In the **Claim and Focus** category, you have achieved a rating of **Proficient**.

You can improve your writing score in this category by revising your essay based on specific criteria.

In order to move up to the **Advanced** rating, your writing must

* introduce a clear, arguable, and specific claim based on the topic or text(s);
* maintain a strong focus on the purpose and task of the essay;
* thoroughly address the demands of the prompt; and
* fully support and develop the claim.

**Introducing a Claim**

Review your answers from the entry ticket. Do you need to add or revise your claim? Write your new claim below.

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When revising your claim, remember the following:

1. As you did in the entrance activity, start by examining the writing prompt. Ask yourself: **What is the question I am being asked to argue?**
2. Then examine your claim. Your claim is the stance that you want others to understand or accept.

Ask yourself: **Does my claim answer the question asked by the prompt? Do I respond to the specific details?**

Does your new claim address the prompt? Explain your answer.

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1. Ask yourself a few more questions to make your claim even stronger, and revise your claim again if necessary.

* **Is my claim clear and specific? Will others understand what position I’m taking?** Your claim should be specific and clearly state your point of view on the question presented in the writing prompt. Don’t assume readers know what you mean.
* **Is my claim arguable? Could a reasonable person take a different position?** A good claim is worth debating or discussing. It has an alternative or opposing point of view.

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| **Is the claim…** | **Yes or No?** | **Explain** |
| Clear |  |  |
| Specific |  |  |
| Arguable |  |  |

If you answered “no” on any row above, revise your claim appropriately.

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**Maintaining Focus**

Your essay should maintain focus on its purpose and task. Examine each part of your essay and ask yourself these questions:

1. **Does each part of my essay support the claim I made in the introduction?**
2. **Is every reason and piece of evidence explained with clear reasoning to connect it to my claim?**

Make a plan to omit or revise portions of the essay that are unrelated or do not provide reasons and evidence connected to the claim you made in the introduction.

**Addressing Demands of the Prompt**

Make sure your writing addresses all aspects of the prompt. Re-read the prompt for details of the task that you may have overlooked.

1. Ask yourself: **Am I doing what the prompt is asking?**

Recall what you underlined and put asterisks around in the prompt analysis. Does your essay accomplish the task?

1. **Have I addressed the specifics of the question?**

Recall what you circled and put boxes around in the prompt analysis. Does your essay address these details?

Now, revise your essay to improve its claim and focus.

**Vocabulary Supports**

**Argument**—an attempt to persuade or convince others to accept an opinion or position on an issue

**Claim**—an arguable position on an issue

**Counterclaim**—a different position on an issue that opposes the writer’s claim

**Evidence**—details such as facts, statistics, or quotations that support the writer’s claim

**Focus**—the set of related ideas used by a writer to support an argument; an argument that lacks focus, presents unrelated ideas, or goes off topic

**Prompt**—the information and instructions students are responding to when writing an argument

**Reason**—a statement explaining why a writer takes a particular position in an argument  
**Reasoning**—an explanation of how a reason and its supporting evidence connect to the claim