

Writing A Claim: Dogs are better pets than cats because ...

A claim is an arguable position. For example, someone might argue that *dogs make better pets than cats*. Not everyone will agree. A claim contains both the arguable position along with the main reasons. Typically, the main reasons follow the word *because*. For example, the claim might be:

Dogs make better pets because they are more loyal than cats, they provide protection, and they encourage their owners to exercise.

Notice that the claim not only contains the arguable position but the reasons for this claim, as well. In looking at the claim above, we could expect the author of an argumentative essay to develop three reasons in the essay body paragraph. The first body paragraph would support the reason that *dogs are more loyal than cats*. The second paragraph would be centered around the idea that *dogs provide protection* in ways that cats can't. The third body paragraph would be focused on the idea that *walking a dog helps an owner exercise*.

Step 1: Pick a Claim, Fix a Claim

Below are six claims you wrote for and against the legalization of recreational marijuana. First, read and discuss the claims with your partner and circle the claim that you feel is the strongest. Next, pick what you felt was the weakest claim of the six and rewrite it to make it a strong claim.

Claim 1: *Marijuana should be legal because it isn't as addictive as tobacco or alcohol.*

Claim 2: *Marijuana should not be legal because it can harm your health.*

Claim 3: *Marijuana should be legal and sold for recreational uses because there is little or no harm from it, it'll lower crime rates, and it can raise new revenue similar to tobacco and cigarettes.*

Claim 4: *Marijuana should not be legalized because of its adverse long term health effects, its influence on consciousness, and its relationship to crime.*

Claim 5: *Marijuana should be legalized for recreational use as less harmful than the use of alcohol and tobacco as it has little evidence of causing harm to your health, it is less addictive and also has a legitimate reason for medical use.*

Claim 6: *Declaring that marijuana should be legal will only disrupt the mind and body that leads to what is called a poor addiction that could affect not ourselves but others as well.*

Which claim did you choose as the strongest of the six? What made it a particularly strong claim.

Rewrite the weakest claim below, making it a strong claim.

Step 2: Practice Writing Reasons for a Claim on Immigration

We've discussed and debated the issue of illegal immigration. Write a clear claim and be sure to identify three reasons in the claim. The stem of the claim relates back to the issue we debated.

If you support a path to citizenship or legalization your claim may begin with: *Immigrants who are in the country illegally should be allowed to remain in the US because*

If you oppose a path to citizenship or legalization your claim may begin with:

Immigrants who are in the country illegally should not be allowed to remain in the US because

Step 3: Write A Clear Claim for Your Research Paper

Use the area below to write a clear claim for your research paper. Be sure to clearly spell out the three reasons you will be developing in your research paper. If you can't spell out three reasons, go back and do more research until you can:

Once you've completed your claim for your research paper, have your partner take a look at it and give you feedback. Make any final edits and then turn it into me.

Step 4: Finding Sources To Support Your Claim

Find sources that will provide strong evidence for your claim. Gather a list of sources on your topic by searching the SIRS Data Base. Collect these sources on a google.docs page. Copy and paste the correct MLA citation from the bottom of each SIRS source. This will be the beginning of your Works Cited page for your research paper.