

The Case for a Culinary Judgment: Building Reviewable Reasons

A proposal by Ahmad Issam Maadarani connecting observation, criterion, decision and inference limits

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A result needs a reason, and a reason needs a visible path from observation to decision. This article proposes requirements, evidence, connecting rationale, alternatives, outcome and boundaries. It concerns professional reasoning rather than judicial procedure and cannot guarantee correctness simply through organised writing.

1. Reasons must do more than rename outcomes

“The score fell because the dish was weak” explains nothing: weakness is the judgment requiring explanation. State the criterion, observation and effect on the requirement. “The component disintegrated during the required bite, failing declared cohesion” is concise and connected. Attributing disintegration to a recipe error adds a claim needing independent evidence.

2. The proposed structure

Start with the task requirement, observed evidence and conditions, the rationale linking them, unresolved alternatives, then decision and boundaries. Reports need not become long templates, but must preserve these relationships. If the rationale is personal preference, disclose it and whether the task permits its use. Expertise alone does not legitimise a reason absent a connection to the requirement.

3. Evidence of effects differs from evidence of causes

Lost crispness may be clearly observed while formulation, service or waiting remain competing causes. Valid samples can support a performance decision without causal certainty. Recommend examination of alternatives rather than accusation. If sample validity is uncertain, use the declared review procedure. Unknown cause does not erase documented effects, and effects cannot establish unseen preparation details.

4. Hypothetical case: weak versus examinable reasons

In a flavour-transition task, “the sauce is too strong, so the result is low” leaves strength and intended transition undefined. A clearer version states: “In the two examined combined bites, bitterness persisted after the main component's effect disappeared, contrary to the declared transition; balance was reduced under the adopted scale, while bitterness source remains unresolved.” Two bites illustrate this case, not universal sample sufficiency. The improvement reveals sample, criterion, rationale and limit rather than merely adding length.

5. Challenges examine the connections

Was the requirement declared? Is the sample representative? Is observation consistent with the report? Does the decision follow the rules? Challenges may reveal factual, application or interpretation errors, each needing different review rather than automatic retasting. The cook's disagreement does not invalidate the outcome, and the judge's confidence cannot dismiss legitimate questions about reasoning.

6. Detect duplication and selective evidence

One observation may appear under several names and affect multiple criteria without explanation. A report may include supporting bites and omit contrary ones. Review criterion relationships and whether rules permit one effect across several aspects, then explain rather than conceal this. Preserve contrary observations that could change inference scope. They need not all invalidate the outcome, but prevent presenting a variable sample as uniform.

7. Test reasoning separately from correctness

Give an independent reader the report without the final score and ask which decision the rule permits and what remains missing. Difficulty indicates a need for clarity.

Understandable reasoning does not establish accurate sensory observation; assess arguments and evidence separately. Predefine training indicators: criterion connection, inference limits, identifiable challenge points and absence of unsupported accusations.

8. Conclusion: authority supported by reasons

Good reasoning grants the judgment authority proportionate to evidence. It cannot remove every disagreement, but prevents outcomes resting on unexaminable generalities. When cooks see requirement, observation and decision connected, they can understand or challenge a specific link. Criticism becomes responsible and scores summarise visible reasons rather than replace them.

9. A concise working sheet

Field	Review question	What to record
Requirement	Which rule applies?	Begin with the declared task rather than the outcome label.
Evidence	Which observation and conditions?	Specify samples and retain contrary notes.
Connection	Why does it affect the criterion?	Explain without relying on author status.
Alternatives	Which causes remain unresolved?	Separate documented effects from inferred causes.

Field	Review question	What to record
Decision	Is the result proportionate to evidence?	State limits and possible challenge points.

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