

9.2 Qualifying a claim

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to qualify a claim across an **entire essay**.

You must be able to:

- plan where each limit will be introduced
- give each limit a reason drawn from the evidence
- keep the final claim strong enough to be worth making
- write a conclusion that states the narrowed position

1 Worked examples

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

■ Planning the limits

Before drafting, list the objections you expect and decide which you will meet with a limit and which with evidence. Limits belong where the objection would first occur to the reader.

■ Reasons from the evidence

Each limit should be introduced by what forced it: "the two rural districts show no effect, so the claim holds only where services are frequent." The limit then reads as honesty rather than retreat.

■ Keeping the claim worth making

Ask at the end: does anyone disagree with what is left? If not, the qualifications have gone too far, and one should be argued rather than granted.

■ The conclusion

State the narrowed claim in full—with its conditions—and say what follows from it. A conclusion that restates the original broad claim contradicts the essay.

2 Practice

2.1 State where a limit belongs in an essay.

[2]

2.2 State the test of whether qualification has gone too far. [2]

2.3 An essay narrows its claim three times and concludes with the original broad claim.

(a) Name the fault. [1]

(b) State the fix. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A limit reads as honesty rather than retreat when it is introduced by [1]

- **A** an apology
 - **B** the evidence that forced it
 - **C** a rhetorical question
 - **D** a transition of addition
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3.2 If nobody would disagree with the final claim, the essay has [1]

- **A** succeeded
 - **B** qualified it out of existence
 - **C** conceded correctly
 - **D** found the thesis
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3.3 Plan a qualified argument for: "Universities should drop standardised admissions tests."

(a) State your claim and two limits. [2]

(b) State the reason for each limit. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **9.2 Qualifying a claim** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Refining Qualified Arguments** section of the AP English Language hand-out on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 where the objection it answers would first occur to the reader, so it is met before it becomes a doubt.

2.2 ask whether anyone would still disagree with what is left; if not, it has been qualified out of existence.

2.3 (a) the conclusion contradicts the essay by restating the unqualified claim. (b) state the narrowed claim, with its conditions, in the conclusion.

3.1 B. a limit forced by evidence is a finding, not a retreat.

3.2 B. a claim nobody disputes is not an argument.

3.3 (a) a claim plus two nameable limits. (b) a reason drawn from evidence for each.