

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

Writing evidence-based claims is a little different from writing stories or just writing about something. You need to **follow a few steps** as you write.

1. ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT

Your readers must know **where your claim is coming from** and **why it's relevant**. Depending on the scope of your piece and the claim, the context differs. If your whole piece is one claim or if you're introducing the first major claim of your piece, the entire context must be established:

In her APEC address, Secretary Clinton argues...

Purposes of evidence-based writing vary. In some cases, naming the text and author might be enough to establish the relevance of your claim. In other cases, you might want to supply additional information:

Secretary Hilary Clinton has been a strong international voice for the working woman. In her APEC address, she argues...

If your claim is part of a larger piece with multiple claims, then the context might be simpler:

According to Secretary Clinton ,... or In paragraph 5, Clinton argues...

2. STATE YOUR CLAIM CLEARLY

How you state your claim is important; it must **precisely and comprehensively express your analysis**. Figuring out how to state claims is a **process**; writers revise them continually as they write their supporting evidence. Here's a claim about Secretary Clinton's APEC address:

In her APEC address, Secretary Clinton argues that when systemic restrictions on the full participation of women in the economy are removed, all members of society will benefit.

When writing claims it is often useful to describe parts of the claim before providing the supporting evidence. In this case, the writer might want to briefly emphasize the inclusive aspect of Clinton's view:

In her APEC address, Secretary Clinton argues that when systemic restrictions on the full participation of women in the economy are removed, all members of society will benefit. She contends that improving opportunities for women is not at the expense of other members of society, but rather will improve the lives of everyone.

The details in the second sentence are relevant to the claim. They also begin connecting the claim to ideas that will be used as evidence.

Remember, you should continually return and re-phrase your claim as you write the supporting evidence to make sure you are capturing exactly what you want to say. Writing out the evidence always helps you figure out what you really think.

3. ORGANIZE YOUR SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Many claims contain multiple aspects that require different evidence and should be expressed in separate paragraphs. This claim can be **broken down into two parts**:

The points that **WOMEN HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED** and
that **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION BENEFITS ALL**.

3. ORGANIZE YOUR SUPPORTING EVIDENCE (CONT'D)

Here are two paragraphs that support the claim with evidence organized into these two points.

The point that WOMEN HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED:

Clinton presents the fact that women's participation in the economy has historically been limited. For example, women "are denied access to credit and may even be prohibited from opening bank accounts, signing contracts, purchasing property, incorporating a business, or filing lawsuits without a male guardian" (99-101). These "structural and social impediments" "stack the deck against them" (56). This "stacking of the deck" against women hampers our economy. Clinton sees women as a "vital source of growth" that needs to be "unlocked" (22-23). Unlocking this vital source of growth is essential to solving today's economic problems. Playing off the words of her husband, President Clinton, she emphasizes that in facing our economic challenges, we "don't have a gender to waste" (64).

The point that WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION BENEFITS ALL:

Clinton strengthens her argument by showing how "increasing women's participation in the economy and enhancing their efficiency and productivity" can lead to "a dramatic impact on the competitiveness and growth of our economies" (25-27). She illustrates that economies that allow more participation of women by "improving the distribution of their talents and skills," "are dramatically outperforming those that have not" (50-53). She offers further support by citing a Goldman Sachs report. According to the report, "a reduction in barriers to female labor force participation would increase America's GDP by 9...the Eurozone's by 13 percent...and Japan's by 16 percent" (122-125). She deftly highlights how this report shows both that women's economic participation is still limited and that it would offer a needed solution to a major worldwide problem (118-128).

Notice the phrase, "Clinton strengthens her argument" starting the second paragraph. **Transitional phrases** like this one aid the organization by showing how the ideas relate to each other.

4. PARAPHRASE AND QUOTE

Written evidence from texts can be paraphrased or quoted. It's up to the writer to decide which works better for each piece of evidence. Paraphrasing is **putting the author's words into your own**. This works well when the author originally expresses the idea you want to include across many sentences. You might write it more briefly.

The last line of paragraph 2 paraphrases the evidence from Clinton's text. The ideas are hers, but the exact way of writing them is not.

She deftly highlights that this report shows both that women's economic participation is still limited and that it would offer a needed solution to a major worldwide problem (118-128).

Some evidence is better quoted than paraphrased. If an author has found the quickest way to phrase the idea or the words are especially strong, you might want to **use the author's words**.

The first line from paragraph 2 quotes Clinton exactly, incorporating two of her powerful phrases.

These "structural and social impediments" "stack the deck against them" (56).

5. REFERENCE YOUR EVIDENCE

Whether you paraphrase or quote the author's words, you must include **the exact location where the ideas come from**. Direct quotes are written in quotation marks. How writers include the reference can vary depending on the piece and the original text. Here the writer puts the line numbers from the original text in parentheses at the end of the sentence.