

TEACHING ARGUMENTATION

SUPPLEMENT 2: SIX COMMON TYPES OF CLAIM*

The six most common types of claim are: **fact**, **definition**, **value**, **cause**, **comparison**, and **policy**. Being able to identify these types of claim in other people's arguments can help students better craft their own. The types of claim can also be used to brainstorm possible arguments students might make about an issue they have decided to examine.

- A **claim of fact** takes a position on questions like: What happened? Is it true? Does it exist? Example: "Though student demonstrations may be less evident than they were in the 1960s, students are more politically active than ever."
- A **claim of definition** takes a position on questions like: What is it? How should it be classified or interpreted? How does its usual meaning change in a particular context? Example: "By examining what it means to 'network,' it's clear that social networking sites encourage not networking but something else entirely."
- A **claim of value** takes a position on questions like: Is it good or bad? Of what worth is it? Is it moral or immoral? Who thinks so? What do those people value? What values or criteria should I use to determine how good or bad? Example: "Video games are a valuable addition to modern education."
- A **claim of cause** takes a position on questions like: What caused it? Why did it happen? Where did it come from? What are the effects? What probably will be the results on a short-term and long-term basis? Example: "By seeking to replicate the experience of reading physical books, new hardware and software actually will lead to an appreciation of printed and bound texts for years to come."
- A **claim of comparison** takes a position on questions like: What can be learned by comparing one subject to another? What is the worth of one thing compared to another? How can we better understand one thing by looking at another? Example: "The varied policies of the US and British education systems reveal a difference in values."
- A **claim of policy** takes a position on questions like: What should we do? How should we act? What should be future policy? How can we solve this problem? What course of action should we pursue? Example: "Sex education should be part of the public school curriculum."

*The text of this section comes from a student-directed writing guide created by Paul Barron and Jennifer Metsker, and is available in the link below as a pdf. Since the guide is addressed to students, this is a resource you could share with them directly.