

Types of Claims

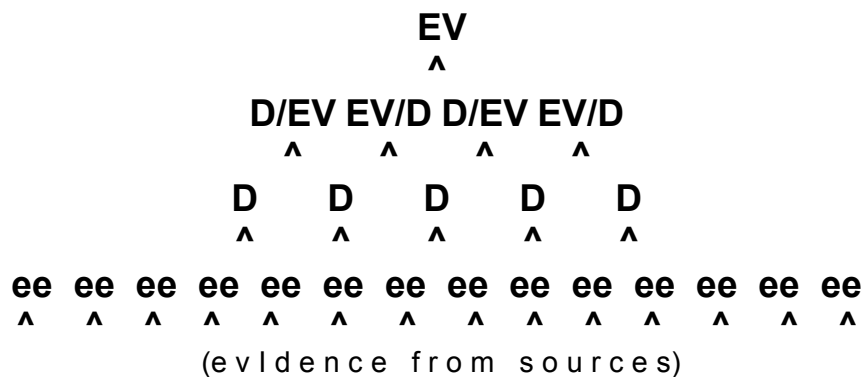
Factual Claim: A factual claim asserts that a condition has, does, or will exist and is supported by verifiable information such as the historical record, statistics, examples, or the evidence of the senses. For example, “*General George Washington was the first president of the United States.*” Such claims require little or no documentation to be accepted as true. Argument writing relies a great deal less on factual claims, because they don’t tend to provoke disagreement (except in situations where facts are disputed, i.e. evolution or global warming). In larger research arguments, a factual claim might be used in a paragraph to provide context or to introduce historical background information.

Descriptive Claim: A descriptive claim is a *readily shared perception*; it’s unlikely to produce more than one interpretation. For example, “*General George Washington reluctantly agreed to become the first president of the United States.*” The evidence to support such a claim should be readily at hand, and the claim itself is likely all but indisputable. Therefore, it’s relatively easy to agree with such a claim—to accept it as true—because it describes more so than boldly states its assertion (note the modifying adverb “reluctantly” in the example).

Evaluative Claim: An evaluative claim involves a value judgment. Evaluative claims won’t necessarily be held or believed by an audience/readers because they’re provocative, debatable, and arguable; it’s more likely for an audience to be in *disagreement*. For example, “General George Washington governed like a tyrannical despot.” The writer is taking a stand on or about something that arguable or debatable when he or she makes an evaluative claim. Strongly evaluative claims need well-considered interpretations of well-chosen evidence to be persuasive, to accepted as true, and to convince the audience of readers of the writer’s perspective, point of view, or argument.

D ----- EV
 Descriptive Evaluative

A claim that starts a paragraph becomes an Assertion in an ACE Paragraph. A claim that ends an introduction becomes the Thesis Statement of an essay. As illustrated above: claims develop on a continuum from left to right, from *descriptive* to *evaluative*: the more evident the claim’s assertion, the closer it will be to **D**; the more provocative & compelling the claim’s assertion, the closer it is to **EV**.



The process of argument begins at the bottom of the above pyramid with the collection of evidence (ee), then proceeds to the making of inferences with descriptive claims (D), then to the drawing of increasingly evaluative conclusions (D/EV, EV/D), ultimately leading to an Assertion Claim (in an I SAY claim for an argument paragraphs) or to a Thesis Claim (in the introduction of an argument essay).