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

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

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

* introduce a claim based on the topic or text; and
* maintain focus on the purpose and task of the essay.

**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:

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? Will others understand what position I’m taking?** Your claim should clearly state your point of view on the question presented in the writing prompt. Don’t assume readers know what you mean.

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

If you answered no, 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 this question:

1. **Does each part of my essay support the claim I made in the introduction?**

Make a plan to omit or revise portions of the essay that are not connected to the claim you are making. If necessary, write new paragraphs focused on your new claim.

Now, revise your essay to improve its claim and focus. Use words from your claim or synonyms in your supporting statements to make connections to your claim clear.

**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