Command of evidence: best-supporting detail

A command-of-evidence question asks which finding or detail would most directly. . .



Lesson `rw.infoideas.I2`

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The idea

A command-of-evidence question asks which finding or detail would most directly support a specific claim or hypothesis. The correct choice supports exactly what the claim asserts.

What exactly does the claim assert? What would have to be true to support THAT claim?

State the claim precisely. For each option, ask whether it directly supports that exact claim, is off-topic, only partly relevant, undercuts it, or supports a different claim.

Watch every step

An author claims that switching to remote work increases employee productivity.

Which finding would most directly support this claim?

A. Employees who switched to remote work completed more tasks per week than they had before.

B. Remote employees reported enjoying their flexible schedules. ✗ *partial/weak support*

C. Office rents fell as companies adopted remote work. ✗ *off-topic evidence*

D. Output dropped sharply among employees after they went remote. ✗ *undercutting evidence*

Why A — "Employees who switched to remote work completed more tasks. . . ." Select the option that most directly and fully supports the stated claim.

Now a harder one

A study suggests that planting trees in cities lowers summer temperatures through shade and the release of water vapor. Researchers compared neighborhoods with many trees to those with few.

Which result would most strongly support the study's suggestion?

- **A.** Tree-dense neighborhoods recorded lower summer temperatures than sparsely treed ones.
- **B.** Tree-dense neighborhoods had higher property values. ✗ *supports-different-claim*
- **C.** Residents of tree-dense areas preferred walking outdoors. ✗ *off-topic evidence*
- **D.** City trees require regular watering to survive. ✗ *partial/weak support*

Why A — "Tree-dense neighborhoods recorded lower summer. . . ." Select the option that most directly and fully supports the stated claim.

The method, in one line

Command of evidence: best-supporting detail

State the claim precisely. For each option, ask whether it directly supports that exact claim, is off-topic, only partly relevant, undercuts it, or supports a different claim.

Does my choice support the specific claim (not a neighboring one)? Does it actually strengthen rather than weaken it? Is the support direct, not partial?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ off-topic evidence
Selects a detail unrelated to the specific claim, true but irrelevant to what is being supported.

⚠ partial/weak support
Selects a detail that is related but does not directly or fully support the specific claim.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

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