

Exercise walk-through

Qualifying a claim ■ 9.2

eXercise

You must be able to

- plan where each limit will be introduced
- give each limit a reason drawn from the evidence
- keep the final claim strong enough to be worth making
- write a conclusion that states the narrowed position

Method — Planning the limits

Before drafting, list the objections you expect and decide which you will meet with a limit and which with evidence. Limits belong where the objection would first occur to the reader.

Method — Reasons from the evidence

Each limit should be introduced by what forced it: “the two rural districts show no effect, so the claim holds only where services are frequent.” The limit then reads as honesty rather than retreat.

Method — Keeping the claim worth making

Ask at the end: does anyone disagree with what is left? If not, the qualifications have gone too far, and one should be argued rather than granted.

Method — The conclusion

State the narrowed claim in full — with its conditions — and say what follows from it.
A conclusion that restates the original broad claim contradicts the essay.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State where a limit belongs in an essay.

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

where the objection it answers would first occur to the reader **B1**, so it is met before it becomes a doubt **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the test of whether qualification has gone too far.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

ask whether anyone would still disagree with what is left **B1**; if not, it has been qualified out of existence **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

An essay narrows its claim three times and concludes with the original broad claim.

- (a) Name the fault.
- (b) State the fix.

Solution 2.3

Method: The conclusion

Worked steps

(a) the conclusion contradicts the essay by restating the unqualified claim **B1**. (b) state the narrowed claim, with its conditions, in the conclusion **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

A limit reads as honesty rather than retreat when it is introduced by

- A** an apology
- B** the evidence that forced it
- C** a rhetorical question
- D** a transition of addition

Solution 3.1

Method: Reasons from the evidence

- A an apology
- B the evidence that forced it
- C a rhetorical question
- D a transition of addition



Worked steps

- B. a limit forced by evidence is a finding, not a retreat.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

If nobody would disagree with the final claim, the essay has

- A** succeeded
- B** qualified it out of existence
- C** conceded correctly
- D** found the thesis

Solution 3.2

- A succeeded
- B qualified it out of existence**
- C conceded correctly
- D found the thesis



Worked steps

- B.** a claim nobody disputes is not an argument.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 2 marks

Plan a qualified argument for: “Universities should drop standardised admissions tests.”

- (a) State your claim and two limits.
- (b) State the reason for each limit.

Solution 3.3

Method: Reasons from the evidence

Worked steps

(a) a claim plus two nameable limits **B2**. (b) a reason drawn from evidence for each **B2**.