

Exercise walk-through

1.2

Identifying claims and evidence

AP English Language and Composition

Identifying Claims and Evidence

That fourth point is the most useful test you have. Ask of any sentence: *could a reasonable person disagree?* If not, it is not a claim – it is a fact, and building a paragraph on it produces writing with nothing to prove.

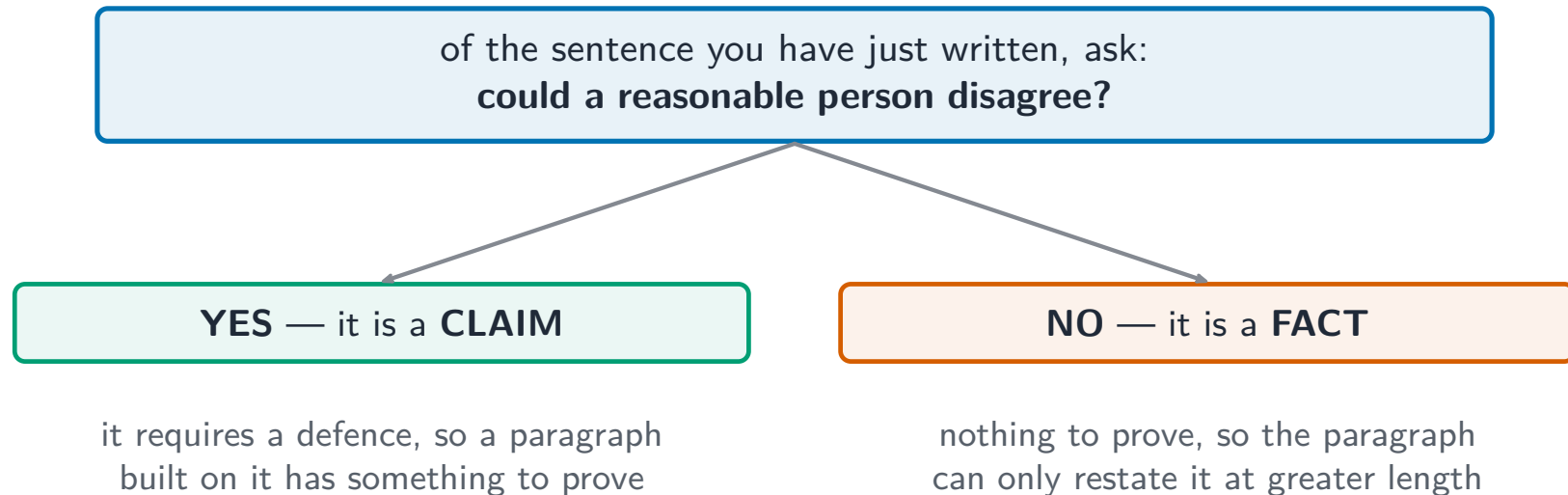
- Writers convey their positions through one or more **claims** that require a defence.
- Writers defend their claims with **evidence and/or reasoning**.
- Types of evidence include facts, anecdotes, analogies, statistics, examples, details, illustrations, expert opinions, and personal experience – a deliberately wide list, because recognising an anecdote or an analogy as evidence is itself a skill.
- Effective claims provoke interest and require a defence, rather than stating an obvious, known fact that requires no proof.

Identifying Claims and Evidence, continued

Finally, writers **relate source material to their own argument by syntactically embedding** quoted, paraphrased, or summarised material into their own sentences.

The evidence is not dropped in beside your sentence; it is built into it.

Claim, or fact? One test



A claim **provokes** and requires a defence. Run this on every topic sentence before you spend a paragraph on it

Dropped in, and embedded

DROPPED IN

The author is critical of the policy. “It has failed every test we set it.” This shows he disagrees.

EMBEDDED

Calling the policy something that has “failed every test we set it,” the author turns a disagreement into a verdict.

Same quotation, different sentence. Embedded, the evidence is doing work in **your** clause – which is what “relate source material to your own argument” means

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the difference between a claim and a fact.

[2]

2.2 State two kinds of evidence a writer might use.

[2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the difference between a claim and a fact. [2]

2.1

- a fact can be verified and is not in dispute; a claim could be disputed and the writer undertakes to support it

2.2 State two kinds of evidence a writer might use. [2]

2.2

- any two of: statistics, anecdote, expert testimony, historical precedent, direct observation

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A writer states: “Our libraries are failing. Visits fell 30% in five years.”

(a) Identify the claim.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A writer states: “Our libraries are failing. Visits fell 30% in five years.”

(a) Identify the claim.

[1]

(a)

- “our libraries are failing”

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A writer states: “Our libraries are failing. Visits fell 30% in five years.”

(b) Identify the kind of evidence.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A writer states: “Our libraries are failing. Visits fell 30% in five years.”

(b) Identify the kind of evidence.

[1]

(b)

- statistical

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Which of these is a claim rather than a fact?

[1]

☐

A The bridge was built in 1932.

B The bridge carries 12,000 vehicles daily.

C The bridge should be replaced.

D The bridge is 400 metres long.

3.2 A paragraph gives three vivid personal stories and no figures. Its evidence is best described as

[1]

☐

A statistical

B anecdotal

C expert testimony

D historical precedent

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Which of these is a claim rather than a fact?

[1]

☐

A The bridge was built in 1932.

B The bridge carries 12,000 vehicles daily.

C The bridge should be replaced.

D The bridge is 400 metres long.

3.1 C

- it is disputable and requires support

3.2 A paragraph gives three vivid personal stories and no figures. Its evidence is best described as

[1]

☐

A statistical

B anecdotal

C expert testimony

D historical precedent

3.2 B

- personal stories without figures are anecdotal evidence

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A passage presents striking data and then moves to a new topic without comment.

(a) State what is missing.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A passage presents striking data and then moves to a new topic without comment.

(a) State what is missing. [1]

(a)

- the link between the evidence and the claim – commentary

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A passage presents striking data and then moves to a new topic without comment.

(b) Explain why the argument is weaker for it.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A passage presents striking data and then moves to a new topic without comment.

(b) Explain why the argument is weaker for it. [2]

(b)

- the reader must supply the connection themselves, and may draw a different conclusion from the same data