

Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions

AP English Language ■ Unit 7

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What we will cover

- 1 Introductions and Conclusions Revisited
- 2 Writing Introductions and Conclusions
- 3 How Claims Are Qualified
- 4 Qualifying a Claim
- 5 Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas
- 6 Writing Clear Sentences

Introductions and Conclusions Revisited

Unit 7 returns to introductions and conclusions with more experience behind you, then moves to the two things that most separate competent writing from strong writing: **qualification** 限定 and **sentence structure**.

Writing Introductions and Conclusions

At this stage the useful upgrade is to make the conclusion do the work the CED permits. A conclusion may:

- Explain the **significance** of the argument – why it matters that this is true;
- Situate it in a **broader context** – what larger question it belongs to;
- Present the **thesis** in its final, now-earned form.

Writing Introductions and Conclusions, continued

The third is the strongest under exam conditions: restate the thesis in language you could not have used in the introduction, because the argument had not yet been made.

How Claims Are Qualified

- A lack of understanding of the complexities of a subject can lead to **oversimplification or generalisation** 过度简化与以偏概全.
- Because arguments are usually part of an ongoing discourse, effective arguments often **avoid expressing claims in absolute terms** 绝对化表述.
- Writers may strategically use words, phrases, and clauses as modifiers to qualify or limit the scope of an argument.

Qualifying a Claim

The tools are ordinary words used deliberately:
in most cases, where X holds, for this population, unless, to the extent that. Each narrows the claim to the ground the evidence actually covers.

A student who states a position, then shows they know its limits and defends it anyway, has demonstrated exactly the control the rubric is looking for.

Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

Two ways to join ideas - and they mean different things

COORDINATION

shows **BALANCE** - the ideas are equals

*"The measure was expensive,
and it worked."*

cost and result are ranked
the same; the reader weighs both

SUBORDINATION

shows **IMBALANCE** - one idea outranks the other

*"Although the measure was expensive,
it worked."*

the cost is still true, but it has been
ranked **BELOW** the result

Same two facts. Different argument. Put YOUR point in the independent clause.

the distinction this unit turns on

Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

- Writers express ideas in **sentences**, made up of **clauses**, at least one of which must be **independent** 独立分句.
- The arrangement of sentences in a text can emphasise particular ideas.
- **Subordination and coordination** 从属与并列 express the intended relationship between ideas in a sentence.
- Writers use **coordination** to illustrate balance or equality between ideas.
- Writers use **subordination** to illustrate imbalance or inequality between ideas.

Writing Clear Sentences

For your own writing: decide the relationship first, then choose the structure that expresses it. If two ideas genuinely carry equal weight, coordinate them.

If one is a concession and the other your point, subordinate the concession – and put your point in the independent clause, where the emphasis falls.

Grammar, Mechanics, and Clarity

- Grammar and mechanics that follow established conventions enable clear communication.
- Writers use punctuation strategically to demonstrate relationships among ideas.
- Punctuation – commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, quotation marks, end marks – advances the argument.
- Design features such as italics or boldface create emphasis.

Conventions of Grammar and Mechanics

The examinable framing is that punctuation is **argumentative**, not merely correct. A colon promises that what follows explains what preceded. A semicolon asserts that two independent statements belong together.

A dash interrupts, and the interruption is the point.

Exam tips

- **Qualify your claims.** An absolute claim is defeated by one counter-example; a qualified one is not.
- Qualification is the most reliable route to the **sophistication point**.
- **Coordination = balance. Subordination = imbalance.** The CED says so, and it makes syntax analysable.
- Put your point in the **independent clause**. Concessions belong in the subordinate one.
- Punctuation **advances the argument**. A colon explains, a semicolon joins as equals, a dash interrupts.
- Never write "the writer uses a semicolon" without saying **what relationship it asserts**.