While formal logic often deals in universal premises: *All humans are mortal*, for example, the real world rarely lends itself to absolute black and white situations. This is why we need qualifiers. Qualifiers are limiting words or phrases that allow us to speak and write more precisely and to limit our responsibilities within an argument.

Examples:

Unqualified statement: People who don't go to college earn less money than those who do.

Qualified statement: *In most cases*, people who don't go to college earn less money than those who do.

Not **all** non-college graduates make less money than college graduates, however, in most cases, this is true.

Unqualified statement: Welfare programs should be cut.

Qualified statement: *Ineffective* federal welfare programs should be *identified, modified, and, if necessary, eliminated.*

Not all welfare should be cut, just the ineffective programs.

In both of the examples, you are qualifying or *limiting* your claim.

A Short List of Qualifiers

Few	More or less	Often
It is possible	In some cases	Perhaps
Rarely	Many	Under these conditions
It seems	In the main	Possibly
Some	Routinely	For the most part
It may be	Most	If it were so
Sometimes	One might argue	

Never assume that readers understand the limits you have in mind.