

Boost Free Lessons - Year 9 English

Lesson 18: Justifying an Opinion with Evidence

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Read the extract below.

Nobody in the house mentioned the letter. It stayed on the hall table for four days, moved twice when the post came, and once when my mother dusted underneath it. On the fifth morning it was gone, and none of us asked where.

Your task: In about 300 to 400 words, respond to this question:

What does this extract suggest about the family?

You must support every point you make with a short quotation from the extract, and explain what each quotation shows.

Worked Example 1

Justifying an opinion: what turns a reaction into an answer?

1. An opinion on its own is not a response. It becomes one when it is **supported**.
2. State your point first, in your own words: the family avoids difficult conversations.
3. Then quote briefly. A few words are enough: *none of us asked where*.
4. Then explain what the quotation shows. This is the step most students skip.
5. Repeat for each point. Three well supported points beat six unsupported ones.

Point, short quotation, explanation. Repeat for each idea.

Remember: Point, quotation, explanation. A quotation never explains itself, and retelling the extract is not the same as answering the question.



Question 1: Plan your response before you begin writing.

1. My overall answer to the question, in one sentence

2. Point one, and the quotation I will use

3. What that quotation shows

4. Point two, and the quotation I will use

5. What that quotation shows

6. My concluding thought



Question 2: Write your response below. Continue on the next page.

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Continue your response here.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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Model Response and Self-Check: Justifying an Opinion with Evidence**Model Response**

The extract suggests a family that manages difficulty by refusing to name it, and that has done so for long enough that the silence has become a shared habit rather than an individual choice.

The clearest evidence is the closing detail that “none of us asked where” the letter had gone. The word “us” is doing considerable work here. It is not that one person avoided the question; the avoidance is collective, and nobody breaks it. This suggests an unspoken agreement that has been in place long before the letter arrived.

The physical detail supports this. The letter is “moved twice when the post came, and once when my mother dusted underneath it”. Everyone in the house handles it. Nobody reads it, and nobody removes it. The family is not ignoring the letter in the sense of failing to notice it, which would be easier to explain. They are noticing it constantly and choosing, repeatedly, to put it back down.

The detail about dusting underneath is the sharpest of these. Lifting the letter to clean beneath it requires touching it deliberately, and then returning it to exactly where it was. That is not neglect. It is maintenance of the silence.

Finally, the disappearance is unexplained: “On the fifth morning it was gone”. Somebody acted, and the extract deliberately withholds who. The family's habit is strong enough that even the resolution happens without acknowledgement, which suggests the silence matters more to them than the contents of the letter ever did.

Check your own response

1. I have answered the question directly in my first sentence.
2. Every point I make is supported by a quotation.
3. My quotations are short, and built into my own sentences.
4. I have explained what each quotation shows.
5. I have not simply retold the extract.
6. My points build on one another rather than repeating.
7. I have used quotation marks correctly.
8. I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

