

Exercise walk-through

Identifying the overarching thesis ■ 6.3

eXercise

You must be able to

- state a thesis together with the limits the writer places on it
- distinguish a qualified thesis from a hedged one
- notice a thesis that narrows as the passage proceeds
- write a one-sentence statement that includes the qualification

Method — Qualification is part of the thesis

“Charter schools raise attainment **where the intake is not selected**” is one claim, not a claim plus an excuse. Reporting it without the clause misstates the passage.

Method — Qualified against hedged

A **qualified** claim states where it holds. A **hedged** claim states nothing definite anywhere. “In dense cities” is a qualification; “possibly, in some cases” is a hedge.

Method — Narrowing thesis

Some passages begin broad and narrow as the evidence is examined. The thesis is the final position, and describing the narrowing is often the best answer available.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State why a qualification belongs in a statement of the thesis.

Solution 2.1

Method: Qualification is part of the thesis

Worked steps

the qualification states where the claim holds **B1**, so omitting it reports a claim the writer did not make **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the difference between a qualified and a hedged claim.

Solution 2.2

Method: Qualified against hedged

Worked steps

a qualified claim states definite limits **B1**; a hedged claim states nothing definite anywhere **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A passage opens with a broad claim and ends with a narrower version.

- (a) State which is the thesis.
- (b) State what should be said about the change.

Solution 2.3

Method: Qualification is part of the thesis

Worked steps

(a) the narrower final version **B1**. (b) describe the narrowing as part of the argument — the evidence forced it **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

“Possibly, in some cases, this may be true” is

A a qualified claim

B a hedged claim

C a thesis

D a concession

Solution 3.1

Method: Qualified against hedged

A a qualified claim

B a hedged claim 

C a thesis

D a concession

Worked steps

B. it commits to nothing.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Reporting a thesis without its limiting clause

- A** makes it clearer
- B** misstates the passage
- C** strengthens it
- D** is required

Solution 3.2

Method: Qualification is part of the thesis

A makes it clearer

B misstates the passage



C strengthens it

D is required

Worked steps

B. the reported claim is broader than the one made.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 2 marks

A writer claims a remedy works, then adds three conditions.

- (a) State the thesis in one sentence.
- (b) Explain why the conditions strengthen rather than weaken it.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) the claim stated together with its conditions in a single sentence **B2**. (b) the conditions specify where it holds **B1**, which makes it testable and shows the writer has considered the cases where it does not **B1**.