

Exercise walk-through

3.3

Describing the line of reasoning

AP English Language and Composition

Two legitimate orders, one requirement

Two ways to arrange an argument

Build to the thesis

evidence and reasoning



reader is led along



THESIS arrives last

State, then justify

THESIS stated first



each claim defends it



evidence follows each claim

Either order is legitimate. What is NOT optional:
commentary connecting each piece of evidence to its claim.

- Writers may **lead readers through a line of reasoning and then arrive at a thesis** - the argument builds to its claim.
- Writers may **express a claim and then develop a line of reasoning to justify it** - the argument declares and then defends.

Describing the Line of Reasoning

The CED allows two arrangements, and both are valid:

- Writers may **lead readers through a line of reasoning** and then arrive at a thesis – the argument builds to its claim.
- Writers may **express a claim and then develop a line of reasoning to justify it** – the argument declares and then defends.
- Writers explain their reasoning through **commentary that connects chosen evidence to a claim**.
- Commentary explains the **significance and relevance** of evidence in relation to the line of reasoning.
- **The sequence of paragraphs in a text reveals the argument's line of reasoning** – which is the practical tool for reading. To find a writer's reasoning, write one sentence per paragraph and read the list.

The shuffle test

- Writers may **lead readers through a line of reasoning and then arrive at a thesis** - the argument builds to its claim.
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The shuffle test, in detail

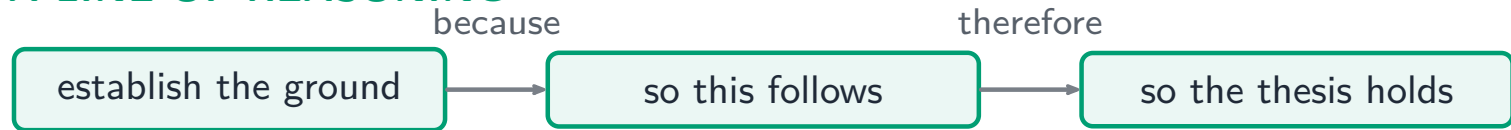
A LIST

a thing I know

another thing

a third thing

A LINE OF REASONING



Writers may **express a claim and then develop a line of reasoning to justify it** - the argument declares and then defends.

What a line of reasoning must do

the requirement

whichever order is used, the **same** requirements hold

each claim supports

the thesis, and each piece of evidence supports its claim

the order is purposeful

the arrangement itself is an argument about what matters and what follows what

the links are visible

the reader can see how each part connects to the next

nothing is missing

no step in the chain is assumed rather than made

the failure

flaws in a line of reasoning may render an argument **specious** or illogical

“Specious” means it *looks* valid. That is the danger a line-of-reasoning question is testing: an argument can be well written and still not follow.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the difference between a summary and a line of reasoning. [2]

2.2 Explain why the order of claims can matter. [2]

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 State the difference between a summary and a line of reasoning. [2]

2.1

- a summary says what the passage contains; a line of reasoning says how each part makes the next possible
-

2.2 Explain why the order of claims can matter. [2]

2.2

- some claims can only be made once another is accepted; e.g. a remedy can only be argued after a problem is established

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A passage argues that a policy is necessary, then that it is affordable, then that it is fair.

(a) State why “necessary” comes first.

[1]

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(a) State why “necessary” comes first.

[1]

(a)

- affordability and fairness are only worth arguing if the policy is needed

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A passage argues that a policy is necessary, then that it is affordable, then that it is fair.

(b) State what a reader who rejects the first claim will do with the rest. [1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A passage argues that a policy is necessary, then that it is affordable, then that it is fair.

(b) State what a reader who rejects the first claim will do with the rest. [1]

(b)

- they will treat the rest as irrelevant

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 “First he shows the harm is real, which allows him to argue about the cost” describes^[1]

☐

A a summary

B a line of reasoning

C a method of development

D a thesis

3.2 The word “granted” most often marks

^[1]

☐

A the thesis

B a concession or qualification

C the exigence

D the first claim

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 “First he shows the harm is real, which allows him to argue about the cost” describes^[1]

☐

A a summary

B a line of reasoning

C a method of development

D a thesis

3.1 B

- it states a dependency between claims

3.2 The word “granted” most often marks

^[1]

☐

A the thesis

B a concession or qualification

C the exigence

D the first claim

3.2 B

- it signals a point being granted

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A passage places its concession immediately before its strongest claim.

(a) State the likely effect.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A passage places its concession immediately before its strongest claim.

(a) State the likely effect.

[1]

(a)

- the concession disarms the objection just before the claim it would weaken

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A passage places its concession immediately before its strongest claim.

(b) Explain why the placement matters.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A passage places its concession immediately before its strongest claim.

(b) Explain why the placement matters.

[2]

(b)

- an objection answered in advance cannot interrupt the strongest claim, so the reader meets it already satisfied

Exercise 3.4

3.4 Full free-response task. In a widely reprinted 1996 essay, a physician argues that hospitals should abandon visiting hours entirely. She begins with the history of the rule, moves to what the rule was designed to prevent, shows that each of those dangers has since been solved by other means, then turns to what the rule now costs patients, and closes with a single sentence about her own father.

Write an essay that analyses how the writer's line of reasoning advances her argument.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A – Thesis (1), Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4), Row C – Sophistication (1).**

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Write an essay that analyses how the writer's line of reasoning advances her argument.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A – Thesis (1), Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4), Row C – Sophistication (1).**

[6]

3.4

- *Row A – Thesis (1).* A defensible claim about **the arrangement**, not the topic. **Earns it:** “By tracing the rule’s original justifications before naming its costs, the writer makes the reader retire the rule rather than reject it – the argument is structured

Full solution 3.4

3.4

- *Row A – Thesis (1)*. A defensible claim about **the arrangement**, not the topic. **Earns it:** “By tracing the rule’s original justifications before naming its costs, the writer makes the reader retire the rule rather than reject it – the argument is structured as a concession that runs out.” **Does not:** “The writer argues that visiting hours should be abolished” – that is her claim, not an analysis of her reasoning. *Row B – Evidence and Commentary (0–4)*. The evidence here is the **sequence of moves**, and the commentary must explain what each move earns. A 4-point response identifies the reasoning: history establishes that the rule was designed for reasons, not prejudice, so dismantling it is not an attack on the people who made it; the point-by-point retirement of each danger transfers the burden of proof to the defender of the rule; only then, with the ground cleared, does she introduce cost; and the closing personal

sentence is placed **last** precisely so it reads as evidence of stakes rather than as the motive for the argument. Responses that list the paragraphs in order without saying what each accomplishes cap at 2. *Row C – Sophistication (1)*. Awarded for handling the tension in the structure – for example, that the essay’s most persuasive moment is also its least argued, and that its placement after the reasoning is what protects it from the charge of sentimentality. The point is for sustained complexity, not for one observation