

3.4 Developing a line of reasoning and commentary

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to **build** a line of reasoning across paragraphs.

You must be able to:

- order your claims so each makes the next possible
- write commentary that carries the reader from one claim to the next
- place a concession where it does most work
- avoid a sequence of unconnected paragraphs

1 Worked examples

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

■ Ordering claims

Before writing, list your claims and ask of each: what must the reader already accept for this to land? That ordering is your structure, and it is rarely the order in which you thought of them.

■ Commentary across paragraphs

The last sentence of a paragraph and the first of the next carry the reasoning. "If the harm is real, the question is who bears the cost" moves the argument without announcing a topic.

■ Placing a concession

Concede immediately before the claim the objection would damage. Conceding at the end reads as a retreat; conceding at the start can undercut you before you begin.

2 Practice

2.1 State the question to ask of each claim when ordering an argument. [2]

2.2 State where a concession does most work and why. [2]

2.3 An essay's three paragraphs each defend a separate point with no connection.

(a) Name the weakness. [1]

(b) State one fix. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The reasoning between paragraphs is usually carried by [1]

- **A** the topic sentence alone
- **B** the last sentence of one and the first of the next
- **C** the thesis
- **D** the title

3.2 Placing a concession at the very end of an argument tends to read as [1]

- **A** decisive
- **B** a retreat
- **C** a thesis
- **D** an introduction

3.3 Plan a three-claim line of reasoning for: "Cities should charge for road use at peak times."

(a) List the three claims in order. [2]

(b) State where you would concede and why. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **3.4 Developing a line of reasoning and commentary** 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 what must the reader already accept for this claim to land; the answers give the order.

2.2 immediately before the claim the objection would damage, so the objection is answered before it can interrupt.

2.3 (a) there is no line of reasoning —the paragraphs do not build. (b) reorder them so each depends on the last, and connect them with linking commentary.

3.1 B. those two sentences are where one claim hands over to the next.

3.2 B. a late concession undoes the case just made.

3.3 (a) a workable dependent order, e.g. congestion imposes real costs → those costs fall unevenly → pricing is the fairest available remedy. (b) a concession named and placed before the claim it protects, with a reason.