In the **Support and Evidence** 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

* use the most, relevant, appropriate, and valid evidence to support your claim and fully explain how the evidence and reasons support the claim;
* demonstrate reasoning and a full understanding of the topic or text(s); and
* acknowledge counterclaims and ensure they are distinguished from the essay’s central claim.

**Step 1**

Use the table from the entry ticket to examine the support already in your essay. Use the table and the questions below to plan your revision.

**Examine Your Reasons**

Start by examining the reasons you sketched in the first column. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does each reason support my claim?
2. Are there other reasons I could add to support my claim?

On your table, cross out any reasons that don’t support your claim, and fill in empty cells with new reasons you can support with evidence. You will make these changes to your essay when you revise.

**Improve Your Evidence**

Next, look at the evidence you described in the second column. Think about each piece of evidence in your essay. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. **Is my evidence clearly stated and relevant?** “Relevant” means that the evidence is related to the topic, appropriate, and meaningful to the audience. Relevant evidence is easily connected to the claim.
2. **Is my evidence the most appropriate?** Examine each piece of evidence. Is there more appropriate evidence in the text to support your reason and claim?
3. **Can my evidence withstand scrutiny?** In other words, does my evidence hold up to the counterclaims of others?

Make notes on your table describing where you should strengthen your evidence.

**Explain Your Reasoning**

Next, make sure you include logical reasoning that demonstrates your full understanding of the topic or text(s). Reasoning explains how your evidence proves your claim.

Check the last column in your table. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are there places where I should add or improve my reasoning?
2. Will I add new reasons and evidence that I will need to explain?
3. Can I make my reasoning clearer so that it better connects my evidence to my claim?

Make notes on your table to show where you need to add or improve the reasoning in your essay.

**Acknowledge Counterclaims**

A counterclaim is what someone might say when challenging your argument. The counterclaim might be addressed to your overall claim, or it might just challenge a single reason. An advanced essay acknowledges counterclaims.

Think about how someone might challenge your argument and acknowledge those counterclaims. Make sure the counterclaim is clearly distinguished from your own central claim.

The sentence frames below can help you work counterclaims into your argument.

* On one hand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. One the other hand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Despite the fact that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Although \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Some say \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. However, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Make notes on your table where you will try to add a counterclaim.

**Step 2**

**Use the notes on your table to plan your revision**. Fill the holes and improve weaknesses that you’ve found in your reasons, evidence, and reasoning.

Now, revise your essay to improve its support and evidence.

**Need Help Understanding Support & Evidence?**

Here is an example of how you might improve support for a claim:

**Claim:**

While some people argue that cats make better pets than dogs, dogs are clearly the better pets for people.

**Reason and Evidence Without Adequate Reasoning:**

Dogs cause people to have to go outside to take their dogs for a walk. People who have dogs walk 22 minutes more per day than people who don’t have dogs.

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| **Support and Evidence (Level 2—Developing Description)** |
| The essay uses some evidence but may not precisely explain how it supports the claim. The essay includes some reasoning and demonstrates a superficial understanding of the topic or text(s). The support of the claim may rely on summary of the source and may not acknowledge counterclaims. |
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**Reason and Evidence with Reasoning and Acknowledgement of the Counterclaim:**

Dogs cause people to have to go outside to take their dogs for a walk. People who have dogs walk 22 minutes more per day than people who don’t have dogs. That means people who own dogs are healthier because they are walking outside more than people who have cats that don’t need to go outside.

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| **Support and Evidence (Level 3—Proficient Description)** |
| The essay uses clear, relevant evidence and explains how the evidence support the claim. The essay demonstrates logical reasoning and understanding of the topic or text(s). Counterclaims are acknowledged but may not be adequately explained and/or distinguished from the essay's central claim. |
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**Reason and Evidence with Reasoning and Additional Acknowledgement of the Counterclaim:**

Some people think the fact that cats don’t need to go outside makes them better pets, because they are easier for the owner. Dogs, they say, are too much trouble because they cause people to have to go outside to take their dogs for a walk. It is true! People who have dogs walk 22 minutes more per day than people who don’t have dogs. That means people who own dogs are healthier because they are walking outside more than people who have cats that don’t need to go outside. That means that dogs make better pets because they help their owners stay healthy.

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| **Support and Evidence (Level 4—Advanced Description)** |
| The essay cites the most relevant, appropriate, and valid evidence to support its claim. The essay fully explains how the evidence cited and reasons support the claim*.* The essay demonstrates reasoning and full understanding of the topic or text(s). Counterclaims are acknowledged and/or distinguished from essay's central claim. |
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**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