

# WRITING – CLAIM AND FOCUS REVISION

## Preparation

- Have your graded essay ready to use for annotation and revision purposes
- [Download the BHP Writing Rubric](#)

## Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to show you how to use a rubric-aligned tool to evaluate and improve upon a piece of writing. A useful strategy for improving writing skills is to analyze samples as an editor, using peer drafts or your own graded essays. As you closely analyze the BHP Writing Rubric and evaluate a piece of writing against it, you will develop a better understanding of what makes a piece of writing strong. This, in turn, will make your writing stronger.

## Process

In this activity, you'll first review the Claim and Focus row of the BHP Writing Rubric with your class. Then, you'll be introduced to the Claim and Focus Revision Tool and how you to use it to improve upon claim and focus in an essay. Finally, you'll use the tool to evaluate and revise an essay.

Start by reviewing and discussing the Claim and Focus row of the rubric with your class. Remember, a strong thesis/major claim and subclaims will help establish good focus in an essay.

Next, take out the Claim and Focus Revision Tool. First, pay attention to the directions at the top, which ask you to review the prompt for the essay. Review a prompt with your class and underline all the key words in the prompt that relate to what specifically is being asked of the writer. This will help you focus your review on what was specifically asked for in the essay. Next, review the feedback received from your teacher or peers to get a better sense of how the essay fared in terms of claim and focus. This will help give you a general sense of where improvement is needed.


Finally, it's time to use the table portion of the tool to really start digging into the details of the essay as they relate to claim and focus. This part of the tool is broken into three steps. The first step addresses claim, the second step addresses focus, and the third step addresses counterclaim. Within each step there is a review and revision process. For the review process, look at the checklist under the Review column and see if you can find those elements of writing in the essay. If you find them, check the box and move to the next item in the list. If you didn't find them, look to the Revision column for suggestions about how to improve that aspect of the essay. Go through each item on the checklist so that you are prepared to revise for claim, focus, and counterclaim in the essay where needed.

Now that you have an idea of how the tool works, it's time to try this out on your own!

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 Name:  Date: 





**Directions:** First, review the Investigation question or prompt and underline all the key words in the prompt that relate to what specifically is being asked of the writer. Second, review the feedback received from your teacher or peer to get a sense of where the use of claim and focus can be improved in the essay. Third, evaluate your essay based on each category in the Review column. For any items you do NOT check in the evaluation column, follow the suggestions in the corresponding Action column to revise the essay.

Step 1 – Thesis/Major Claim	
Review	Revise
If you do not check a box in the column below, then try  the suggested action in this column!	
<input type="checkbox"/> The thesis/major claim directly responds to the prompt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Turn the question from the prompt into a statement that answers the question.
<input type="checkbox"/> The thesis/major claim includes details that make it more specific by including a preview into some of the supporting claims that support thesis/major claim.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add brief phrases into the claim statement that summarize your specific reasons.
Step 2 – Improving Focus	
<input type="checkbox"/> The contents of each supporting claim explicitly supports the thesis/major claim.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add to or improve your supporting claims so readers can clearly see how that paragraph supports your major claim. To do this, use similar language or ideas from the thesis/major claim.
<input type="checkbox"/> Each supporting paragraph (that is, any paragraphs that aren't the introduction or conclusion) clearly connects to the major claim.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add another sentence of explanation, repeating key words from the major claim to help show the connection. Remove any extra information that isn't related to the thesis/major claim or counterclaim.
Step 3 – Improving Counterclaims	
<input type="checkbox"/> A counterclaim has been addressed as part of the thesis/major claim.	<input type="checkbox"/> Start your major claim with a phrase that captures an alternative or opposing viewpoint, such as "While some have argued..."
<input type="checkbox"/> Counterclaims have been addressed in the essay.	<input type="checkbox"/> Revise to address counterclaims anywhere you might imagine a reader responding, "But what about...?" Or, think about alternative or opposing viewpoints you've read about and incorporate them.

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Name:

Date:

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<input type="checkbox"/> Review the Investigation question or prompt.		<input type="checkbox"/> Underline all the key words in the prompt that relate to what specifically is being asked of the writer.
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<input type="checkbox"/> The thesis/major claim includes details that make it more specific by including a preview into some of the supporting claims that support thesis/major claim.		<input type="checkbox"/> Add brief phrases summarizing your specific reasons into the claim statement itself.