

5.2 Developing a line of reasoning and commentary

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to develop reasoning whose **commentary** does the connecting work.

You must be able to:

- write transitional commentary that states a dependence, not a topic change
- signal a qualification without weakening the claim
- carry one argument across four or more paragraphs
- diagnose a paragraph that has lost its connection

1 Worked examples

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

■ Transitional commentary

Weak: "Another point is cost." Strong: "If the harm is as widespread as the figures suggest, the question is no longer whether to act but who pays." The second states the dependence; the first announces a topic.

■ Qualifying without weakening

"This does not hold where the population is small" narrows the claim and strengthens it, because it shows the writer knows the limits. "This may or may not be true" abandons it.

■ Diagnosing a lost paragraph

If you cannot state in one sentence what the previous paragraph had to establish for this one to be possible, the connection is missing. That test locates the problem quickly.

2 Practice

2.1 State the difference between announcing a topic and stating a dependence. [2]

2.2 Explain how a qualification can strengthen a claim. [2]

2.3 A paragraph on staffing follows one on cost, connected only by "Also".

(a) State the weakness. [1]

(b) Write a better transition. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 "This holds only where transport is already frequent" is [1]

- **A** an abandonment of the claim
- **B** a qualification that strengthens it
- **C** a topic announcement
- **D** a thesis

3.2 The quickest test of a lost connection is whether you can state [1]

- **A** the paragraph's length
- **B** what the previous paragraph had to establish for this one
- **C** the number of examples
- **D** the writer's tone

3.3 Write two consecutive sentences —the last of one paragraph and the first of the next—that carry an argument from "the problem is real" to "the remedy is affordable". [4]

4 Go further

- work through the **5.2 Developing a line of reasoning and commentary** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Organization, Coherence, and Style** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 announcing a topic states what comes next; stating a dependence explains why what comes next follows from what came before.

2.2 it narrows the claim to where it holds, showing the writer knows the limits, so the remaining claim is more credible.

2.3 (a) "Also" announces addition without stating any dependence. (b) a transition that names the dependence, e.g. "If the cost is bearable, the remaining obstacle is whether the staff exist to deliver it".

3.1 B. a stated limit makes the remaining claim more credible.

3.2 B. that sentence is the connection; if it cannot be written, it is missing.

3.3 the first sentence closes on what has been established; the second opens on what that makes possible, without announcing a topic.