

Let us presume that Western Europe will remain a major economic force for the foreseeable future . . .

Both reflect a status that is likely to continue. Let's be clear here; there is a difference, albeit one of degree, between making *presumptions* that ordinary events are likely to continue as they are unless an intervention is made to alter them and making *assumptions*, which is making a claim without evidence.

- *Values.* Values are commonly shared understandings about how the world either does or should work. At first glance, values would appear to be the vaguest and most subjective of the four categories. However, it's just as robust as any of the others. Imagine you asked 10,000 high school students, picked at random, whether capital punishment deterred crime or whether they agreed with a certain poll or study. You'd likely get some pretty mixed results. Now, ask the same 10,000 students, "Is it fair to be punished for something you didn't do?" If you had 1 in 10,000 say "yes," it would be astonishing. Nonetheless, "fairness" is a value judgment.

Value statements provide evaluations of the world around us; they place judgments on people, ideas, institutions, and actions. To be effective as evidence, they need to be meaningful. Look again at the fairness question and replace it with, "Is fairness good?" Again everyone would agree, but no definition of "fairness" is provided. It is a statement so bland that everybody—including the person who is punishing someone without cause—can support, but it's useless as evidence. Like a political sound bite or a marketing slogan, it sounds nice but doesn't really mean anything. To use a value as evidence, a judgment must be associated with a situation or what would be more helpful in this case, a definition of what is meant by "fairness."

So, were we to say, for example, that fairness is "being treated equitably in accordance with what we could have expected before committing an action on the basis of past experience" or that "fairness consists of rewards and punishments applied consistently to the situation rather than the individuals involved," then we can ask the audience to accept that such a state of affairs is "good" and measure a particular instance by that standard.

None of these types of evidence is completely distinct from the others. Some theories are a bit more "factish" and others are a bit more "presumptiony." Frequently, when building an argument, you may use a theory, backed up by some facts and wrapped in a presumption. Don't worry too much about what box it checks off as long as the audience finds your evidence reasonable.