2.4 Developing a paragraph with claim and evidence

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 17 marks**

KEY WORDS commentary • effect • purpose • simile • contrast • rhetorical choice

Objective

Build the skills to write **commentary** that connects evidence to a claim and to what the audience cares about.

You must be able to:

- explain what commentary does in a paragraph
- write commentary that explains a writer's choice
- analyze how a writer's reasoning moves an audience

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ What commentary does

Commentary answers **so what?** It explains:

question	example
how does this evidence prove the claim?	"Because the fall came after hours were cut..."
why does it matter to this audience?	"...which worries parents who rely on the library after school."
(in analysis) why did the writer make this choice?	"Paine compares tyranny to hell so readers see the war as a moral fight."

■ Analysis commentary: the choice → effect → purpose chain

1. **choice**: what the writer does (a contrast, a question, an image)
2. **effect**: what it makes the audience think or feel
3. **purpose**: how that helps the writer's aim

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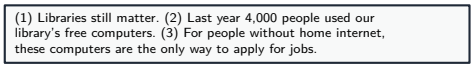
■ **Worked example**

Task: comment on Paine's line "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country."

Answer: Paine names a type of person no reader wants to be (choice). "Summer" and "sunshine" suggest loyalty that lasts only in easy times, so readers feel shame at the thought of quitting (effect). This pushes tired soldiers and doubtful colonists to stay in the fight in the hard winter of 1776 (purpose).

2 Practice

2.1 Read the paragraph: "(1) Libraries still matter. (2) Last year 4,000 people used our library's free computers. (3) For people without home internet, these computers are the only way to apply for jobs." Identify which sentence is evidence and which is commentary. [2]



2.2 Explain the difference between summary and commentary in analysis writing. [3]



2.3 Write commentary for this evidence in an essay about a speech: "The speaker repeats 'we will not wait' three times." [3]



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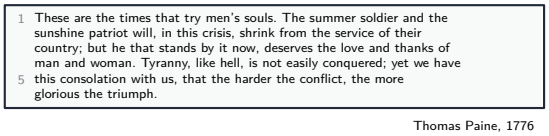
3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the passage.

> "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, December 1776

(a) Identify the audience of this passage. [1]



(b) Explain the effect of the contrast between the "summer soldier" and "he that stands by it now". [1]

(c) Explain how the final sentence turns hardship into a reason to fight. [1]

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3.2 Use the Paine passage in Question 3.1.

Write one paragraph that analyzes how Paine's choices encourage his audience to keep fighting. Begin with a thesis sentence, and use the choice, effect, purpose chain at least twice. [6]



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Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

evidence: sentence (2); commentary: sentence (3)

2.2

summary restates what a text says or what happens in it; commentary explains how and why the writer's choices work; so commentary shows understanding and earns credit, while summary only shows the writer was read

2.3

names the effect, for example the repetition builds rising urgency and determination; links it to the audience, for example listeners feel they share one strong will; links it to the purpose, for example to push the audience to demand change now rather than accept delay

3.1

(a) American soldiers and colonists during a low point of the war (General Washington had it read to his troops)

(b) it shames those who quit and praises those who stay, so readers want to be on the side that earns "love and thanks"

(c) it claims that a harder fight brings a greater victory, so the army's suffering becomes a sign of the glory to come

3.2

thesis: a defensible thesis about how Paine encourages his audience, for example that he uses shame and hope

evidence: specific evidence of one choice, for example the "summer soldier" image; specific evidence of a second choice, for example the simile "Tyranny, like hell" or the final claim about triumph

commentary: commentary that explains the effect of the first choice on the audience and links it to Paine's purpose; commentary that explains the effect of the second choice and links it to Paine's purpose

sophistication: explains the rhetorical situation with insight, for example that the text was read aloud to a defeated army in winter, so it had to work on tired listeners

model: "Paine moves his readers from shame to hope. He invents the 'summer soldier' and 'sunshine patriot,' people loyal only in easy times, so any reader thinking of quitting sees a figure he despises. Having shamed doubt, Paine then offers comfort: 'the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.' The army's suffering becomes proof of the glory ahead. For soldiers who had just retreated across New Jersey in winter, this pairing turned defeat into a reason to keep going."

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