EOC PART A

Identifying an argument and claims and evaluating evidence
STEPS

1. Read and annotate the text.
2. What is the argument? What reasons(s) does the author give for the argument?
3. What claims are given?
4. How are the claims connected?
5. What evidence is offered to justify the claims?
6. How can you evaluate the evidence?
IDENTIFY THE ARGUMENT/THESIS/MAIN IDEA

Consider the context, purpose, and audience.

Who is the writer trying to persuade to do or think what? (Is the argument explicit or implied?)

What is the structure of the argument?

Is there a counter-argument? Is it addressed? (explicitly/implicitly)

Is a solution proposed?

The line of reasoning that runs throughout the argument should reflect the purpose of the writing.
WHAT CLAIMS ARE USED TO SUPPORT THE ARGUMENT?

There should be a clear alignment or connection between the claims. If you consider how writing/argument is developed, each claim should address some aspect of the argument, or should build on the argument in a convincing way.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE

1. The evidence must support (align with) the claim and the reasoning in an argument. This adds to the validity of an argument.
2. Language for discussing/evaluating evidence (How well does it support the conclusion?): compelling, sufficient, accurate, relevant, current, credible, qualified.
3. When evaluating evidence, consider the appropriateness of the writer’s selection based on purpose, context, and audience.
4. Evidence may be used to: (a) align an argument with authority, (b) illustrate a process, (c) clarify a statement, (d) set a mood, (e) provide an example, (f) amplify OR qualify a point.
5. Writers used evidence strategically. Your evaluation should recognize this.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - TYPE

Writers use QUANTITATIVE and QUALITATIVE evidence.

QUANTITATIVE = data, facts, research, observations

QUALITATIVE = narratives, analogies, explanations, anecdotes

MIXED (combined)

The appropriateness of a type of evidence depends on the context, purpose, and audience.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - METHOD

INDUCTIVE REASONING - uses specific observations and/or data points to identify trends, make generalizations, and draw conclusions.

Proves a conclusion

DEDUCTIVE REASONING - uses broad facts or generalizations to generate additional, more specific conclusions about a phenomenon.

Provides a better understanding of a phenomenon.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - SOURCE

Is the source of the evidence:

1. Credible? - Is the research peer-reviewed? Has it been countered? Qualified? Further cited? What credentials does the researcher have? Has the researcher considered multiple perspectives? Has the researcher considered any limitations to his/her conclusions? Has the researcher disclosed any possible personal bias(es)?

2. Reliable? - Considering the context and situation for the argument, is the evidence the best in the circumstance? Consider the length of time of research, the size of the data pool, the parameters of participants, etc.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

Has the evidence been:

- Generalized?
- Oversimplified?
- Overextended?
- Misused?
- Misinterpreted?
- Taken out of context?

To the extent it has, it will qualify/diminish/limit the application/reliability of evidence and, ultimately, the argument.
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - COUNTERARGUMENT

Is there a counterargument?

Has it been addressed? Explicitly? Implicitly?

Has the counterargument been rebutted?

What has been assumed? Conceded?

How does it add to/detract from the argument?
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - ALIGNMENT

Evidence may be used to identify and explain relationships (show causality, show correlation, make a comparison or contrast for effect).
EVALUATING EVIDENCE - PERSUASIVENESS

What rhetorical choices has the writer made?

Are they effective (persuasive)?

Are the rhetorical choices persuasive in the context, for the purpose, for the intended audience?