

Refining Qualified Arguments

AP English Language ■ Unit 9

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Refining Qualified Arguments

What we will cover

- 1 How Claims Are Qualified
- 2 Qualifying a Claim

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How Claims Are Qualified

Three moves, three different admissions

Three different moves - and the evidence you have decides which one you may make

CONCEDE	REBUT	REFUTE
accept all or part of the competing claim as correct	offer a contrasting perspective, or an alternative interpretation	demonstrate, using evidence, that the claim is incorrect
needs: honesty	needs: another reading of the same facts	needs: evidence of error
and the CED says it RAISES your credibility	almost always available - this is the workhorse move	without that evidence, refuting is bluffing

Then come back to your own position. An unreturned concession reads as agreement.

- Effectively entering an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been taken. An...
- Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis. All three are usable - contradicting...

How Claims Are Qualified

Unit 9 is short and it is the course's final move: how to handle the arguments that oppose yours. Everything here is directly rewarded on the exam, and the three key verbs are constantly confused.

- Effectively entering an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been taken. An argument that ignores them is not participating in the discussion, only announcing into it.
- Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis. All three are usable - contradicting evidence is not a problem to be hidden but material to be handled.
- Writers enhance their credibility when they refute, rebut, or concede opposing arguments and contradictory evidence.
- Concede 让步: writers accept all or a portion of a competing position or claim as correct, and agree that the opposing point has merit.

How Claims Are Qualified, continued

The distinction is what your evidence lets you do. Refuting requires evidence of error; if you do not have it, refuting is bluffing and a reader will see it. Rebutting requires only an alternative reading of the same facts, which is far more often available.

Conceding requires honesty, and it costs nothing – the CED says explicitly that it enhances credibility.

The rubric, row by row

THESIS 1 point

all or nothing, and decided by one sentence — so it is the cheapest point on the paper to secure

EVIDENCE AND COMMENTARY 4 points

evidence gets you to the middle of this scale; the movement from there to the top is almost entirely **commentary**

SOPHISTICATION 1 point

not awarded for length or vocabulary — see the qualifying and counterargument moves in this unit

- **Effectively entering an ongoing conversation** about a subject means **engaging the positions that have already been taken**. An...
- Evidence and sources will either **support, complement, or contradict** 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis. All three are usable - contradicting...

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Qualifying a Claim

Qualifying a Claim

For your own writing, the strongest and most reliable shape on Question 3 is:

- State your position, **qualified** to the ground your evidence covers.
- **Concede** the part of the opposing position that is genuinely correct.
- **Rebut or refute** the rest – rebut if you have an alternative reading, refute only if you have evidence of error.
- Show why your position **survives** the concession.

Qualifying a Claim, continued

Step 4 is the one most students omit, and it is where the sophistication point lives.

Conceding and then not returning to your own argument reads as having changed your mind.

Exam tips

- **Concede, rebut, refute** are three different claims. Do not use the words interchangeably.
- **Refute only with evidence of error.** Without it, rebut instead – an alternative interpretation is almost always available.
- **Conceding raises credibility**, by the CED's own statement. It is not a weakness.
- After conceding, **come back**. An unreturned concession reads as agreement with the other side.
- Use a transition that **ranks** the counterargument: *the strongest objection to this is beats some people say*.
- When analysing a text, notice when it addresses **no** counterargument. That absence tells you who it was written for.

Where the counterargument goes

WHERE YOU PUT IT	WHAT IT SIGNALS	USE IT WHEN
first — before your own case	you know the strongest version of the the reader probably holds it already other side	
inside each paragraph	every claim has been tested as it was the objections are specific to each claim made	
near the end	a duty discharged — or, done well, then objection outweighs the rest real turn	

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What earns the sophistication point

DOES NOT EARN IT

- longer words for the same idea
- a fourth body paragraph
- a counterargument mentioned and dropped
- a conclusion that widens to all of humanity

EARNs IT

- a claim qualified so that it is exactly defensible
- an objection answered, not noted
- tension between two of your own sources, named
- a consequence the prompt did not ask for

Every item on the right is a **move**, and every one of them appears elsewhere in this course. None of them is a matter of vocabulary