

Claims and Concluding Sentences Notes

Part I: Note-Taking

Directions: Follow along with the teacher and take notes in the table below regarding what makes a strong claim.

Claim Definition: A claim presents the **main idea** of what you are writing in the form of an argument.

- It must be **opinion-based**.
- It must **address or answer** a question presented to you.



Example:

Prompt: *What message do Marc Nicely and Larry Sallaway aim to convey through the mural, “We Are Still Here?” Why is this message significant?*

Claim: In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway remind viewers of the permanence of Native American peoples as they defend their ancestral lands and celebrate their cultural identity.

Non-Examples:

- There are Native Americans in the mural.
- Marc Nicely and Larry Sallaway created the mural called “We Are Still Here.”

“So What” Definition: a clause attached to the end of the argument that presents some **insight** into an **important lesson, human nature** or **society** that readers can learn from your argument.

You can begin your “So What” clause with:

- ... **because**
- ... **which** shows/illustrates/presents
- ... **-ing verb**
(showing/illustrating/presenting)

Tips:

- Avoid **vague** and **clichéd statements** like “all that glitters isn’t gold.”
- Make sure your “So What” can be **connected** to your argument.
- Your “So What” should make it clear to your reader **why your argument matters** beyond the scope of your paragraph or paper.
Think: What does it help us **understand** about **the people and the world** around us?

Example:

In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway remind viewers of the permanence of Native American peoples as they defend their ancestral lands and celebrate their cultural identity, **fostering awareness and respect for their often-overlooked rich heritage and values.**

Non-Example:

In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway remind viewers of the permanence of Native American peoples as they defend their ancestral lands and celebrate their cultural identity,

- **which shows how we should all be in this together.**
- **illustrating how we can move mountains with more knowledge.**

Structure of a Claim:

- **Topic + Verb + Argument, + So What**
- Your claim should be **clear and concise**. Aim for a **3-line sentence**.

In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway remind viewers of the permanence of Native American peoples as they defend their ancestral lands and celebrate their cultural identity, **fostering awareness and respect for their often-overlooked rich heritage and values.**

Placement of a Claim:

- In a *single paragraph*, the claim is the **topic sentence**.
- In an *essay*, there are two kinds of claims:
 1. A **Central Claim:** the **main argument** that is stated at the end of the introductory paragraph.
 2. **Sub-Claims:** the **topic sentences** of the body paragraphs become smaller claims that **support and prove** your central claim.

Concluding Sentences

How to Write a Concluding Sentence:

- Restate the claim using **synonyms and a different sentence structure** to avoid repetition,
- **Emphasize the significance** of your argument and So What
- Add more **nuance or reflection**

Original Claim: In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway remind viewers of the permanence of Native American peoples as they defend their ancestral lands and celebrate their cultural identity, fostering awareness and respect for their often-overlooked rich heritage and values.

Concluding Sentence: Nicely and Sallaway use their mural to resist colonialism and highlight the enduring presence and cultural richness of Native American peoples.

What to Avoid:

- Copy the **exact wording** and **sentence structure** of the claim.
- Begin a **new topic** at the very end of the paragraph or end with an **idea that wasn’t explored** in the paragraph.

Non-examples:

In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway show viewers that Native American peoples are permanent and they fight for their ancestral lands and honor their cultural identity.

Sample Sentence Frames for Claims

- The author uses _____ to illustrate/convey/ demonstrate/reveal....., (So What).
- The author uses _____ to help visualize, understand/ realize/connect....., (So What).
- The author includes _____, as a result/ consequently, the reader....., (So What).
- By using _____, the author suggests/intimates/ implies....., (So What).
- The use of _____ helps the reader visualize/connect with (to), understand....., (So What).
- The author illustrates/ conveys/ reveals the theme of _____ by....., (So What).

Refer to [this list](#) for more examples of power verbs for literary analysis.

Part II: Claim Practice

Directions: Answer each of the following questions using our **Topic** + **Verb** + **Argument** + **So What?** format from above.

- Prompt:** What message do Marc Nicely and Larry Sallaway convey through the forest imagery in the mural? Think about the implicit meaning of the imagery.

Type Here: In “We Are Still Here,” Nicely and Sallaway use _____ to communicate _____, which highlights how _____.

- Prompt:** What role do the children and their attire play in the mural?

Weak Claim: The children in “We Are Still Here” shed light on how the Native American community is continuing to grow.

A. Why is this a weak claim?

Type Here:

B. Revise the claim below by making sure it has all of the major components. Use the checklist for support.

Type here:

Checklist:

- ☐ Do you have a claim that responds to all aspects of the initial prompt: What role do the children and their attire play in the mural?
- ☐ Do you have a So What that adds nuance and depth to the viewer's understanding of the mural?
- ☐ Did you highlight all the individual components of the claim?