

# REVISING INVESTIGATION WRITING—USE OF EVIDENCE

## Preparation

- Download the Unit 4 Investigation 4 Library

## Purpose

Much like they did for the last Investigation writing activity, students will review a student writing sample and analyze and then improve that sample. In this particular activity, students are focusing on the second row of the BHP Writing Rubric, Analysis and Evidence. This next step, in which students come to understand this vital ingredient of good historical writing, has them move beyond simply identifying where evidence is used in an essay, to actually revising the text to improve the use of that evidence.

## Practices

### *Reading, claim testing*

As with all the activities that students encounter in this series on revising historical writing, students have to engage in close reading, which is tied to the writing they are asked to do. Additionally, because of the focus on the use of evidence in this activity, it's helpful to discuss claim testing and how authors might be wise to claim test the evidence they intend to use in an article before writing about it. Not only is this helpful for ensuring their evidence is high quality, it also can assist them in anticipating counterclaims or counterarguments that may arise in response to their work.

## Process

Tell students that this activity is going to be a lot like one they did in the last unit. They're going to read a piece of student writing and analyze it using a section of the BHP Writing Rubric. Then, they'll use that analysis to revise and improve upon what they read.

First, let students know that the essay they're about to read was written in response to the Unit 4 Investigation. Remind them of the Investigation question for Unit 4: How and why do theories become generally accepted? It's also important for students to know that there were seven documents in the Investigation Library that was provided to the essay's author, and that all seven texts are available to them as they begin to analyze the writing.

Ask students if they remember three important things that should happen in their writing when using evidence. If they don't, share some version of the following:

1. They must use the texts, and they should use as many as they can as long as the texts actually support the point they're trying to make. In other words, they should use the most appropriate evidence available to them.
2. They must analyze the texts. That is, they should show that they understand the sources, and the connections between them, if they use multiple sources (including similarities, differences, and inconsistencies between the sources and evidence).
3. They must show how their sources connect to the thesis/major claim in their writing.

Ask them to read the essay, keeping in mind how the writer used and analyzed texts as evidence in their writing. Then, ask them to follow the directions on the worksheet: First, students will highlight the thesis/major claim in the essay. Then, they'll underline any area where texts are used as evidence. From there, they should pick two sentences/areas where they believe the writing could be improved in relation to analysis and evidence. Next, they'll revise that writing. Finally, they should provide the writer with two general comments about their use of evidence in the essay.

After you've had a chance to discuss student responses as a class, remind them that Investigation 5 is up next, and you expect that they'll all show their newfound mastery of analysis and evidence in their writing.

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## Directions:

1. Read the essay and **highlight** the thesis statement.
2. Underline anywhere a text was used as evidence, including if it was discussed or analyzed as part of the writing.
3. Pick two sentences that you can improve upon, and label one with a number 1, and the other with the number 2.
4. In the space provided below, rewrite the sentences you chose, correcting the citation if needed. Make sure to demonstrate a clear understanding of the source, showing analysis and connection to the thesis/major claim when possible.
5. Provide the writer with two suggestions about how to improve the use of texts as evidence more generally in this essay.

Rewritten Sentence #1: *Sample answer: Alfred Wegener, a meteorologist, proposed the theory of continental drift. As he wrote, “The concept of continental drift came to me as far back as 1910, when considering the map of the world” (Wegener, 1966). Scientists, historians, and other scholars built upon and bolstered this theory over time as they advanced their own disciplinary understanding.*

Rewritten Sentence #2: *Sample answer: In 1963, more evidence was discovered that supports the theory of continental drift, in the form of the Vine-Matthews-Morley hypothesis, which shows that new discoveries in science that support existing theories help those theories become more generally accepted (Vine and Matthews, 1963).*

## Suggestions for Improvement

1. *Sample answer: Use more sources/more of the Investigation Library in your essay.*
2. *Sample answer: Don’t just rephrase the quotes that you use – show that you understand how they relate to your overall thesis and how they support your points.*

**Note:** *This student essay was written in response to the Unit 4 investigation question, “How and why do theories become generally accepted? There were seven documents provided in the investigation library.*

Many people today can see theories being generally accepted throughout the study of science, history, etc. As stated in *The Big History Project*, “To explain an observed phenomenon, scientist often begin with a hypothesis,” (page 1). As the quote says everything beings with a hypothesis. People form hypothesizes to ask questions about a general topic or to gather more information about a certain thing. Like many scientists before us, most of them formed hypothesizes that tested to see if their theories were correct or not. **Due to hypothesis and solid evidence brought up people can see why theories are generally accepted.**



## REVISING INVESTIGATION WRITING—USE OF EVIDENCE

Alfred Wegener was a meteorologist born in 1880, and he came up with the theory of continental drift. As Wegener wrote, “The concept of continental drift came to me as far back as 1910, when considering the map of the world,” (text 01).<sup>1</sup> Today people see this theory as correct because Wegener drew conclusions that say that in his mind he drew a mental picture of the coastlines fitting together like puzzle pieces (text 01). People weren’t always so accepting of this theory because he was a meteorologist and because he had no solid evidence to prove it. As of today though, people have become more accepting of his theory and many people can also see what Wegener saw.

Many people did not believe Wegener’s theory, but some did. Harry Hess helps prove Wegener’s theory correct because of Hess’s evidence with the use of sonar and evidence that the sea floor was spreading. More evidence to back up Wegener’s theory was that scientists discovered the Earth’s magnetic field flips sometimes, which means that the Poles are sometimes are reversed, (Text 06).<sup>2</sup> Another thing that helped prove Wegener’s theory was how plate tectonics were formed. As said in the Big History Project, “the theory of plate tectonics offers an interesting case study in how an idea goes from being widely rejected to widely accepted within the scientific community,” (page 1). For example, when looking at the Himalayan mountains, people can see that the continents were apart at one point and when they collided the Himalayan Mountain Range was formed.

Due to hypothesis and solid evidence brought up people can see why theories are generally accepted and why we have the facts that we do today. Although their theories weren’t accepted at first they are now backed up but solid evidence and proof. People were not so easy to believe Wegener’s theory of continental drift because they do not believe that the continents move. They should believe continental drift is real because there is now solid evidence and proof that people can see. People can see the evidence through plate tectonics, mountains, and Hess’s proof with his sonar technology. There are a lot of other ways to prove his theory correct, and just like all the other scientists and like Hess they formed a hypothesis and asked questions.

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Comments from Turnitin: This essay earned a score of “Developing” for Analysis and Evidence; a score of “Developing” for Claim and Focus; a score of “Proficient” for Organization; a score of “Developing” for Language and Style; and a score of “Developing” for Applying BHP Concepts.

The major claim/thesis should be refined to more fully answer the Investigation question. The use of more texts and analysis/connection back to the major claim/thesis is necessary, as only a few texts were used and cited. The Organization and Language and Style rows of the rubric must be addressed to make sure you are connecting your body paragraphs back to your claim/thesis in a logical manner. Proofread to catch mistakes in both grammar and spelling, because errors take away from the progression and readability of the essay. Make sure you define and connect at least two BHP concepts in your essay.

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## Practices

### *Reading, claim testing*

As with all the activities you encounter in this series on revising historical writing, you have to engage in close reading, which is tied to the writing you are asked to do. This activity is also a good one for thinking about how authors might use claim testing before using specific evidence. This is helpful for ensuring their evidence is high quality, and can assist them in anticipating counterclaims or counterarguments that may arise in response to their work.

## Process

This activity is going to be a lot like one you did in the last unit – you're going to read a piece of writing and analyze it using a section of the BHP Writing Rubric. Then, you'll use that analysis to revise and improve upon what you read.

The essay you're about to read is a response to the Unit 4 Investigation. The Investigation question for Unit 4 is, "How and why do theories become generally accepted?" There were seven documents in the Investigation Library that was provided to the essay's author.

Do you remember the three main things that should happen in your writing when using text as evidence? Discuss this with your class. Now, look at the Revising Investigation Writing – Analysis and Evidence Worksheet. First, read the essay, keeping in mind how the writer used and analyzed texts as evidence in their writing. Then, follow the directions on the worksheet: Highlight the thesis/major claim in the article. Then, underline any area where texts are used as evidence. From there, pick two sentences/areas where you believe the writing could be improved in relation to analysis and evidence. Now, revise that writing. Finally, provide the writer with two general comments about the use of evidence in the essay. Then, discuss your answers with your class.

Investigation 5 is up next! Make sure to show off your newfound mastery of analysis and evidence in your writing.

# REVISING INVESTIGATION WRITING—USE OF EVIDENCE

Name:

Date:

## Directions:

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5. Provide the writer with two suggestions about how to improve the use of texts as evidence more generally in this essay.

### Rewritten Sentence #1:

### Rewritten Sentence #2:

### Suggestions for Improvement

1.

2.

## REVISING INVESTIGATION WRITING—USE OF EVIDENCE

Name:

Date:

**Note:** This student essay was written in response to the Unit 4 investigation question, “How and why do theories become generally accepted? There were seven documents provided in the investigation library.

Many people today can see theories being generally accepted throughout the study of science, history, etc. As stated in The Big History Project, “To explain an observed phenomenon, scientist often begin with a hypothesis,” (page 1). As the quote says everything beings with a hypothesis. People form hypothesizes to ask questions about a general topic or to gather more information about a certain thing. Like many scientists before us, most of them formed hypothesizes that tested to see if their theories were correct or not. Due to hypothesis and solid evidence brought up people can see why theories are generally accepted.

Alfred Wegener was a meteorologist born in 1880, and he came up with the theory of continental drift. As Wegener wrote, “The concept of continental drift came to me as far back as 1910, when considering the map of the world,” (text 01). Today people see this theory as correct because Wegener drew conclusions that say that in his mind he drew a mental picture of the coastlines fitting together like puzzle pieces (text 01). People weren’t always so accepting of this theory because he was a meteorologist and because he had no solid evidence to prove it. As of today though, people have become more accepting of his theory and many people can also see what Wegener saw.

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