Analyze an Issue: instruction families and a reasoned qualified position

Original classroom teaching; not an official form or score predictor

Analyze an Issue: Instruction Families and a Qualified Position

- Recognise which instruction comes with the claim, and do what it asks.
- Write a **qualified thesis 有条件的论点** that states when the claim holds.
- Weigh a **policy consequence 政策后果** where the instruction asks.
- Use a **counterexample 反例** or objection, and answer it.

The instruction families

- Discuss how far you agree, and how the claim might or might not hold.
- Address the most compelling reasons or examples against your position.
- Evaluate a claim together with the reason given for it.

The instruction families (2)

- Discuss the consequences of a recommendation or policy.
- Discuss two opposing views and which you find more convincing.

A qualified thesis

- State your position with its scope: "This holds for X, because..., but not for Y, because...".
- If the instruction includes a reason, judge the reason separately from the claim: a good claim can have a weak reason.
- Keep the thesis to one or two sentences.

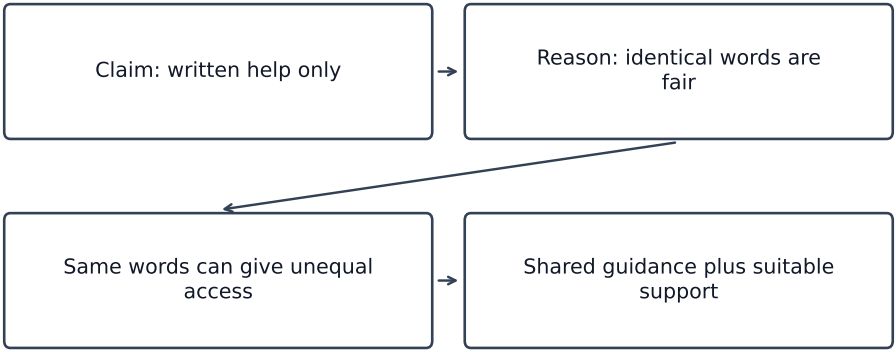
Planning the 30 minutes

- A practice budget: about 4 minutes to read and outline, 23 to write, 3 to revise.
- Outline: thesis; two or three developed reasons; the strongest objection and your answer; conclusion.

Developing and answering

- Explain each example: what happens, and why it supports your point.
- For a policy, consider who benefits, who bears the cost, and what could go wrong.
- A **counterexample** shows where the claim fails; use it to set the limit of your thesis.

Figure: Developing and answering



- Identical help is not equal access: pair shared guidance with suitable support

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Worked example: a claim and its reason

- The instruction asks you to judge both. The reason is too strong: it ignores learning from direct measurement, mistakes in procedure and working with others.
- A **qualified thesis**: reject universal replacement, but accept reading as preparation, and allow a remote or simulated alternative where a laboratory is impossible.
- **Counterexample** to the reason: a student who has read about titration still has to learn to judge an end point by eye.

Worked example: an original application

- Original Issue prompt.
- Claim: “Public learning centres should provide help only through written guides.” Reason: “Giving every visitor identical information is the fairest policy.” Discuss how far you agree with both the claim and its reason.
- Explain circumstances and consequences that affect your position.
- Written guides can make public services clearer and more consistent, but they should not be the only source of help in a learning centre.

Independent transfer

- Compare three instruction families using this issue: (a) assess when a recommendation works, (b) discuss both a claim and its stated reason, (c) address the strongest challenge to your own position.
- Write a different planning sentence for each.
- Explain why a fixed agree/disagree template could miss the task.
- (a) “Written-only help may work for simple routine services used by experienced visitors, but fails when accessibility or unusual cases demand explanation.” (b) “I reject exclusive written help and distinguish the reason’s valid concern for consistency from its unsupported equation of identical words with fairness.” (c) “The strongest challenge is that personal support may introduce inconsistent advice; shared rules, records and staff training can reduce that risk.” Other plans are valid if they perform the requested action.

Common errors

- Writing a general essay that ignores the instruction.
- Judging the claim but not the reason when both are required.
- A thesis with no limits, defended only by examples that fit.

Common errors (2)

- Naming consequences without weighing them.
- Running out of time for the objection and conclusion.

Key terms

- **qualified thesis**: A position that states the conditions under which a claim holds.
- **policy consequence**: A likely result of carrying out a recommendation.
- **counterexample**: A case that shows a general claim is not always true.

Check yourself

- The instruction says to "discuss the consequences of following the recommendation". What must your essay include?
- A claim seems right but its reason is weak. What can your thesis say?
- In a 30-minute task, roughly how long should you spend outlining?