomly chosen from a bag that contains exactly 6 yellow gumballs, 5 green gumballs, and 4 red gumballs, what is the probability that the gumball chosen is NOT green?

F.  $\frac{2}{3}$

G.  $\frac{1}{3}$

H.  $\frac{2}{5}$

J.  $\frac{3}{5}$

K.  $\frac{4}{15}$

11. What expression must the center cell of the table below contain so that the sums of each row and each column are equivalent?

$-4x$	$9x$	$2x$
$7x$		$-3x$
$4x$	$-5x$	$8x$

- F.  $5x$   
G.  $3x$   
H. 0  
J.  $-x$   
K.  $-4x$



# THE ZIKA VIRUS EMERGES

46

(1) What is the Zika virus (ZIKV), what does it do and how fearful should we be of it? Though you might only have heard of the Zika virus recently, it has been known by scientists for almost 70 years. It was first discovered and isolated in Uganda in a forest called the Zika Forest. This virus comes from the genus of viruses called flaviviruses which includes related viruses like the West Nile virus, yellow fever virus and dengue (fever) virus. All of these viruses are *arboviruses* which means that they are transmitted from person to person by *arthropod vectors*. In terms of disease, a vector is anything that can carry and transmit an infectious agent from one host to the next. An arthropod is any invertebrate which has an exoskeleton and a segmented body. In the case of the Zika virus, its preferred arthropod vector is the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. Since the Zika virus can be found in the blood of infected humans, mosquitos can pick up this virus and spread it to uninfected humans.

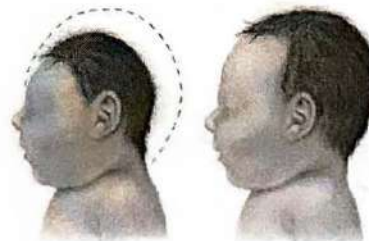


*Aedes aegypti* mosquito with its characteristic white banded legs.

increasing international travel, the threat of a Zika pandemic (an infection that becomes widespread over large regions and even multiple continents) is of great concern.

(2) Until recently, Zika has been isolated to the equatorial regions of Africa and Asia where it causes symptoms that are referred to as Zika fever, which resemble a very mild case of dengue fever. These symptoms include a fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Sometimes headaches and muscle pain are also present. The symptoms begin 2 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito but the symptoms are not severe and last only a few days to a week. Rest and fluids usually help a person recover fully. Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) can be used for the pain. However, since only 1 in 5 infected people ever develop symptoms, most people don't know they've been infected and Zika hasn't been widely reported in the media until recently.

(4) The current alarm that has arisen over Zika is not due to the Zika fever symptoms, it is due to the increasing evidence that pregnant women infected with Zika may give birth to children with microcephaly. Microcephaly is a neurodevelopmental birth defect. This means that it involves a disorder that affects the development of the brain. "Micro" is the Latin prefix that means small and "cephaly" comes from the Greek word for head or brain. Most



A baby with microcephaly (left), compared to a baby with a normal head size (right).

(3) In 2014, Zika began spreading eastward across the Pacific Ocean where it reached French Polynesia and then jumped over to Easter Island. Zika then spread to Central and South America and the Caribbean in 2015. Zika infected mosquitos did not make it across the ocean, but people infected with Zika did. Local mosquitoes in Zika free zones who bit infected humans would pick up the virus and begin to spread it among the previously uninfected human population, thus beginning a new chain of disease transmission. With ever

babies born with microcephaly are either born with a noticeably small head or a normal one. However, for those born with normal heads, they soon show outward signs of microcephaly when their faces and body grow larger but their skulls do not. This causes the characteristic shrunken head appearance of people with microcephaly. Not only are the heads smaller, the brains within them are also smaller which results in severe intellectual and motor impairment. Some children might also have seizures and life expectancy is reduced.

(5) Microcephaly can be caused by many factors, but an alarming number of cases of microcephaly have shown up in places like



# THE ZIKA VIRUS EMERGES

46

Brazil where there were 2782 cases of microcephaly reported in 2015 while there were less than two hundred reported cases in each of the two previous years. The rise in microcephaly seems to follow the 2015 outbreak of Zika in Brazil that led to increasing numbers of pregnant women being infected. It will remain to be seen how the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Brazil affects the international spread of Zika.

(6) Many countries infected with Zika have warned women to postpone getting pregnant until the outbreak of the virus can be contained. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) in the United States along with many other countries have issued

travel warnings advising pregnant women against traveling to Brazil and other infected areas. Effective vaccines currently exist for some flaviviruses, like the yellow fever virus, and now scientists are intensely focusing on developing a vaccine for Zika as well.

(7) Currently, few Europeans and North Americans report Zika infections because the type of mosquitoes that carry Zika are not found where they live. However, there might be evidence that once a person is infected, they may be able to transmit the virus through sexual intercourse. The evidence for this is currently supported by only a few cases, but as more research is done, sexually transmitted Zika may become confirmed.

## Article Questions

- 1) Zika is a type of arbovirus. What is an arbovirus?
- 2) List some of the symptoms of Zika fever.
- 3) What is the treatment for Zika fever?
- 4) What is microcephaly and what are some of the symptoms of microcephaly?
- 5) Why should health officials around the world be worried about the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Brazil?
- 6) Why has the Zika virus not made much of an impact in Europe and North America thus far?
- 7) Why have pregnant women specifically been warned to stay away from countries currently experiencing a Zika outbreak?
- 8) What are two potential ways that a human can contract the Zika virus?

## 9

PROVIDING  
SUPPORT**LESSON SUMMARY**

Your essay evidence is as important as the thesis it supports. This lesson describes six different strategies for supporting your assertions.

**A**n essay is an explanation, not just of what you think, but of why you think it. Readers want to see both deep subject knowledge and a unique viewpoint; it's not enough to simply provide a grocery list of your supporting reasons. Your *why* must comprise many types of support—including evidence, examples, and details—that are knowledgeably and meaningfully articulated in your writing. Six kinds of support this lesson covers are:

1. reasons
2. facts
3. specific examples
4. descriptions and anecdotes
5. expert opinions and analysis
6. quotations from the text

The boundaries of these categories are not absolute; an anecdote is often an example, and a reason can also be a fact. However, the categories are useful for discussing types of support and illustrating how to substantiate your assertions in a variety of ways.



### Reasons

For many essays, the best way to support the thesis is to explain why you think the way you do. In the Toulmin model introduced in Lesson 8, those reasons immediately follow a topic sentence, in order to provide logical grounds for believing what you do. Think of reasons as completing the following statement:

My thesis/topic sentence is true because \_\_\_\_\_.

Consider the following thesis, one quite typical of a high school writer:

*School officials should not be allowed to randomly search students' lockers and backpacks.*

For support, the following reasons could be used:

- these searches violate the right to privacy
- searches should not be done randomly, but only when there is a suspected violation

As you can see, reasons are the thinking behind the main idea; however, they are not always evidence in and of themselves—they need to be based on evidence or good common sense. That is, they must be logical. They can't simply be stated with an expectation that the audience will believe them.

Both of the previous reasons, for example, are opinions, and they need support to be convincing. To support the first reason, the writer could define the right to privacy (a combination of specific examples, facts, and description). He could provide an example or describe a certain situation where a search led to a violation of privacy (specific example, anecdote); and provide an expert opinion.

To support the second assertion, he could explore the idea that random searches can lead to profiling of who is searched and, without a suspected violation, everyone then becomes a suspect unless otherwise cleared of a violation. He could then provide expert opinion.

### Facts

Ask any young writer what good evidence is and you'll likely get a one-word answer: facts. If it's true—or at least appears like it could be true—it must be good, right? Many ACT and SAT test takers will generate facts on the writing portions of these tests, under the presumption that such data inevitably impresses. Unfortunately, their fake facts are often as absurd as you can imagine.

Facts must be handled diligently—they are a means, not an end. In elementary or middle school, your teacher may have praised you for collecting three or more statistics just because it showed you did some research; in high school and college, your teachers are looking beyond whether your statistics, definitions, and observations are right or not. They want to know that you've considered the context of the fact, understand its application, and know its power and limitations.

A gaudy statistic can be impressive, no doubt, but advanced writers think about how facts fit into the entirety of their arguments, not just whether it flatters their egos. A fact is only as useful as what the writer does with it.

Suppose a writer is drafting an essay assessing the flat tax. She's gathered the following facts to support her thesis (*A flat tax would be good for the government and for citizens*):

- The IRS publishes 480 different tax forms.
- The IRS publishes 280 different tax forms to explain those 480 tax forms.
- The body of the tax law has 7.05 million words—ten times the number of words in the Bible.
- The cost of income tax compliance is over \$1.3 billion a year (some sources estimate the cost as high as \$2 billion).

How would you **utilize** these statistics in an essay on the flat tax? Sure, 480 tax forms sounds like several hundred too many—but what is the direct connection between the number of forms and the stance of the thesis, that a flat tax would offer a better way? After asking questions about relevance, not all of these statistics may be useful to the writer's argument.

## Practice 1

Choose one of the essays for which you developed an outline in Lesson 6 or 7. Identify the reasons supporting your thesis, and for each describe one fact and one specific example that backs up your reasoning. Use the Toulmin model from Lesson 8 to compose at least one paragraph that incorporates your reasons and evidence.

### Description and Anecdotes

Evidence and support can also come in the form of short stories or descriptions that illustrate a point. Descriptions and anecdotes are effective evidence—especially in essays about people—because they help the reader form a picture that illuminates your ideas. In the following thesis, the writer addresses a college application essay topic:

*The person I admire most is my sister. I call her Wonder Woman. A professional who copes daily with the most stressful and potentially depressing situations, she is the strongest person I know.*

The best kind of support for this essay will likely be descriptions and anecdotes—a series of snapshots and stories that illustrate the sister's strength. Here's an example:

*Amy's job with the Division of Youth and Family Services is incredibly stressful. Every day for the past five years, she has visited families who are struggling with addiction, abuse, poverty, and hopelessness. One family has been in the system for a decade, cycling through the same problems without resolution. But instead of burning out, Amy's compassion and resolve have increased. She visits this family weekly, and is available to them almost 24 hours a day should a crisis arise. Once, she was awakened at three in the morning when the teenager in this family failed to come home. She got in her car and drove to their apartment, and then called the police and helped them file a missing persons report. And this is just one family under her watch.*



Similarly, to support the assertion that searches of students' lockers and backpacks should not be allowed, you could describe a search in which a student was unfairly accused of and blamed for a crime. The following description appeared in a law journal article about such a case:

*Wearing an orange prison jumpsuit and flip-flops, Sam Mazza looked dejected as he made his first court appearance. He was facing three years in prison for a crime he says was intended as a private joke. His spirits appeared to lift, however, when his attorney carefully laid out his case: The search of every locker in the school was unconstitutional. When Mazza's principal ordered the search, he was in violation of the reasonable suspicion component of legal searches.*

*Since the note about a bomb threat (Mazza contends it was a joke) was found during an illegal search, the case had to be dropped. Mazza sat taller in his seat and smiled at his parents when his attorney concluded his remarks.*

### Expert Opinion and Analysis

During a trial, lawyers often call upon expert witnesses to help them make their cases. These witnesses were not involved in the crime, but they have expertise that can help the jurors determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Similarly, in many essays, and particularly in research papers, much of your support will come in the form of expert opinion and analysis—from credible subject matter experts in the field who can help you demonstrate the validity of your thesis. This expertise is derived from Internet, periodicals, journals, books, and transcripts.

The strength of expert opinion and analysis as evidence comes from the fact that your sources are experts. Think about the groups of people whose opinion on your topic would add credibility to your argument—and those who would not. Take, for instance, the flat tax topic presented earlier. An accountant in your community, for instance, surely has an opinion on the topic—but is he an expert on it? He or she is certainly less of an expert than an economics professor or a politician who is a proponent or opponent of a flat tax. Support for a flat tax could be asserted using the following expert sources:

*The Tax Foundation, a nonprofit tax think tank, estimates that America spends \$140 billion complying with the current tax code—a cost that would be reduced 94% by instituting a flat tax.*

Expert analysis is more challenging to utilize, but is no less useful on timed writing exams. You will not be able to directly quote an expert or reference their knowledge, but you can talk about how a group of people is likely to respond to a topic, and provide examples or descriptions that enable you to speak for them.

For instance, if the task were to argue for or against school uniforms, it is well within your power to consider how teachers, administrators, parents, and even the community would respond to the new clothing requirements. How would these constituents be affected by such a change in policy? What would their opinion be on the issue?

### Quotations from a Text

When your essay is about a specific piece of literature, much of your evidence will come from the text itself. For example, imagine that you've written the following thesis statement:

*In his poem "Splinter," Carl Sandburg uses metaphor and sound to suggest loss.*

To support your assertion, you will need to discuss the poem's content, structure, and style. But that's only part of the task. In addition to telling the reader why you think what you do about the poem, you also need to show them the evidence that led to your conclusion. You can tell readers that the poem suggests loss by the repetition of the short *i* sound (known as a phonetic intensive in line 4 (*thin, splinter, singing*)). You can also explain how metaphor is used to emphasize the same theme, and show evidence by quoting the last line, which describes the voice of the last cricket by comparing it to a thin splinter:

*The voice of the last cricket  
across the first frost  
is one kind of good-by.  
It is so thin a splinter of singing.*

### Practice 2

Provide support for another essay outlined in Lesson 6 or 7, or add more support to the essay you used for Practice 1 in this lesson. Identify the reasons supporting your thesis, and for each provide one description or anecdote, expert opinion and analysis, and quotation from the text. Use the Toulmin model from Lesson 8 to compose at least one paragraph that incorporates your reasons and evidence.

### Summary

Evidence enables writers to demonstrate more than a position, including how and why they think the way they do. Evidence supports the writer's reasoning and comes in the form of facts, specific examples, descriptions and anecdotes, expert opinion and analysis, and quotations from the text.

### Skill Building Practice

Read an opinion piece on the editorial page of a newspaper or website. How does the author support his or her ideas? What kind of evidence does he or she provide? After you read the piece, keep it handy because you'll need to use it again in Lesson 11.