More Thinking About Data

DIRECTIONS: Each of the scenarios below involves an argument someone might make to a particular audience. For each *claim*, there are four pieces of *data* that might be used to support it. Rank the four pieces of *data* and *then write out a brief explanation of your rankings*. Justify why the *data* you ranked as #1 are the best, and then explain why the other pieces of *data* are not as strong.

Scenario A

CLAIM: Mr. Jay should not be allowed to teach high school.

AUDIENCE: School principal

DATA:

_____ (1) He gives way too much homework.

_____ (2) One student of his explains: "I went to see him after school for extra help three times. The first time, he yelled at me for bothering him. The second time, he left after only 5 minutes because he said he had something more important to do. The third time he stayed and worked with me, but he made fun of me the whole time, calling me stupid because I couldn't keep up in class."

_____ (3) Last year, 10% of his students failed his classes.

_____ (4) His lessons are so boring that half of the students fall asleep during his class.

Scenario B

CLAIM: We should eat dinner at McDonald's tonight.

AUDIENCE: A friend who prefers Burger King over McDonald's

DATA:

_____ (1) McDonald's is the world's largest chain of fast food restaurants, serving around 68 million customers every day across 119 countries.

_____ (2) The last time I ate at Burger King, I had to wait in line for more than 10 minutes before I got my food.

_____ (3) In a blind taste test, 62% of people preferred the Big Mac over the Whopper.

_____ (4) Unlike Burger King, McDonald's serves breakfast all day.

(Continued)

Scenario C

CLAIM: The United States Congress *should not* pass a law banning private ownership of handguns.

AUDIENCE: United States Congress

DATA:

_____ (1) A National Rifle Association self-defense pamphlet reads: "Literally tens of millions of Americans disapprove of banning private ownership of handguns."

_____ (2) The Second Amendment guarantees all citizens the right to bear arms.

_____ (3) A study of state prisoners found that 56% of the inmates agreed that a criminal would be much less likely to approach a victim if he or she knew the victim was armed with a gun. Seventy-four percent of the prisoners agreed that criminals avoid houses when people are home because they fear being shot.

_____ (4) According to a recent poll, 1 out of every 5 American males fears that himself or a close loved one will be the victim of a terrorist attack.