

7.3 How claims are qualified

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to analyse **how a claim is qualified** in a text.

You must be able to:

- identify the qualifying word, clause or structure
- state what the qualification excludes
- distinguish a qualification from a hedge and from a concession
- explain the effect of qualification on credibility

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Where qualification lives

In a **word** (often, typically, largely), a **clause** (where transport allows), a **modal** (may, can, might), or a **structure** (a subordinate clause carrying the exception). Point to the actual language.

■ What it excludes

A qualification is informative in proportion to what it rules out. "In cities over one million" excludes a great deal; "in some circumstances" excludes nothing.

■ Three different moves

A **qualification** limits the claim's scope. A **hedge** weakens the writer's commitment without limiting scope. A **concession** grants a separate point to the other side. They look similar and do different work.

2 Practice

2.1 Name three places qualification can appear in a sentence.

[3]

2.2 State the difference between a qualification and a hedge. [2]

2.3 "This holds in cities over one million; elsewhere the effect reverses."

(a) State what the qualification excludes. [1]

(b) State its effect on credibility. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 "In some circumstances" is best described as [1]

- **A** an informative qualification
- **B** a hedge
- **C** a concession
- **D** a thesis

3.2 A qualification is informative in proportion to [1]

- **A** its length
- **B** what it rules out
- **C** where it appears
- **D** the writer's tone

3.3 A passage qualifies its central claim three times in one paragraph.

(a) State one possible reason. [1]

(b) Explain the risk. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **7.3 How claims are qualified** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 any three of: a qualifying word; a limiting clause; a modal verb; a subordinate structure carrying the exception.

2.2 a qualification limits the claim's scope; a hedge weakens the writer's commitment without limiting anything.

2.3 (a) all cities under one million, where the effect is said to reverse. (b) it raises credibility, since the writer states where the claim fails.

3.1 B. it weakens commitment without excluding any case.

3.2 B. what is excluded is what makes it informative.

3.3 (a) the audience is expert or hostile and will test the claim. (b) repeated qualification can leave the reader unsure what is being claimed, so the argument loses force even as it gains accuracy.