

CLAIMS, REASONS, AND EVIDENCE

The building blocks of an argumentative essay

First, the CLAIM...

Claim = Argument

- . a statement of belief that can be argued for
- . must be arguable, meaning someone can disagree

Questions for assessing a Claim

- . is it arguable?
- . is there bias?
- . is it obvious?
- . is there an agenda?

Example: *Gina should be elected class president.*

Second, the REASONS...

Reasons = Logical Support

- . statements that support the Claim
- . must be relevant to Claim
- . makes the Claim stronger (harder to disagree with)

Questions for assessing Reasons

- . is it logical?
- . is it related?
- . is it fair/unbiased?
- . does it strengthen the Claim?

Example: *Gina should be elected class president because she has excellent leadership skills.*

Third, the EVIDENCE...

Evidence = Proof and Examples

- . proves that Reasons are valid
- . makes claim even stronger (even harder to disagree with)
- . bring in outside sources, research, anecdotes, statistics, etc.

Questions for assessing Evidence

- . is it relevant?
- . is it convincing?
- . is it specific?
- . is it sound? (without bias)
- . is it directly connected to a Reason?

Example: Gina should be elected class president because she has excellent leadership skills. *Last year, when the bus broke down on the way home from the museum, she made sure that everyone got in touch with their parents to let them know the bus would be two hours late.*

Fact vs. Opinion

Fact = a statement that can be checked, usually by an expert source

Opinion = a statement that may or may not be verified, based on personal choice/taste

Arguments will include BOTH Facts and Opinions.

A strong argument is made up of an Opinion that can be proven and backed up by Facts.

NOTE: In this day and age, Fact and Opinion can become confusing, even controversial topics, so steering students toward Objective and Subjective instead can be very helpful.

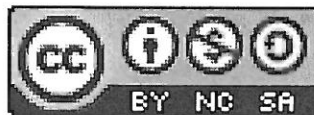
Objective vs. Subjective

Objective = a statement that is based on measurable and/or observable information

Subjective = a statement that is based on personal preferences, emotions, or judgments

Arguments will include BOTH Objective and Subjective statements.

A strong argument starts with a Subjective statement, that can be proven and backed up by Objective information and statements.



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