**11AP**

**Staking a Claim**

Every argument has a **claim** – also called an assertion or proposition – that states the argument’s main idea or position. A claim differs from a topic or subject in that a claim has to be arguable. It can’t just be a simple statement of fact; it has to state a position that some people might disagree with and others might agree with. Going from a simple topic to a claim means stating your informed opinion about a topic. The topic may be a simple word or phrase, but the arguable claim has to be stated as a complete sentence.

It’s important to note that neither a published author nor a student writer is likely to develop a strong claim without exploring a topic through reading about it, discussing it with others, brainstorming, taking notes, and rethinking. After looking into a topic thoroughly, then you are ready to develop a position on an issue. For example, let’s use the topic of single-sex classrooms. You’ll notice that a simple statement of the topic does not indicate whether you support the notion or challenge it.

Please read the following statements and discuss any strengths or weaknesses you see in each:

1. Many schools have single-sex classrooms.

2. Single-sex classrooms have been around for years, especially in private schools.

3. Single-sex classrooms are ineffective because they do not prepare students for the realities of the workplace.

**ACTIVITY:**

For each of the following statements, evaluate whether it is arguable or too easily verifiable to develop into an effective argument. Revise the ones that you consider too easily verifiable to make them into arguable claims.

1. SUV owners should be required to pay an energy surcharge.

2. Charter schools are an alternative to public schools.

3. Ronald Reagan was the most charismatic president of the twentieth century.

4. Requiring students to wear school uniforms improves school spirit.

5. The terms global warming and climate change describe different perspectives on this complex issue.

6. Students graduating from college today can expect to have more debt than any other generation.

7. People who read novels are more likely to attend sports events and movies than those who do not.

8. Print newspapers will not survive another decade.

9. The competition among countries to become a site for the Olympic Games is fierce.

10. Plagiarism is a serious problem in today’s schools.