

This Kibbitzer is based on the following point from an end-of- term paper by a Japanese-student of EFL:

Original	Revision
When I asked her <b>reason to attend</b> classes, she said ...	When I asked her <b>reason for attending</b> classes, she said ....

The importance of the word **reason** in academic discourse suggested that it might be worth looking at these structures more closely. A rapid concordance of **reason** in the immediate left context of **for + V+ing** and **to + V** showed that there was a strong tendency for the former structure to appear where the reason is named as **specific** (typical determiners being Possessives, **the** and **one**), while the latter structure tended to appear where the reason is named as **non-specific** (typical determiners being **every**, **any** and **no**, together with the Zero determiner):

1 ing to use Mr Yeltsin's poor health as a reason for overthrowing him. The president spen  
2 us. `That, he said heavily, `is the best reason for getting the Prince of Wales married  
3 er action against EU fraud is not a good reason for holding up legislation which must ge  
4 matic venture, he reminded them that his reason for being there was not to act as a role  
5 de this year. But that slide is the main reason for fearing higher inflation just when t  
6 it was rumoured yesterday that the MoD/s reason for blocking the book was its concern th  
7 es. "But the Citizens' is different. My reason for working is to try and enjoy myself.  
8 mperfect comprehension. This is just one reason for welcoming the increasing availabilit  
9 Gregor Mendel. But that is not the real reason for cutting such people out of your life  
10 eeing another soul. This was part of the reason for moving her manufacturing base away f

11 harmonising dialogue. We all have ample reason to be grateful to Spender for his 85 yea  
12 ue of agents provocateurs. If we had any reason to suspect that an informant was acting  
13 for three days to read it. We have every reason to be grateful to Andrew Davies for serv  
14 am Hussein. He is now a democrat and has reason to regret it. >The other is Ali Salim al  
15 o suburbia, there has been less and less reason to use the middle of many cities. >The h  
16 ts so many times now that we have little reason to believe that this will stop the firin  
17 little as possible "because there is no reason to believe that they do it better than b  
18 el when he was taken ill, but we have no reason to suppose it was inadequate.' The reali  
19 . Let us try the second option. Is there reason to believe our intuitions are not genuin  
20 egun on the tunnel and there was no real reason to doubt the project's viability - but s

After the consultation a more detailed investigation of 400 citations for the two structures confirmed the initial overall judgement, but but gave a more detailed picture:

Determiner	for +V +ing	to+V	Determiner	for +V +ing	to+V
<b>Possessives</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>every</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>
my reason	7	-	have every reason	2	27
their reason	6	-	there be every reason	-	10
his reason	5	-	give X every reason	-	3
's reason	5	-	(Other)	-	1
her reason	4	-			

its reason	3	-	<b>Zero determiner</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>96</b>	
your reason	2	-		have reason	1	36
whose reason	1	-		be reason	1	7
				have good reason	9	32
<b>the</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>5</b>	be good reason	3	3	
the reason	36	5	have/be (other adj) reason	2	9	
the only reason	18	-	(Other)	2	9	
the main reason	16	-	<b>no</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>109</b>	
the best reason	7	-		be no reason	12	73
the real reason	6	-		have no reason	-	35
the major reason	3	-		see no reason	2	31
the other reason	3	-		give no reason	3	1
the principal reason	3	-		no good reason	1	4
the sole reason	3	-		<b>any</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>
the (other adj) reason	14	-	have any reason		-	7
<b>one</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	see any reason		1	4
			give any reason		2	2
<b>a</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>26</b>	be any reason	1	2	
a reason	44	16				
another reason	17	3				
a good reason	11	1				
a/an (other adj) reason	36	6				

Evidently there is more to be discovered in these data by the determined linguistic researcher: for example the effect on specificity of the presence of an adjective. Also, further data are needed for these two structures in the context of the plural noun **reasons**.

Checks of a number of standard works of reference have failed to identify previous discussion of the point in this Kibbitzer: if you happen know of any such discussion, we'd be grateful if you could [e-mail us](#) with a reference.