

G8 Playlist: Distinguish Claims from Alternate or Opposing Claims

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.A:

- Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Welcome

Over the course of history, persuasive texts have changed the outcomes of wars, the treatment of diseases, and even the direction of science and technology. For example, an early catalyst for the atomic bomb being dropped in Hiroshima in 1945 was a letter from physicist Albert Einstein to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939. Although persuasive arguments can have powerful consequences, writers do not blindly argue their points of view. Rather, they consider many sides of an issue and even acknowledge the arguments of those who oppose them. Even Einstein expressed limitations of his idea in his letter to President Roosevelt. Because persuasive writing can have a big impact on major and minor issues, it is important that writers who want their words to create change be skilled in the ability to introduce claims, organize evidence, and acknowledge differing viewpoints, clearly expressing how the opponent's viewpoints are distinct from the writer's claim.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- introduce claim(s).
- organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- acknowledge and distinguish the claims from alternate and opposing claims.

Review

Key Terms

- A **claim** is a statement that clearly expresses a writer's opinion or perspective about an idea or topic. It is typically one sentence long and appears at the beginning of an argument. It contains a clear, specific, debatable idea that requires support and evidence.
- **Evidence** is information that validates or supports the writer's claim. Evidence can consist of statistics, facts, examples, quotations, research, and testimonials. It is important that evidence come from reliable and credible sources.



Exploring the Standard

A Closer Look: Introducing Claims and Organizing Evidence Logically

When making an argument, it is important to write clear claims and present evidence to support those claims. A writer needs to be especially clear in introducing claims when the argument is complicated or has many sides.

Read the following excerpt from a student’s persuasive essay on the cost of college tuition. What are the specific claims in the excerpt? How does the student use evidence to support the claims?

Example 1

¹College should be free and available to anyone who wants to attend. For example, in 1785, in a letter to John Jebb, a peer in England, John Adams wrote, “The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people, and must be willing to bear the expense of it.” In other words, the students and their families should not pay for college. Rather, everyone should share its cost. Most likely, Adams thought this because he worried that college was expensive. Certainly, it is pricey today! Some people do not attend college at all because they can’t afford it.

²However, it is in the best interest of society to increase enrollment. Although ideas and policies about education have changed over time, data from 2004 show that society benefits when students attend and graduate from college. For the individual college graduate, education can increase his or her earnings by a million dollars over the course of a lifetime. People with college degrees also have a positive impact on their neighborhoods and communities. For example, communities that have more college graduates tend to also have higher rates of volunteer work and blood donation. As a result, society is also bettered.

The following graphic organizer shows how the student connected all the information.

Claim 1: College should be free and available to anyone who wants to attend.	
Supporting Evidence	Supporting Evidence
Some people don’t enroll in college because they can’t afford it. This idea has been supported from an early point in the history of America.	In a letter to John Jebb, a peer in England, John Adams wrote, “The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people, and must be willing to bear the expense of it.”
Claim 2: Recent data show that society overall benefits when students attend and graduate from college.	
Supporting Evidence	Supporting Evidence
For the individual college graduate, education can increase his or her earnings by a million dollars over the course of a lifetime.	Communities that have more college graduates tend to also have higher rates of volunteer work and blood donation.

In Example 1, the writer uses two main claims and four pieces of supporting evidence. This example states the claim and then provides support for each claim, making it easy for a reader to follow along. Notice how each paragraph focuses on one claim only.

