

Refining Qualified Arguments
AP English Language ■ Unit 9

AP English Language

Refining Qualified Arguments

What we will cover

1

How Claims Are Qualified

2

Qualifying a Claim

1

How Claims Are Qualified

Refining Qualified Arguments
How Claims Are Qualified

Three moves, three different admissions

Effectively entering an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been taken.

Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis.

Refining Qualified Arguments
How Claims Are Qualified

Three moves, three different admissions, in detail

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

CONCEDE accept all or part of the competing claim as correct needs: honesty and the CEO says it RAISES your credibility	REBUT offer a contrasting perspective, or an alternative interpretation needs: another reading of the same facts almost always available - this is the workhorse move	REFUTE demonstrate, using evidence, that the claim is incorrect needs: evidence of error without that evidence, refuting is bluffing
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Then come back to your own position. An unreturned concession reads as agreement.

Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis.

Refining Qualified Arguments
How Claims Are Qualified

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.

Rebut 反驳: writers offer a contrasting perspective on an argument and its evidence, or provide an alternative interpretation.

Refining Qualified Arguments └─How Claims Are Qualified	Refining Qualified Arguments └─How Claims Are Qualified
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 <i>enhances</i> credibility.	The rubric, row by row Effectively entering an ongoing conversation about a subject means engaging the positions that have already been taken. Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis.

Refining Qualified Arguments └─How Claims Are Qualified	
The rubric, row by row, in detail 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 Evidence and sources will either support, complement, or contradict 支持、补充或反驳 a writer's thesis.	2 Qualifying a Claim

Refining Qualified Arguments └─Qualifying a Claim	Refining Qualified Arguments └─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.

Refining Qualified Arguments ↳ Qualifying a Claim	Refining Qualified Arguments ↳ Qualifying a Claim
Exam tips	Where the counterargument goes
■ 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: <i>the strongest objection to this is beats some people say</i>. ■ When analysing a text, notice when it addresses no counterargument. That absence tells you who it was written for.	■ 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.

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Counterarguments, and where they go

the CED point	transitions may be used to introduce counterarguments, and the transition itself signals the relationship
the signals	admittedly, granted, some would argue, it is true that
then the pivot	however, yet, still – the return to your own line
the other CED point	not all arguments explicitly address a counterargument
why it matters	true of the texts you read – and worth noting when analysing one, since the omission is itself a choice
in your own writing	the concession is where the sophistication point is most often earned

Naming a counterargument the text *does not* address is legitimate analysis. Silence is a rhetorical decision like any other.

Refining Qualified Arguments
↳ Qualifying a Claim

Where the counterargument goes, in detail

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 one objection outweighs the rest real turn	

Concede early and the reader trusts you before your own case begins; concede late and it reads as an afterthought.

Refining Qualified Arguments ↳ Qualifying a Claim	Refining Qualified Arguments ↳ Qualifying a Claim		
What earns the sophistication point	Worked example – conceding, then refuting		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> 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 </td><td> 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 </td></tr> </table> 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	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	On a Question 3 prompt, compare two treatments of the same objection. ■ Low-scoring: “Some people disagree, but they are wrong.” ■ Scoring: “The objection that the policy is too costly is correct as far as it goes: the direct expenditure is higher than any alternative considered. But cost is only decisive if the alternatives achieve the same result, and the same report shows they do not.” That paragraph concedes the cost and refutes the comparison with evidence. Naming an opposing position without engaging it is neither concession nor rebuttal.
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		

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Recap

Unit 9 – key takeaways

1 Three moves

concede, rebut, refute – not synonyms

2 Refute

only with evidence of error;
otherwise rebut

3 Concede

raises credibility; then come back

4 Rank

*the strongest objection beats
some people say*

Check yourself

- 1 Concede, rebut, refute – why not mix them?
- 2 When should you refute?
- 3 Is conceding a weakness?
- 4 What must you do after conceding?

Answers: they are three different claims ■ with evidence of error ■ no – it raises credibility ■ come back