

'EVIDENCE OF' VERSUS 'EVIDENCE THAT'

I was recently asked about the difference between "evidence of" and "evidence that", and whether "evidence of" can ever be logically correct. So here's the [e-GMAT](#) take on these terms!

'Evidence of' should be followed by a noun, and this noun should be the entity whose existence has been proved by the evidence. For example:

- Astronomers have discovered **evidence of** life on Mars. – CORRECT
- Scientists have discovered **evidence of** the dinosaurs being herbivores. – INCORRECT
- Scientists have discovered **evidence that** the dinosaurs were herbivores. – CORRECT

In the first sentence above, astronomers discovered evidence about something: about life on Mars. This meaning is logically correct. But in the second sentence, 'evidence' is followed by 'the dinosaurs'. Now, scientists did not discover evidence that proved "the dinosaurs". The evidence they discovered showed them that the dinosaurs were herbivores. This meaning is not brought out precisely in this sentence, since 'being herbivores' is a modifier for 'dinosaurs'. While this kind of usage is quite common in everyday use, official questions are very precise, and the correct answers are extremely unlikely to allow this imprecise use of an idiom. So, the third sentence makes the intended meaning far more precise by replacing 'evidence of' with 'evidence that', and following it up with a clause that conveys the meaning clearly.

Here are some more typical ways in which 'evidence of' and 'evidence that' are used:

- Experts examining the power plant found no **evidence of** leaks.
- The economy has shown **evidence of** a slowdown in the recent past.
- The government has insisted that there is no **evidence that** the recent employment cuts were targeted at specific industries.
- Geologists have discovered **evidence that** some of the glaciers in the Arctic have survived previous eras of global warming.

Examining how these sentences are constructed, we can see that 'evidence of' is typically followed by a noun, whereas 'evidence that' is followed by a clause. So the usage of these terms depends on the intended meaning of the sentence. If we mean that we have found evidence of a noun, we use 'evidence of'. If we mean that we have found evidence of a particular action, we use 'evidence that' followed by a clause.

Try applying this understanding to these official questions:

1. Astronomers have uncovered evidence that a star that was as bright as the full moon exploding into view 340,000 years ago, emitting dazzling radiation that could have disrupted Earth's protective ozone layer and sunburned our Stone Age ancestors.

A. that a star that was as bright as the full moon exploding into view 340,000 years ago, emitting

- B. that a star as bright as the full moon exploded into view 340,000 years ago, emitting
- C. of a star that was as bright as the full moon exploding into view 340,000 years ago and that it emitted
- D. of a star as bright as the full moon, exploding into view 340,000 years ago and emitting
- E. of a star as bright as the full moon that exploded into view 340,000 years ago and that emitted

2. Scientists have found new evidence of people initially registering emotions like sadness or anger in much the same way as heartburn—by monitoring what's going on within their bodies.

- A. of people initially registering emotions like sadness or anger in much the same way as
- B. of people initially registering emotions such as sadness or anger much the same as experiencing
- C. that people initially register emotions such as sadness or anger in much the same way as they experience
- D. that a person initially registers emotions such as sadness or anger much the same way as experiencing
- E. that a person initially registers emotions like sadness or anger much the same as

I hope this understanding helps!

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