

Distinguish Claims, Reasons, and Relevant Evidence

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In this estimated 40-minute lesson, learners classify statements by their role in an argument: claim, reason, relevant evidence, or unrelated detail. They explain how evidence supports a reason and how that reason supports a claim. Agreement with the claim is not scored.

Follow the argument's reasoning

A claim is a position or conclusion the writer wants readers to accept. A reason explains why the writer supports that claim. Evidence is specific information, such as an observation, example, or result, that supports a reason. Evidence can mention the same topic and still be irrelevant if it does not connect to the reason. To classify a statement, read the surrounding argument: name its claim, ask what reason supports it, then ask what evidence supports that reason. A statement's role can change in a different argument, so use its job in this argument. A detail can be true and still be unrelated. Judge the role and relevance of the reasoning, not whether you agree with the claim.

Model argument: A lunch reading corner

Fictional instructional example; counts are invented, not research or classroom results.

At the fictional Ridgeview School, the school should open a quiet reading corner in the library during lunch. Some students want a calmer place to read than the cafeteria. In a fictional poll of 24 students, 17 said cafeteria noise made it hard to read during lunch. The library bulletin board is green.

Modeled practice

Read “A lunch reading corner.” Follow the possible classification and explanation. What is the claim? Which sentence gives a reason? Which detail is evidence for that reason? Why is the final sentence unrelated? The categories describe each statement’s job here, not whether you agree with the claim.

Possible classification: Claim — “the school should open a quiet reading corner in the library during lunch,” because it is the proposal. Reason — “Some students want a calmer place to read than the cafeteria,” because it explains why the proposal may help. Relevant evidence — the fictional poll result that 17 of 24 students said cafeteria noise made lunch reading hard; it directly connects to the need for a calmer place. Unrelated detail — the bulletin board is green; its color supports neither the reason nor the proposal. This identifies how the argument works, whether or not a reader supports the proposal.

Guided classification: Two-book checkout

Fictional instructional example; counts are invented, not research or classroom results.

A. The school library should let students borrow two books at once. B. A second choice lets a reader switch if the first book is not a good fit. C. During a fictional three-day trial, 12 of 15 students selected a second book after previewing the first. D. The library opened fourteen years ago.

Guided sorting and classification

Sort statements A–D into these groups: claim, reason, relevant evidence, or unrelated detail. You may label the cards or write the letters. Then explain how C connects to B and how B supports A. The trial is fictional and its count describes only those 15 participants; do not claim it proves every reader wants two books. Your score depends on each statement's function and relevance, not whether you agree with two-book checkout.

Card labels and reasoning

Independent argument: Family night bookmarks

Fictional instructional example; counts are invented, not research or classroom results.

At family night, the school should set out student-made bookmarks. This gives visitors a simple way to learn which books students recommend. In a fictional one-night trial, 19 of 25 visitors took a bookmark labeled with a student-recommended book. The gym's east wall has three windows.

Independent classification

Independently classify each sentence in "Family night bookmarks" as a claim, reason, relevant evidence, or unrelated detail. Use the organizer to explain how the relevant evidence supports a reason and how the reason supports the claim. State one limit on what the fictional trial shows. You do not need to agree with the claim; classify each sentence by its function and relevance.

Independent argument organizer

Use the sentences in “Family night bookmarks.” Name each sentence’s function, then explain the reasoning link and one limit of the fictional trial. Agreement with the claim is not scored.

Claim: which sentence states the proposal?

Reason: which sentence explains why?

Relevant evidence: which sentence gives specific information?

Unrelated detail: which sentence has no stated link?

How does the evidence support the reason and the reason support the claim?

One limit of what the fictional trial shows

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Created for L09; the school, poll, counts, and details are fictional.

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Created for L09; visitors, trial, count, and setting are fictional.