

3.3 Describing the line of reasoning

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to describe a passage's **line of reasoning** 推理线索.

You must be able to:

- state a line of reasoning as a sequence of claims, not topics
- explain why the order of claims matters
- identify where a passage turns or qualifies
- distinguish a line of reasoning from a summary

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Sequence of claims

A line of reasoning is the order in which claims build toward the thesis. Describe it as *first he establishes A, which lets him claim B, and only then does C become plausible*—not as *he talks about A, then B, then C*.

■ Why order matters

Some claims can only be made once another is accepted. Establishing that a problem exists must precede arguing about the remedy. Naming that dependency is the analysis.

■ The turn

Most arguments have a point where they concede, qualify or pivot —“and yet”, “of course”, “granted”. Locating it identifies the argument’s own sense of where it is weakest.

■ Not a summary

A summary says what a passage contains. A line of reasoning says how one part makes the next possible.

2 Practice

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]

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]

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

3 Exam-style questions

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

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

(a) State the likely effect. [1]

(b) Explain why the placement matters.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **3.3 Describing the line of reasoning** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Line of Reasoning and Methods of Development** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

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

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.

2.3 (a) affordability and fairness are only worth arguing if the policy is needed. (b) they will treat the rest as irrelevant.

3.1 B. it states a dependency between claims.

3.2 B. it signals a point being granted.

3.3 (a) the concession disarms the objection just before the claim it would weaken. (b) an objection answered in advance cannot interrupt the strongest claim, so the reader meets it already satisfied.