

## Claim, Reasons, Evidence Worksheet

A reasonable argument takes a stance on a debatable issue, presenting reasons and supporting evidence along with responses to counterarguments. This worksheet will guide you in evaluating your current draft and making plans for revising it.

### I. Take Inventory of and Evaluate Your Ideas

1. Without rereading your draft, answer the following:

A. If I had to sum up my **argument or claim** about this topic in one or two sentences, I would say:

---



---

B. The **reasons** I have for making this argument are:

*II. (to be completed later)*

Reason 1: \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes No Needs tweaking*

Reason 2: \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes No Needs tweaking*

Reason 3: \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes No Needs tweaking*

Reason 4: \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes No Needs tweaking*

(use an additional sheet if necessary)

C. Write a version of your **central claim** that includes your argument and your reasons for making it:

---

---

**From this point on, you should consult your draft:**

2. Question and challenge your **central claim**.

A. Copy the version of your central claim from your rough draft here:

---

---

B. Compare the versions in 1 and 2. Which is stronger and sharper? (A central claim should take a clearly defined position rather than offering an observation or statement of fact. It should make a claim that requires discussion, proof, and support.) Rewrite (or piece together) the strongest version here:

---

---

C. Look at the presentation of your claim. Look for any vague, general, or “fuzzy” words. Circle all generic words like “people,” “things,” “you,” “everyone,” “society,” “different,” “similar,” “interesting,” etc. Substitute more specific words for the circled terms. Write the revised version here:

---

---

3. List the **evidence** that you use in your paper. It will be easier to do this paragraph by paragraph, so number the body paragraphs in your draft. Then, for each, write down a phrase or sentence that indicates the evidence presented in that paragraph.

*II. (to be completed later)*

Body ¶1 \_\_\_\_\_

*Supports Reason #\_\_\_\_\_ or  
Supports unlisted reason \_\_\_\_\_*

Body ¶2 \_\_\_\_\_

*Supports Reason #\_\_\_\_\_ or  
Supports unlisted reason \_\_\_\_\_*

Body ¶3 \_\_\_\_\_

*Supports Reason #\_\_\_\_\_ or  
Supports unlisted reason \_\_\_\_\_*

Body ¶4 \_\_\_\_\_

*Supports Reason #\_\_\_\_\_ or  
Supports unlisted reason \_\_\_\_\_*

(List additional evidence if necessary)

## II. Sharpen Your Ideas

4. Question and challenge your **reasons**. Test whether they truly support the central claim as revised (that is, are they relevant? On topic? Valid?). Use the section labeled *II* in question 1 above to keep track. Make some notes below as to which reason or reasons need to be cut or tweaked to fit the claim, or how you need to tweak your claim so that these reasons will be valid.

---



---



---

5. Look at your list of **reasons** again. Have they all been expressed clearly in the draft? In many cases, they may be used as part of topic sentences or mini-claims (sentences that introduce the point being made in a particular paragraph). Make revision notes here:

---

---

---

6. Next, test your **evidence**, piece by piece, to see whether it supports the central claim and fits the reasons you offered. Use the section labeled *II* in question 3 above to keep track. Make some notes below as to how you need to revise the evidence to better fit the reasons or vice versa. Also make note if a new, unlisted reason has emerged from the evidence that you should include in your next draft.

---

---

---

---

7. Do you use references to at least two unit 2 readings? If so, how and where? If not, what reading(s) could you add references to in the next draft?

---

Freewrite about how these references help or will help you:

---

---

---

---

---

---

8. Do you include references to other positions on your topic? If so, how and where? If not, what counterargument(s) could you add references to in the next draft?

---

Write a brief note to yourself summarizing this other argument AND your response (rebuttal) to it:

---

---

---

---

Where in your essay should this counterargument be presented and addressed?

---

---

9. Final notes to yourself about revisions to make as you work on the next draft:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---