

Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions

AP English Language ■ Unit 7

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Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions

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

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Introductions and Conclusions Revisited

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**.

2

Writing Introductions and Conclusions

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.

3

How Claims Are Qualified

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.

4 Qualifying a Claim

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Qualifying a Claim

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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.

Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions

Qualifying a Claim

How much of a claim you can hold

always, never, proves

one counter-example ends the argument

generally, tends to

survives an exception, and still says something

in this case, for these readers

scoped — defensible, and precise

may, could arguably

safe, and close to saying nothing

stronger, and easier to refute

safer, and claims less

Aim for the third position. A qualified claim is not a weaker claim — it is one you can **hold** for the length of an essay

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Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

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└ Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

Two ways to join ideas, meaning different things

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.

- 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.

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└ Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

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- Writers use coordination to illustrate balance or equality between ideas.
- Writers use subordination to illustrate imbalance or inequality between ideas.

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Writing Clear Sentences

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└ Writing Clear Sentences

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.

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└ Writing Clear Sentences

Where a sentence ends

THE FAULT	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	THE FIX
COMMA SPICE	<i>The data was clear, the committee ignored it.</i>	full stop, semicolon, or add <i>but</i>
RUN-ON	<i>The data was clear the committee ignored it.</i>	the same three repairs — the comma was never the problem
FRAGMENT	<i>Although the data was clear.</i>	attach it to the sentence it depends on

- **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.

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Grammar, Mechanics, and Clarity

Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions
└ Grammar, Mechanics, and Clarity

Grammar, Mechanics, and Clarity

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Conventions of Grammar and Mechanics

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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**.

Three marks, three promises

MARK	WHAT IT PROMISES	AN EXAMPLE
semicolon :	two complete statements, closely related and of equal weight	<i>The policy was cheap; it was also useless.</i>
colon :	what follows delivers what the first half announced	<i>The result was predictable: nobody applied.</i>
dash —	an interruption, or a turn the reader did not expect	<i>The scheme worked — for the six people who heard of it.</i>

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