

YORKWAC Infobase

Making Claims

A claim is a statement of something as a fact or an assertion of something as true. You need to make claims in order to argue your thesis in a research paper.

FUN FACT: *claim* comes from the Latin word that means “shout.” The Latin verb is *clamare*, “to shout,” and the Latin noun is *clamor*, “a shout.”

Types of claims

1. *Factual claim*

Factual claims are statements about people, places, or things that exist in reality, events that happened in history, or current events. *For example:*

The first mandatory cap-and-trade program for greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities in the United States took effect in September 2008.

2. *Speculative claim*

Speculative claims are statements of opinion reached by conjecture or supposition or based on inconclusive evidence. *For example:*

Capping greenhouse-gas emissions and creating a market for trading emissions would reduce carbon dioxide output.

Is one kind of claim better than the other?

Factual claims are not better than speculative claims, or vice versa. They are simply different, and they are used to develop different kinds of arguments or to advance an argument in different ways. If you are writing an opinion essay, you may find yourself making many speculative claims. If you are writing an analysis of an historical event, you may find yourself making many factual claims.

Regardless of whether claims are factual or speculative, they must be supported by *evidence* from reliable *sources*, properly *cited*.

The **YORKWAC Infobase** includes many other Infosheets that can help you with your writing assignment.

If you want more information on making claims, you might want to try:

Infosheet #14, Using Evidence

Infosheet #15, Types of Sources

Infosheet #16, Citing Sources