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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

## Preparation

* Download the [WHP Writing Rubric](https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/Teacher-Resources/WHP-Writing-Rubric)
* Download the [Sentence Starters posters](https://www.oerproject.com/OER-Materials/OER-Media/PDFs/Teacher-Resources/BHP-Sentence-Starters) (optional)

## Purpose

In this writing activity, you’ll circle back to the first row of the WHP Writing Rubric: Claim and Focus. You’ll progress from analyzing an essay for its major claim and focus, to identifying and revising these elements in a student-written essay. The move from analysis to application should help you advance your claim-making skills so you can generate your own well-crafted thesis statements and claims. This is an important skill to practice—a clear thesis statement can be thought of as the backbone of a well-written essay.

## Process

1. You are once again going to take a look at claim and focus in a student-written essay. However, this time you’ll get an essay that needs some improvement.
2. With your class, first review what makes a claim good and an essay focused.
3. Then, read an essay that didn’t exactly get high marks for claim and focus. Your job is to revise and improve upon claim and focus in the essay.
4. Take out the Writing – Claim and Focus Part 2 worksheet and the WHP Writing Rubric for reference and follow the directions. Your teacher may also hand out Sentence Starters posters to give you some ideas about how you might revise some of the writing in this essay.
5. Locate the major claim/thesis statement in the essay, then revise it.
6. Next, look for focus in the essay, and then revise at least two sentences where the focus could be improved. It’s important to follow the instructions in order, since it will be difficult to improve the focus without a clear and convincing major claim to connect to. Keep in mind that improving focus might mean adding more text and not just revising what is there.
7. Be prepared to share your revisions with the class.

**Directions:** After reading the essay, follow the steps below.

1. Circle the major claim/thesis statement in the essay.
2. Revise the major claim and write your revision in the space below.
3. Underline anywhere you find focus in the essay.
4. Pick two areas of focus to revise. Put star ( ★ ) next to the text you will revise. Then, write your revisions in the spaces below.
5. Highlight one counterclaim in the article.

**Essay prompt:** *Analyze the similarities and differences between early Chinese philosophies (Legalism, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism) regarding how a state should be ruled.*

Various political philosophies arose in early imperial China in response to questions regarding the best way to rule a state. Among the most popular of these political philosophies were Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Legalism. Although each at one point played a prominent role in the governance of the early Chinese state, they were all very different.

Daoist philosopher Laozi argues that limited government intervention in public affairs will result in a more stable and peaceful state. Increased enforcement of laws and rules will be seen by subjects as a form of “prying and meddling,” leading to an increase in “infraction[s] of the law” (Document 1). The concepts of freedom and independence are important to the Daoist political philosophy, as is evidenced in Document 5. When asked if he would accept a government position in the kingdom of Chu, Master Zhuang scoffs at the state officials sent to retrieve him, telling them to leave. A government position would likely leave him trapped, stuck in an “ancestral temple…preserved as an object of worship,” rather than free like the tortoise was when it was alive, “dragging [his] tail through the mud” (Document 5).

Legalist thinker Li Si disagrees with the philosophy of Laozi, arguing that an authoritarian government is important to ensuring that the public remain disciplined and that social order is maintained. He asserts that even the slightest of infractions should be met with “heavy punishment” so that the public is not tempted to violate state law out of fear of what “will be done against a [more] serious offense” (Document 3). The concept of civil obedience is important to Li Si’s Legalist political philosophy, and he is steadfast in his opinion that the Chinese emperor should prohibit all texts regarding other political schools of thought.

Confucianism argues that a strong government involved in state affairs is necessary to ruling a large population. Additionally, as is stated in Document 2 he states that “He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star” (Document 2). Just as all other stars face and support the north star, a leader who rules with virtue will have the support of his subjects.

Buddhist monk and philosopher Huiyuan does not explicitly agree or disagree with the Daoist, Legalist, or Confucian perspectives. Instead, he acknowledges the existence of government in early imperial China but argues that Buddhist monks should be separate from it. Additionally, Huiyuan diminishes the traditional virtuous and all-powerful image of a ruler, highlighting the inability of kings and princes to extend life or take away one’s sorrows.

Each of the political philosophies that arose in early imperial China argues that a different form of government is best.

1. **Revised claim**:

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1. **Revised focus 1**:

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1. **Revised focus 2**:

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