ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

# Distinguishing claims from evidence

### Difficulty level: Advanced

### English, Literacy, and Communication

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## *Overview of the concept*

This is how you tell what someone is claiming from the proof they offer for it. An advertisement claims a product works wonders, but the evidence might be one person's opinion, not a real test. A news article does the same thing, with a bold claim and thin proof behind it. Separating the two lets you judge whether to believe something before you act on it or share it.




## *Rule*

**Claims and evidence: a claim is a position to be proved, something that needs arguing for. Evidence is a fact or data offered to back up a claim.**

Ask: is this something to be proved, or something that proves? A study result, a measurement, or a fact is evidence. An opinion or a should statement is a claim.

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## Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

### Q Classify: 'School should start later.' Claim or evidence?

**SOLUTION**

Ask: is it a point that needs proving, or a point that does the proving? It is a position to be argued.

No fact or data is given in the sentence itself.

So it is a claim.

EXAMPLE 2

### Q Classify: 'A study found students scored higher with a later start.' Claim or evidence?

**SOLUTION**

Ask: does this give a fact that supports a position? Yes, a study result.

It is there to support a claim.

So it is evidence.

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## Practice questions

### 1 Classify: 'Recycling helps the planet.'

- A Claim
- B Evidence

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### 2 Classify: 'Recycling one tonne of paper saves 17 trees.'

- A Claim
- B Evidence

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### 3 Classify: 'Homework should be shorter.'

- A Claim
- B Evidence

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## 4 Classify: 'Students who slept more scored 10 percent higher.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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## 5 Classify: 'Libraries are important.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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## 6 Classify: 'The library lent 5,000 books last year.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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7

## Classify: 'Exercise is healthy.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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## Classify: 'Runners had lower heart rates in the study.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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9

## Classify: 'We should build a new park.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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## Classify: 'The town has no park within 2 kilometres.'

A Claim

B Evidence

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## ANSWER KEY

**1.** Claim

**2.** Evidence

**3.** Claim

**4.** Evidence

**5.** Claim

**6.** Evidence

**7.** Claim

**8.** Evidence

**9.** Claim

**10.** Evidence

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