**11AP**

**Presenting Evidence**

PAPA SQUARE: P (purpose), A (audience), P (persona/writer), A (argument)

PURPOSE

RHETORICAL DEVICES, STRATEGIES

&

EVIDENCE

AUDIENCE

PERSONA

ARGUMENT

Once a writer has established a claim and developed a thesis statement, the next step is to support it with effective evidence. What evidence to present, how much is necessary, and how to present it are all rhetorical choices guided by an understanding of the audience. A person speaking to a group of scientists will more likely need facts and figures to persuade her audience, while one writing an essay for a local newspaper may want to use an anecdote to grab the audience’s attention. Amy Domini, knowing that her audience – the generally affluent and liberal readers of *Ode* magazine – will include many that are hostile to fast food, presents evidence regarding the positive changes that fast-food companies are making, as well as numerical evidence showing that fast food is a growing phenomenon that could have either a positive or negative impact on health and the environment. Keep audience in mind throughout this discussion of evidence, particularly in terms of whether your audience would be persuaded by more formal or informal sources.

**Relevant, Accurate, and Sufficient Evidence**

Regardless of the type of evidence a writer chooses to use, it should always be relevant, accurate, and sufficient. Relevant evidence is evidence that specifically applies to the argument being made. To argue that a particular car is superior from a dependability standpoint, bringing in evidence about its maintenance record would be relevant, but talking about its hand-tooled leather seats would not. Generally, good writers do not leave the relevance of a piece of evidence to the reader’s imagination; they explicitly spell out what the relationship is between an example and the argument at hand.

Presenting accurate information means taking care to quote sources correctly without misrepresenting what the sources are saying or taking the information out of context. One way to ensure that you have accurate evidence is to get it from a credible source. Think carefully about the bias any source might have. Is it partisan or backed financially by a company or industry group? Even statistical data can be accurate if it is from a source that has gathered the data in a way that will fit its own agenda. Accuracy can also be a matter of the audience’s perception. You should choose sources that they will find credible. If you want accurate dependability information about a car, some reliable sources might be a reputable mechanic, a magazine reviewer who has compared the car’s performance to other similar cars, or simply someone who has owned the car for a long time.

Finally, you should include a significant amount of evidence to support your thesis. If you based your entire argument about the car’s dependability on an interview with a single mechanic, this would not be persuasive. A mechanic only sees the cars that break down, so perhaps his viewpoint is overly negative.