Course Companion

AP English Language and Composition

Every topic handout in one volume

全部专题讲义合集

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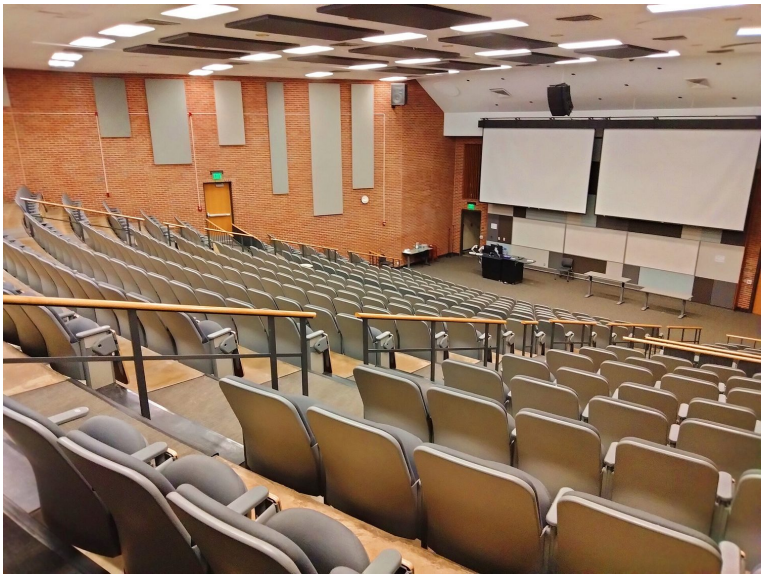
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Claims, Evidence, and the Rhetorical Situation

AP English Language and Composition

The Rhetorical Situation

On 12 April 1963 eight white religious leaders in Birmingham, Alabama, published a statement in a local newspaper. It called the protests against racial segregation in the city "unwise and untimely" and asked Black citizens to wait for the courts. Martin Luther King Jr. was in Birmingham's jail for leading those protests. He began his answer in the margins of that newspaper, and it became the "Letter from Birmingham Jail". He did not write it because he felt like writing: a statement had been published, it criticised demonstrations he helped lead, and an answer was needed now. That prompt has a name in this course, the exigence, and it is the first part of every rhetorical situation.

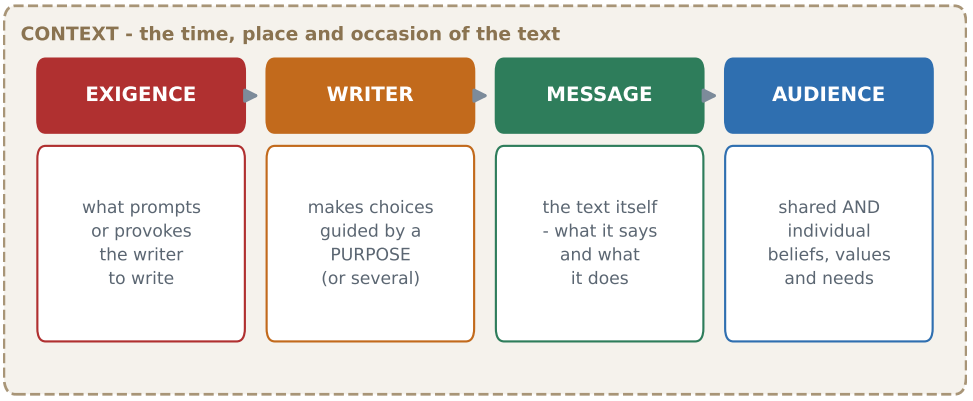


A speaker and an audience in one room: the rhetorical situation is who speaks, to whom, why, and in what context

AP English Language is not a literature course. It is a course in **how texts do work on readers**, and Unit 1 installs the two ideas everything else is built on: the **rhetorical situation** and the **claim-plus-evidence** paragraph.

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The rhetorical situation - and the order runs left to right



The sentence every rhetorical-analysis answer needs:
this writer, prompted by this exigence, made this choice to move this audience toward this purpose.

Exigence prompts the writer; context surrounds everything - and every question about "choices" is answered from here

The CED defines the **rhetorical situation** 修辞情境 as the **exigence, purpose, audience, writer, context, and message** taken together. Each has a precise meaning, and using them precisely is what separates a strong answer from a vague one:

- The **exigence** 促因 is the part of the situation that **inspires, stimulates, provokes, or prompts a writer to create a text**. It is the reason this text exists *now*.
- The **purpose** 目的 is what the writer hopes to accomplish. A text may have **more than one purpose**.
- The **audience** 受众 has **shared as well as individual** beliefs, values, needs, and backgrounds - so "the audience" is never a single uniform thing.
- The **context** 语境 includes the **time, place, and occasion** in which the text was created.
- The **message** 信息 is what the text actually says and does.

The most common weak answer in this course names a device and stops. The rhetorical situation is what turns a device into an argument: *this writer, prompted by this exigence, made this choice to move this audience toward this purpose.*

> **Worked example: the rhetorical situation of the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (April 1963).**

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Component	In this text
exigence	the clergymen's public statement calling the protests "unwise and untimely"
writer	King: a minister himself, writing from a jail cell
audience	first the eight clergymen; beyond them, moderate white readers who agreed segregation was wrong but wanted Black citizens to wait
purpose	to defend the protests and to show why waiting was itself a choice with costs
context	segregation laws in Birmingham; King jailed for marching without a permit
message	injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere; "wait" has almost always meant "never"

Because King and the statement's signatories are religious leaders, the letter answers them in their own language of religion and conscience. That is the situation shaping the choices.

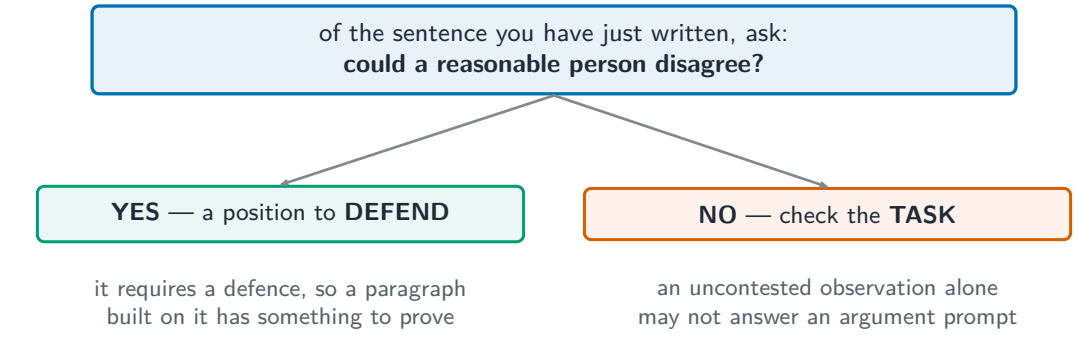
Identifying Claims and Evidence

- Writers convey their positions through one or more **claims** 主张 **that require a defence**.
- Writers defend their claims with **evidence** 证据 and/or **reasoning** 推理.
- Types of evidence include facts, **anecdotes** 轶事, **analogies** 类比, **statistics** 统计数据, examples, details, illustrations, **expert opinions** 专家意见, and personal experience - a deliberately wide list, because recognising an anecdote or an analogy *as* evidence is itself a skill.
- **Effective claims provoke interest and require a defence**, rather than stating an obvious, known fact that requires no proof.

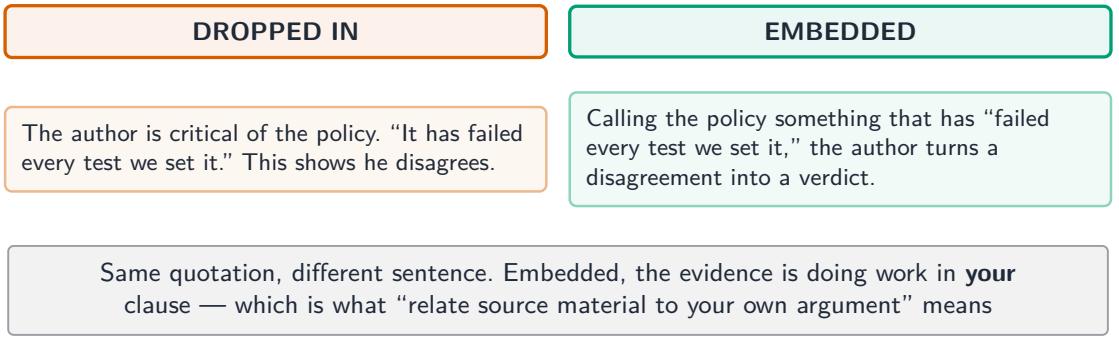
That fourth point is the most useful test you have. Ask of a proposed argumentative position: *could a reasonable person disagree?* This helps distinguish an arguable position from an uncontested observation. Factual claims can also require proof; a statement does not cease to be a claim merely because it is true.

Finally, writers **relate source material to their own argument by syntactically embedding** 嵌入 quoted, **paraphrased** 转述的, or **summarised** 概括的 material into their own sentences. The evidence is not dropped in beside your sentence; it is built into it.

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A planning test for an arguable position: could a reasonable person disagree?



The same quotation dropped in, and embedded - only one of them does work in your sentence

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

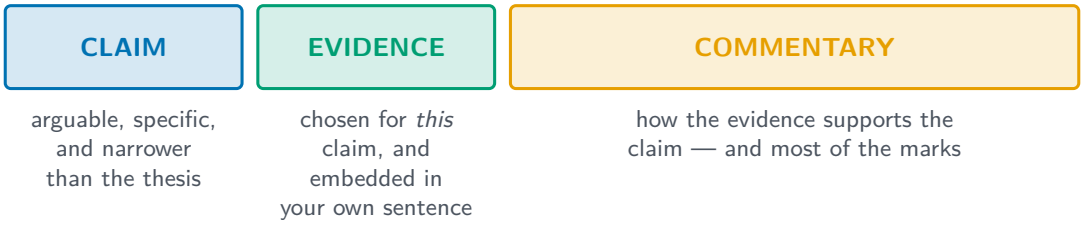
Unit 1's writing objective is deliberately small: **write one paragraph containing a claim and evidence that supports it**. Everything later in the course is an elaboration of this.

A working shape:

1. A **claim** that requires defence - arguable, specific, and narrower than the whole thesis.
2. **Evidence** chosen because it supports *this* claim, embedded syntactically rather than dropped in.
3. **Commentary** 评述 explaining how the evidence supports the claim - the step students skip, and the one that carries most of the marks on the exam.

The single most common failure on the AP Language essays is a paragraph in which the

evidence is present and the explanation is absent. The reader can see the quotation; what they cannot see is why you think it proves your point.



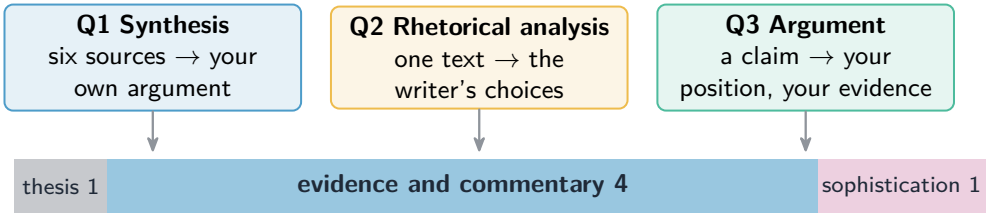
The paragraph drawn to the proportions it should have - the widths are the point

What the Exam Actually Asks

The free-response section has three questions, and they use the same skills in different arrangements:

- **Question 1, Synthesis** 综合写作: you are given six sources and must build **your own argument**, combining and citing at least three as support rather than merely summarising them.
- **Question 2, Rhetorical Analysis** 修辞分析: you are given one text and must explain **the choices the writer makes** and how those choices contribute to purpose - which is the rhetorical situation applied.
- **Question 3, Argument** 论证写作: you are given a claim or a scenario and must argue a position, using evidence from your own knowledge and experience.

All three are marked on a **six-point rubric** 评分标准 with the same three rows: **thesis (1 point)**, **evidence and commentary (4 points)**, and **sophistication** 思辨深度 (1 point). Knowing that shape from Unit 1 tells you where the marks are: four of the six come from evidence *and the commentary on it*, so a plan that produces evidence without explanation caps you at low marks no matter how good the writing sounds.



Three questions, one rubric

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** A Rhetorical Analysis prompt asks you to *"explain the writer's rhetorical choices"* in a given passage. A row-scoring answer does not say *"the writer uses a rhetorical question."* It says: *"Faced with an audience that already agrees on the problem but not on its urgency, the writer opens with a question rather than a statement, forcing readers to supply the answer themselves and so to feel the conclusion as their own rather than as one imposed on them."* Notice what earns the points: the **audience**, the **choice**, and the **effect on purpose** - the rhetorical situation, used.

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Name the six parts of the rhetorical situation, as the course defines it.
2. A charity letter opens: "Last winter, 300 children in this city slept in cars." What is the exigence, and who is the likely audience?
3. Identify the claim and the evidence: "Cycling lanes make streets safer: after the city added 20 km of lanes, cyclist injuries fell by a third."
4. Turn this summary into commentary: "The writer uses statistics about injuries."
5. A student says: "Evidence speaks for itself, so I can end my paragraph with a quotation." Correct the student.

Model answers

1. Exigence (what prompts the text), purpose, audience, writer, context and message.
2. The exigence is child homelessness made urgent by winter; the audience is local readers who could donate and may not know the problem is so close.
3. Claim: cycling lanes make streets safer. Evidence: injuries fell by a third after 20 km of lanes were added.
4. For example: "By choosing a local injury figure rather than a national one, the writer makes the danger feel close, so readers see the lanes as protecting people they know."

5. Evidence needs commentary that explains how it proves the claim. A quotation left unexplained leaves the reader to make the argument, which limits the evidence-and-commentary score; relevant evidence can still earn credit without adequate explanation.

Exam tips

- Learn the **six components** by name and use the names. Precision here is directly rewarded.
- **Exigence is not the same as purpose.** Exigence is what prompted the text; purpose is what the writer wants to achieve.
- Test every claim with *could a reasonable person disagree?* An uncontested observation alone may not supply an argumentative position; factual claims can also need proof.
- **Embed** evidence in your own sentence. Dropped quotations read as unprocessed.
- **Four of six points are evidence and commentary.** Write the commentary; it is where most lost marks live.
- Never name a device without saying **what it does to the audience**. Naming a device alone does not earn the higher evidence-and-commentary scores.

Vocabulary card meanings

rhetorical situation: The writer, the audience, the purpose, and the setting of a text. audience: The people a text is written for. claim: A statement the writer wants the reader to accept. exigence: The problem or event that prompts a writer to write now.

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Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence

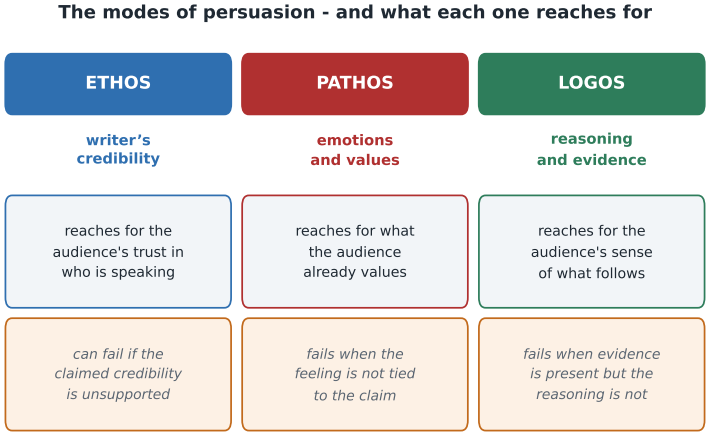
AP English Language and Composition

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

In August 1588 England feared invasion: a huge Spanish fleet, the Armada, had sailed up the English Channel, and a Spanish army waited across the sea in the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth I rode out to her soldiers at Tilbury, near London. Many of them had never seen a woman lead an army, and she knew it. In the version of her speech that has come down to us, she said: "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too." She named her audience's doubt before they could, and turned it into a reason to trust her. Every choice in that sentence starts from what she believed her listeners were thinking.

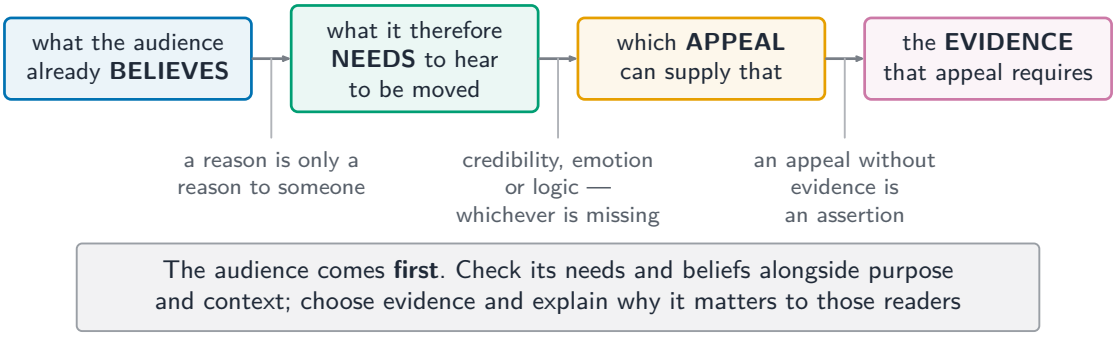
Unit 1 established that a text has an audience. Unit 2 makes that audience the engine of every choice a writer makes.

- Writers' **perceptions** 看法 of an audience's **values** 价值观, **beliefs** 信念, needs, and background guide the choices they make. Note the word *perceptions*: what steers the writing is the writer's picture of the audience, which may be accurate or not.
- To achieve a purpose, writers make choices in an attempt to relate to an **intended audience** 目标受众's emotions and values.
- Arguments seek to persuade or motivate action through **appeals** 诉求 - the **modes of persuasion** 说服方式.



An answer that names the appeal has labelled it. Explain the wording, target and connection to the purpose.

Name the appeal, its target and the wording that connects it to the purpose



The audience comes first: what it believes determines what will count as a reason

Worked example: the audience at Tilbury.

What she believed the soldiers thought	Her choice	The appeal
"Can a woman lead us in war?"	"the body of a weak and feeble woman; but ... the heart and stomach of a king"	ethos: she concedes the doubt, then claims a king's courage
"Will she stay safe in London while we die?"	"being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all"	pathos and ethos: she shares their danger
"Will we be paid?"	she promises "rewards and crowns" and says they "shall be duly paid"	logos: a practical need answered with a practical promise

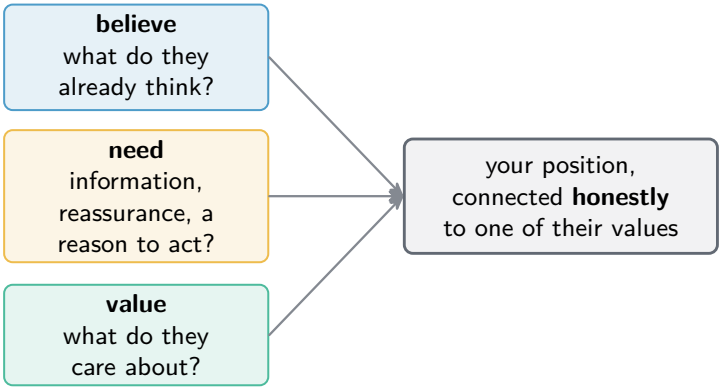
A scoring sentence: *"By naming the soldiers' doubt about a woman commander before they can voice it, Elizabeth turns a weakness into proof of her honesty, so the claim to a king's heart that follows sounds earned rather than boastful."*

Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

The same three statements now become a writing instruction. Before drafting, decide:

- What does this audience already **believe** about the subject?
- What do they **need** - information, reassurance, a reason to act?
- What do they **value**, and which of those values can honestly be connected to my position?

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Believe, need, value: then connect

Compare drafts for different audiences: which needs and values does each address? The same wording can sometimes serve overlapping audiences; similarity alone does not prove that no audience was considered.

Identifying Claims and Evidence

Unit 2 deepens Unit 1's treatment of evidence with three claims about **how** evidence works:

- Writers use evidence **strategically and purposefully** to **illustrate, clarify, set a mood, exemplify, associate, or amplify**. Evidence does a *job*, and naming that job is analysis.
- Strategically selected evidence strengthens the **validity** 有效性 and reasoning of the argument, relates to an audience's **emotions and values**, and helps establish the writer's **credibility** 可信度.
- An effective argument contains **sufficient evidence** 充分的证据 - sufficient when its **quantity and quality** provide apt support for the line of reasoning.

That third point is often misread as "more is better". Sufficiency is quantity **and** quality together: relevant, **reliable** 可靠的 evidence with explained connections is more useful than a larger pile of loosely related material. No fixed count guarantees sufficiency.

TYPE	WHAT IT CAN ESTABLISH	WHAT IT CANNOT
facts and statistics	measured scale or pattern, within the data's limits	that the pattern matters to a reader
anecdotes and examples	a particular case or experience, if documented	that it is typical
analogies	a potentially useful comparison between cases	anything, if the two cases differ where it counts
expert opinion	that informed people hold the view	that they are right

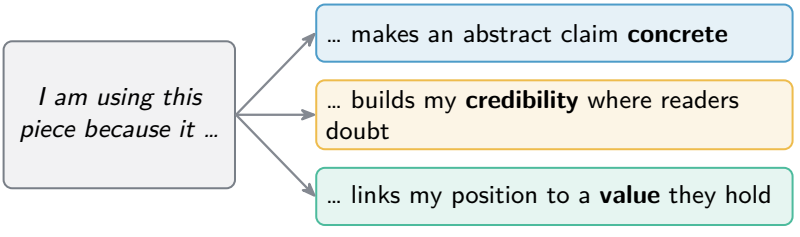
The third column is why writers combine them. A statistic and an anecdote are not **interchangeable** — check what each adds and which gaps still remain

Evidence types sorted by what each can and cannot establish

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

Applying the above to your own writing, choose each piece of evidence for a stated reason. In practice this means being able to finish the sentence: *I am using this piece because it …*

- … illustrates a claim that would otherwise stay abstract;
- … establishes my credibility on a subject where readers may doubt it;
- … connects my position to a value the audience already holds.



the reason plans the commentary; the commentary still has to explain

Choose each piece of evidence for a reason

Selecting evidence for a reason helps you plan commentary, but you must still explain how it supports the claim and acknowledge what it cannot establish.

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Identifying the Overarching Thesis

- A **thesis** 论点 is the main, **overarching** 总体的 claim a writer seeks to defend or prove by using reasoning supported by evidence.
- A writer's thesis is not necessarily a single sentence or an **explicit** 明确的 statement, and may require a thorough reading to identify.

That second point matters for the reading side of the exam. On a rhetorical-analysis passage, the thesis may be distributed across the text or **implied** 隐含的 by its structure. Do not assume the first sentence of the second paragraph is the thesis because that is where you would put yours.



A thesis can be stated once or spread across a text

Writing a Thesis Statement

The writing objective is precise: **write a thesis statement that requires proof or defence and that may preview the structure of the argument**.

Two independent requirements sit in that sentence:

- It must **require defence**. Apply the Unit 1 test again: could a reasonable person disagree? A topic or uncontested observation alone may leave the position unstated; factual claims can themselves require evidence. State the position the task asks you to defend.
- It **may preview the structure** - optional, but useful, because a thesis that names the lines of reasoning it will pursue gives the essay its shape.

A defensible thesis responds to the actual task and states a position requiring support. Restating a prompt alone does not supply that position. A weak thesis does not by itself determine all other parts of an essay's assessment; do not claim a guaranteed total from one sentence.

■ Original practice source pack: an evening library trial

This prompt, evidence and letter are fictional teaching material, not an authentic AP question or real school survey. The task is to recommend whether a principal should try one evening library session each week for four weeks. The principal must consider access, staffing and cost.



A school library: who would use an evening session, and what would convince a principal to try one?

Supplied evidence	What it can support
18 of 30 volunteer respondents say they would attend.	Interest among respondents; not actual attendance or a whole-school estimate.
One respondent says, "I share a room and need somewhere quiet."	A specific need; not its prevalence across all students.
Staffing and transport costs have not been checked.	A **feasibility** 可行性 question remains; interest alone cannot settle it.

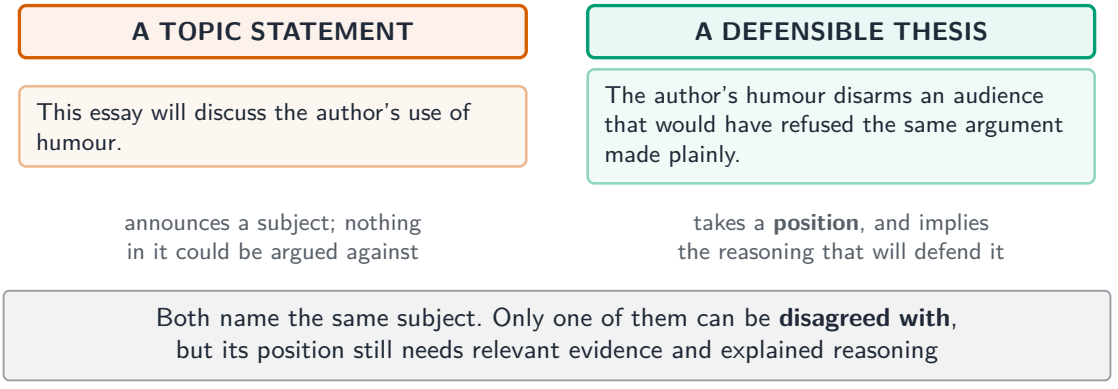
Model letter. "Please trial one evening library session a week for four weeks, subject to confirmed staffing and safe travel arrangements. In our practice survey, 18 of 30 volunteer respondents said they would attend; one explained that sharing a room makes quiet study difficult. Those responses suggest a reason to test access, not a guarantee of attendance. Record visits and costs during the trial before deciding whether to continue."

Worked analysis. The letter connects a concrete need to access, acknowledges the principal's staffing concern, and uses survey results as a reason for a limited test rather than permanent opening. The respondent's situation illustrates the need; the numbers describe this sample; the **qualification** 限定 limits the conclusion. Transparent limits can support credibility, but do not prove that the principal will be persuaded.

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Practice. Revise the recommendation for students who want a quiet study space. Then state one reason the principal might still decline. Keep the underlying evidence and its limits honest.

Thesis comparison. "There are arguments for and against opening the library" names a topic without deciding. "The school should test one evening session for four weeks, because the responses suggest an access need while uncertain attendance and costs make permanent opening premature" states a specific, arguable position and previews its reasoning. It still needs support.



Same subject, and only one of them can be disagreed with

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. A writer arguing for longer school holidays addresses parents who both work. What need of this audience must the argument meet?
2. Is this thesis defensible? "Many students use phones." Explain.
3. Write a defensible thesis about school start times.
4. A writer addresses an audience that strongly disagrees. Should the thesis come first or later? Explain.
5. A student says: "A thesis is just the topic of my essay." Correct the student.

Model answers

1. Childcare: an argument for longer holidays must answer who will look after the children, or these parents will reject it.
2. Not as a thesis for a policy argument: it gives no position on what should be done. It is a factual claim that could still require evidence.
3. For example: "Secondary schools should start at 9:00 rather than 7:30, because a later start better fits teenagers' sleep patterns and may help them get enough sleep."

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4. Often later: a **hostile** 敌对的 audience may stop listening after a direct claim, so writers first build **common ground** 共同点 with shared values or facts.
5. A topic names a subject ("school start times"); a thesis takes a **defensible** 可辩护的 position on it, one a reasonable reader could dispute.

Exam tips

- Consider the audience's needs and values alongside purpose, context and evidence. Similar wording may serve overlapping audiences.
- Name **what evidence does** - illustrate, clarify, associate, amplify. That is analysis; listing evidence is not.
- **Sufficiency is quantity and quality**, not volume. Explain relevance and reliability; no fixed number guarantees enough support.
- A thesis in a passage may be **implied or distributed**. Read the whole text before deciding.
- Your own thesis must be **arguable**. Restating the prompt alone leaves the position unstated; it does not determine the whole essay's assessment.
- Previewing your line of reasoning in the thesis is optional but makes the rest of the essay easier to organise.

Vocabulary card meanings

sufficient evidence: Enough support that a careful reader can accept the claim.

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Line of Reasoning and Methods of Development

AP English Language and Composition

Identifying Claims and Evidence

Unit 3 is where the course stops being about parts and starts being about **structure**. Its subject is the **line of reasoning** 推理线索 - the path an argument takes from where it starts to what it proves.

First, four claims about how evidence gets into an argument properly:

- Effective use of evidence uses **commentary** 评述 to establish a **logical relationship between the evidence and the claim**.
- Writers **introduce source material** using commentary to integrate it into their line of reasoning - so commentary comes before as well as after.
- **Synthesis** 综合 requires consideration, explanation, and **integration** 整合 of others' arguments into one's own. That is the exact skill Question 1 tests, and the word *integration* rules out a paragraph that simply summarises each source in turn.
- Writers must **acknowledge** the words, ideas, images, and texts of others through **attribution** 注明出处 and **citation** 引用.

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

Applied to your own writing, the change from Unit 2 is that commentary now has **two jobs, not one**: it introduces the evidence into the reasoning, and it explains the relationship afterwards.



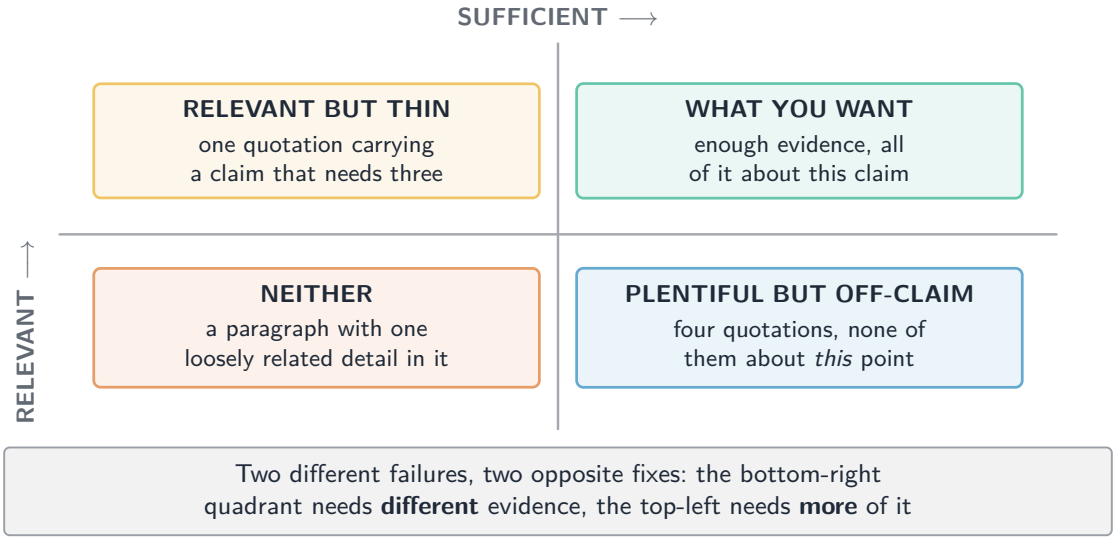
A town bus at its stop: the paragraph's claim is about how a route changes travel habits, not just how many buses run

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A paragraph that does both reads: *claim - a sentence positioning the evidence - the evidence, embedded - commentary establishing the logical relationship - the link onward.* The sentence before the quotation is doing as much work as the one after it, and most students write neither.

> **Worked example: one paragraph, built part by part.** The essay's thesis: *the town should keep its new bus route, because it changed how people travel, not just how many buses run.* Here is one body paragraph, with each part labelled.
>
> [**Claim**] The route has already changed people's habits, not only the timetable. [**Positioning**] The clearest sign is not the number of passengers but what happened on the roads the buses share. [**Evidence**] In the year after the route opened, car journeys on those roads fell by 15%, while traffic elsewhere in the town stayed level. [**Commentary**] The local fall, while traffic elsewhere stayed level, is consistent with some drivers switching to buses. It does not establish that mechanism or rule out chance, roadworks or other local changes; those alternatives need checking. [**Link**] The pattern supports investigating whether to retain or extend the route, alongside passenger, cost and local traffic data.

Compare a weak version: *"Car journeys fell by 15%. This shows the route is good. It is important for the town."* The evidence arrives with no positioning, and the commentary only repeats the claim ("good", "important") without saying **why** the number supports it. The strong version's commentary does the reasoning: it connects the evidence to a possible explanation while acknowledging alternatives the data do not rule out.

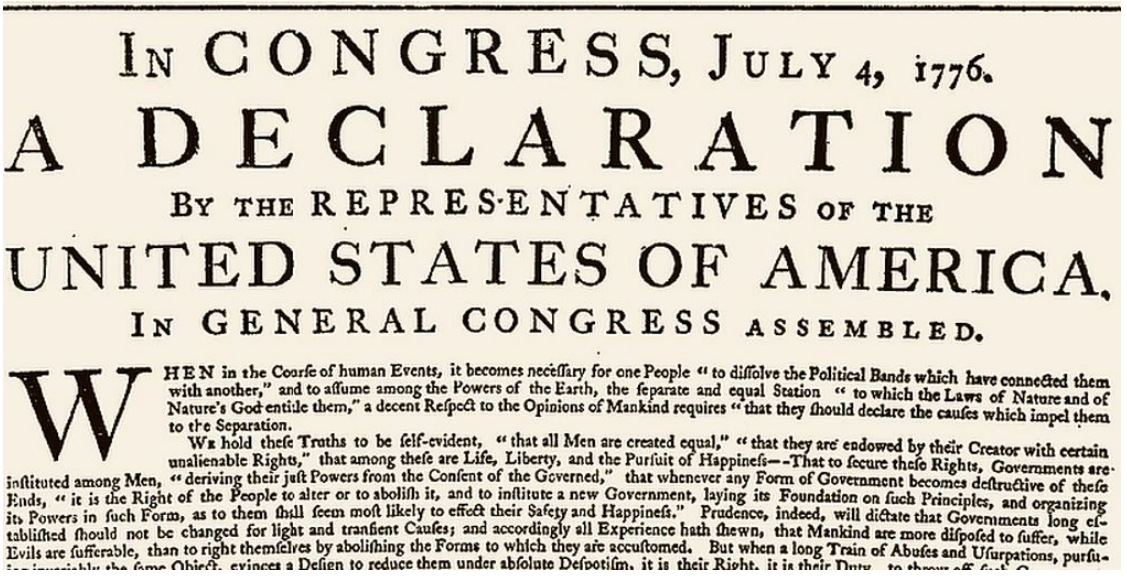


Relevant and sufficient are two different failures with two opposite fixes

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Describing the Line of Reasoning

A line of reasoning you already know. The US Declaration of Independence (1776) is built like a proof. First come the general truths: all men are created equal, they have rights to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness", governments exist to protect those rights, and when a government destroys them the people may change or end it. Then comes a long list of evidence, 27 grievances against the British king, many beginning "He has ...". Last comes the conclusion: the colonies "are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States". Principle, evidence, conclusion: every part leads into the next, and the reader who accepts the first part is pushed towards the last.



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

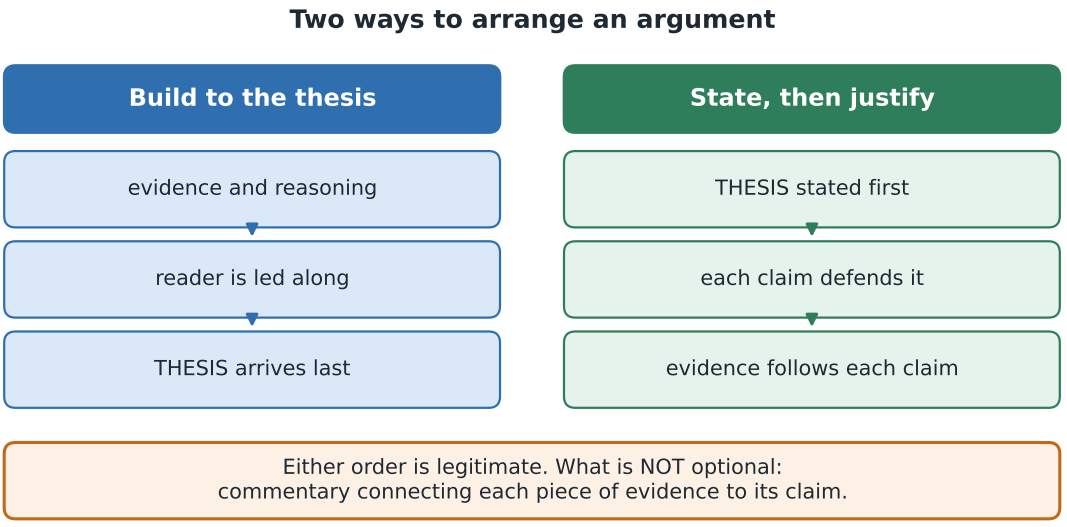
IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

WHEN in the Courſe of human Events, it becomes neceſſary for one People "to diſſolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another," and to aſſume among the Powers of the Earth, the ſeparate and equal Station "to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them," a decent Reſpect to the Opinions of Mankind requires "that they ſhould declare the cauſes which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold theſe Truths to be ſelf-evident, "that all Men are created equal," "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," that among theſe are Life, Liberty, and the Purſuit of Happineſs--That to ſecure theſe Rights, Governments are inſtituted among Men, "deriving their juſt Powers from the Conſent of the Governed," that whenever any Form of Government becomes deſtructive of theſe Ends, "it is the Right of the People to alter or to aboliſh it, and to inſtitute a new Government, laying its Foundation on ſuch Principles, and organizing its Powers in ſuch Form, as to them ſhall ſeem moſt likely to effect their Safety and Happineſs." Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long eſtabliſhed ſhould not be changed for light and tranſient Cauſes; and accordingly all Experience hath ſhewn, that Mankind are more diſpoſed to ſuffer, while Evils are ſufferable, than to right themſelves by aboliſhing the Forms to which they are accuſtomed. But when a long Train of Abuſes and Uſurpations, purſu-

The Declaration of Independence as first printed, July 1776: a premise, a list of grievances and a conclusion, a line of reasoning in order

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The order is a choice; the connective tissue is not

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.

Whichever order is used, the same requirements hold:

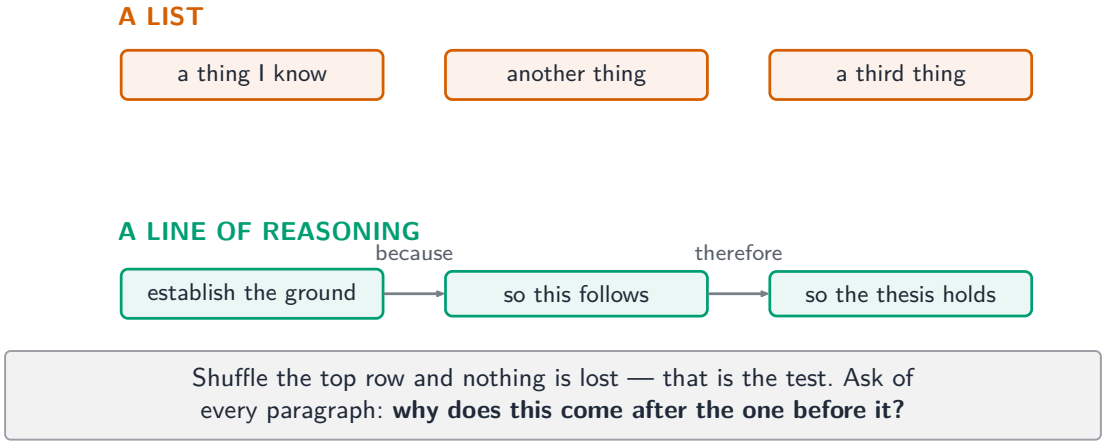
- Writers explain their reasoning through **commentary that connects chosen evidence to a claim**.
- Commentary explains the **significance** 意义 and **relevance** 相关性 of evidence in relation to the line of reasoning.
- **The sequence of paragraphs in a text reveals the argument's line of reasoning** - which is the practical tool for reading. To find a writer's reasoning, write one sentence per paragraph and read the list.
- **Flaws** 漏洞 in a line of reasoning may render an argument **specious** 似是而非的 or **illogical** 不合逻辑的.

> **Worked example: tracing a line of reasoning.** A short opinion article argues against banning phones in schools. Summarise each paragraph in one sentence:

1. Schools face real problems with phones in lessons: distraction and cheating.
2. But a full ban removes a tool many families rely on for safety and travel.
3. A ban is also hard to enforce, so teachers spend lesson time policing it.
4. Schools that require phones to be switched off and kept in bags report fewer problems without these costs.
5. So schools should limit phone use in lessons, not ban phones from the building.

Now describe how the reasoning **moves**, not what each paragraph says: the writer **concedes** 让步 the problem (1), **counters** a full ban with two separate objections (2, 3), offers an **alternative** with evidence that it works (4), and only then reaches the **claim** (5). This writer leads the reader through the reasoning and arrives at the thesis last. Test the order: paragraph 5 could come first if the writer chose to state the thesis before defending it. In the order shown, paragraph 4 prepares the final recommendation. That dependence is the sign of a line of reasoning rather than a list.

In an analysis essay, write this movement with verbs that name what each part does: *concedes, counters, illustrates, qualifies, builds to.*

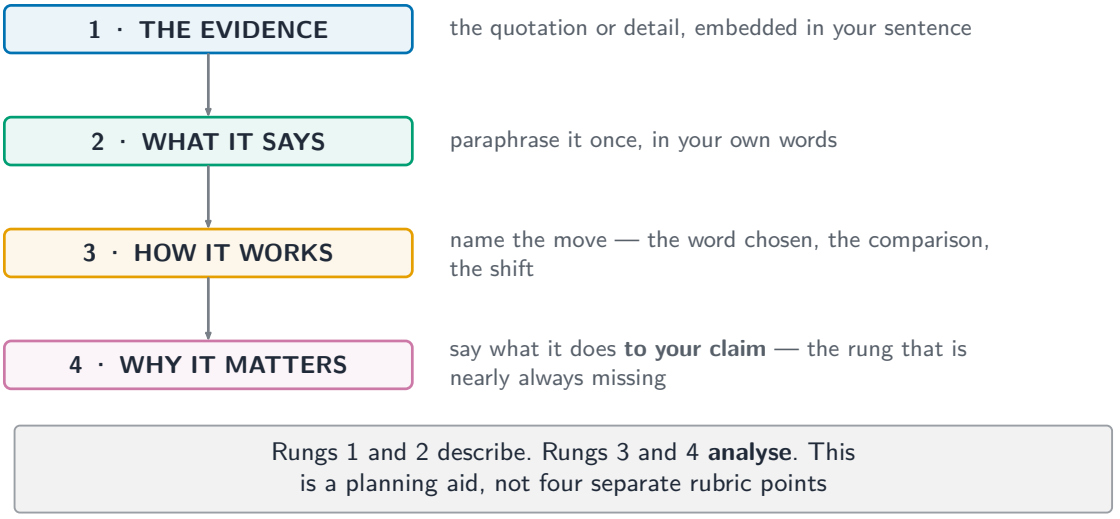


The shuffle test: if the paragraphs can be reordered without loss, it is a list

Developing a Line of Reasoning and Commentary

For your own essays, the useful discipline is to decide the **order of your claims before writing any of them**. If paragraphs can be shuffled, check that their claims still connect to the thesis. Independent supporting reasons can form a line of reasoning even when more than one order works.

Test a draft by asking of each paragraph: *why does this come after the one before it?* If the only answer is "it is another thing I know about the topic", check whether the paragraph supports the thesis or merely lists information. There is no separate reasoning point: the rubric assesses reasoning within evidence and commentary.

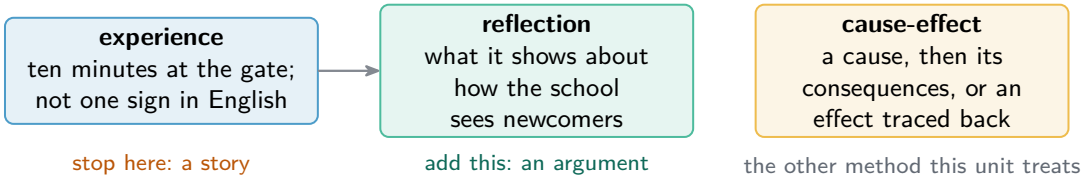


Commentary as four rungs - a planning aid, not four separate rubric points

Recognizing Methods of Development

Methods of development 展开方法 are **common approaches writers use to develop and organise the reasoning** of an argument. The CED's list: **narration, cause-effect, comparison-contrast, definition, and description**. This unit treats the first two.

- Developing through **narration** 叙述: writers offer details about **real-life experiences** and **reflections** 反思 on them. The reflection is what makes narration an argument rather than a story - an anecdote with no reflection has supplied no reasoning.
- Developing through **cause-effect** 因果: writers **present a cause, then assert the effects or consequences** 后果 of that cause - or begin from an effect and trace it back.



The reflection turns a story into an argument

What each method looks like.

- *Narration:* "On my first morning at the new school, I stood at the gate for ten minutes because I could not read the signs. Nobody had thought to put up a single word in English. **That morning taught me that a welcome is not a feeling**

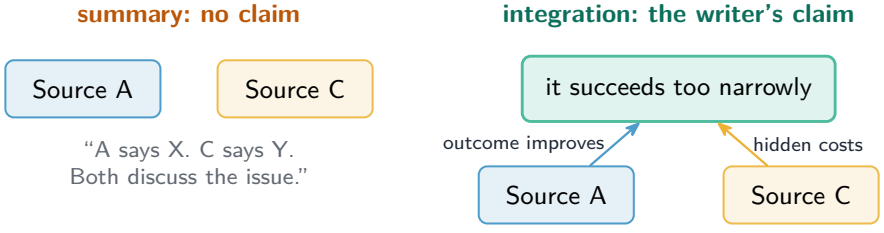
but a set of practical choices." The bold sentence is the reflection: it turns the story into a claim the rest of the argument can defend.

- *Cause-effect:* "When the library cut its evening hours, students without a quiet room at home lost their only place to study after school; within a term, homework completion in the lower years fell." The cause (shorter hours) leads to a first effect (no place to study) and then to a second (lower completion). Each link in the chain is a place where the argument can be checked, and where a reader may push back.

Using Methods of Development

Choosing a method is a rhetorical decision, not a stylistic one. Narration works when the audience needs to *feel* the situation before they will accept a claim about it. Cause-effect works when the audience already accepts the facts but not the connection between them.

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** On a Question 1 synthesis prompt, compare two paragraphs using the same two sources. The weak version: *"Source A says X. Source C says Y. Both discuss the issue."* That is **summary** 概述 in sequence - no claim, no integration, no reasoning. The strong version: *"The strongest objection to the proposal is not that it fails but that it succeeds too narrowly: Source A's data show the intended outcome improving, while Source C's account of the same programme records the second-order costs that the measurement in Source A was never designed to capture."* Here the sources are **integrated into the writer's own claim**, and the commentary establishes the logical relationship - which is what the four evidence-and-commentary points are awarded for.



Sources serve the writer's claim

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Put these in a logical line of reasoning: (a) so the ban should be partial; (b) phones distract during lessons; (c) phones help in emergencies.
2. Which method of development suits proving that a new bus route caused fewer car journeys?

3. Write commentary for: "Car journeys fell 15% in the year after the route opened."
4. What does a "line of reasoning" mean?
5. A student says: "More evidence always makes an argument stronger." Correct the student.

Model answers

1. (b) then (c) then (a): state the problem, acknowledge the competing need, then reach the conclusion that balances them.
2. Cause-effect: the argument must connect the route to the change, not just report the change.
3. For example: "The timing is consistent with the route helping reduce car journeys, but this figure alone does not show causation; other changes need checking."
4. The sequence of claims that work together to defend the thesis, each building on the last.
5. Evidence helps only when it is relevant and explained. Piling up unexplained examples weakens the line of reasoning, because the reader cannot see how each one supports the claim.

Exam tips

- Commentary has **two jobs**: introducing evidence into the reasoning, and explaining the relationship afterwards. Write both sentences.
- **Synthesis means integration**, not summary in sequence. A paragraph per source is the classic low-scoring shape.
- To find a writer's line of reasoning, **summarise each paragraph in one sentence** and read the list.
- Ask of your own paragraphs: *why does this one follow that one?* Also check how each claim supports the thesis; independent reasons may allow several orders.
- When you describe a writer's line of reasoning, name what each part **does** (concedes, counters, illustrates, builds to), not only what it says.
- **Narration needs reflection.** An anecdote without it has told a story, not made an argument.
- Choose a method of development for a **rhetorical** reason and be able to say what it is.

Vocabulary card meanings

line of reasoning: The path of claims and support that runs through an argument. commentary: The writer's explanation of how evidence supports a claim. attribution: Naming who said or wrote something. citation: Saying exactly where a quoted idea was found. method of development: A way of building an argument, such as story, cause, or comparison. narration: Telling events in an order the reader can follow.

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cause-effect: Showing what led to what.

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Introductions, Conclusions, and Development

AP English Language and Composition

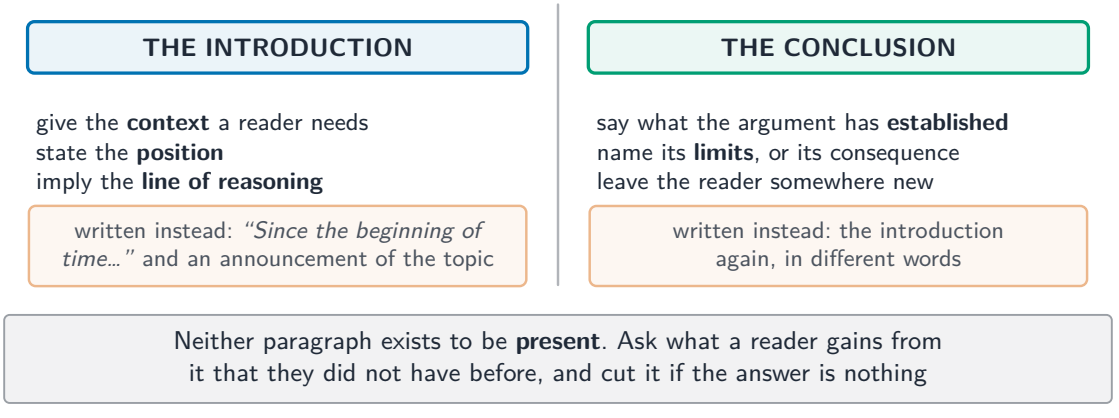
Introductions and Conclusions in a Text

In December 1776 the American army had lost battle after battle, and many soldiers were about to go home. Thomas Paine published a short paper, *The American Crisis*, which began: "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." On George Washington's orders it was read aloud to his soldiers. In two sentences the introduction names the moment, divides the readers into two kinds, and invites each reader to choose the better one. Openings and endings are where a writer's choices show most clearly.

Unit 4 covers the two positions in a text where a writer's choices are most visible - the beginning and the end - and completes the CED's list of **methods of development**.

- The **introduction** 引言 of an argument **introduces the subject and/or the writer** to the audience. It may orient the reader, establish the exigence and context, and gain attention.
- The **conclusion** 结论 **brings the argument to a unified end**. It may present the argument's thesis, explain its significance, or situate the argument in a broader context.

Note the verb in the second: *unified*. A conclusion need not merely summarise; it is the point at which the parts are shown to have been one argument.



Neither paragraph exists to be present - ask what a reader gains from it

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Writing Introductions and Conclusions

On the exam, both are worth writing well but neither is worth writing long. A useful discipline:



Students on their phones: an introduction about a phone ban earns attention with a concrete scene and a position, not with phones are everywhere

- An introduction that **positions the subject and states a defensible thesis** in two or three sentences is complete. Everything else in a timed essay is better spent on evidence and commentary.
- A conclusion that **says what follows from the argument** - its significance, or its wider **implication** 含义 - does more than one that **restates** 重述 the paragraphs.

The weakest conclusion is the one that re-lists what the essay already said. The reader has just read it. Say instead what it means, or what it obliges.

> **Worked example: two introductions.** The prompt asks whether schools should ban phones during the school day.
>
> *Weak:* "In today's modern society, phones are everywhere. Some people think they should be banned in schools and some people think they should not. This essay will discuss both sides."
>
> *Strong:* "A phone in a pocket costs a student nothing; a phone on the desk costs every lesson a little attention. Schools should keep phones locked away during lessons but allow them at break, because the harm comes from interruption, not from the device itself."

The weak version spends three sentences saying nothing a reader could disagree with: "phones are everywhere" is not a claim, and "discuss both sides" is not a position. The strong version opens with a concrete contrast, takes a position a reasonable person could dispute, and its *because* clause tells the reader what the **body paragraphs** 主

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体段 will have to prove.

	weak	strong
a concrete opening, not "phones are everywhere"	no	yes
a position a reasonable reader could dispute	no	yes
a *because* clause that sets the body's job	no	yes

strong: *"…the harm comes from interruption, not from the device itself"* is the claim the body paragraphs must prove

Three tests a timed introduction must pass.

Two conclusions for the same essay. *Weak:* "In conclusion, phones should be limited in schools because they distract students, as this essay has shown." *Strong:* "If interruption is the problem, the same logic reaches beyond phones: laptops and smartwatches belong in the same locked box. The rule worth writing is about attention, not about one device." The strong conclusion does not repeat the essay; it says what follows from it.

Identifying the Overarching Thesis

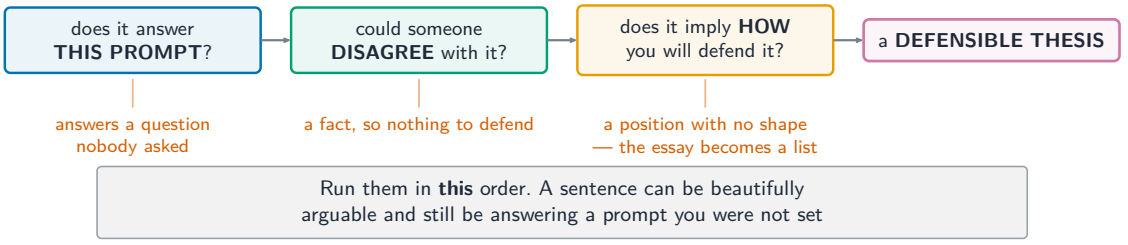
The CED adds a precise refinement here: **a thesis statement may preview the line of reasoning of an argument** - and then, immediately, *this is not to say that a thesis statement must list the reasons.*

That double statement is worth holding, because both errors are common. A thesis need not preview reasons if the body develops a clear line of reasoning. A thesis mechanically listing three reasons is not required and often produces a rigid essay that cannot develop.

Writing a Thesis Statement

For your own writing, the practical version:

- The thesis must be **defensible**. Non-negotiable, and it is the whole of the thesis point.
- It **may** indicate the shape of the reasoning. Do it when the shape is genuinely load-bearing; do not do it as a formula.
- It should be **specific enough to constrain what follows**. A thesis so broad that any paragraph could belong under it is not directing the essay.



Three questions, run in this order, before the essay is written

Worked example: an introduction that meets resistance first. Paine's earlier pamphlet *Common Sense* (January 1776) opened by admitting that its ideas were unpopular: "Perhaps the sentiments contained in the following pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favour; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right." Paine anticipated readers reluctant to break with the king. Instead of attacking them, the introduction explains *why* they feel that way (habit), so the reader can change their mind without feeling foolish.

Recognizing Methods of Development

The method	What the writer does	Reach for it when...
Narration	details of real experience, plus reflection on them	*the audience must FEEL the situation before judging it*
Cause-effect	present a cause, assert its effects - or work backwards	*they accept the facts but not the connection*
Compare-contrast	state a CATEGORY, then the similarities and differences	*they judge better against something already familiar*
Definition	relate the features that make the thing what it is	*they are applying the wrong standard*
Description	features and sensory detail	*abstraction is the obstacle - they cannot see it*

The right-hand column is the decision. The method follows from what the audience needs, not from the topic.

Choose the method the reasoning needs, not the one the topic suggests

Unit 3 covered narration and cause-effect. Unit 4 adds the rest:

- Developing through **comparison-contrast** 比较对照: writers present a **category of comparison** 比较类别 and then examine **similarities** 相似之处 and differences within it. The *category* is the part students omit - a comparison without a stated basis is two descriptions side by side.
- Developing through **definition** 定义 or **description** 描写: writers relate the **characteristics** 特征, features, or **sensory details** 感官细节 of a subject.

Definition is more powerful than it looks. An argument that turns on what a word means - what counts as *success*, as *fairness*, as *progress* - is an argument that has moved to the ground where it can actually be won.

Using Methods of Development

The choice is rhetorical. Ask what the audience needs before they will accept your claim:

- They need to **see** it, and **abstraction** 抽象 is the obstacle: **description**.
- They accept the facts but not the connection: **cause-effect**.
- They are applying the wrong **standard** 标准: **definition**.
- They will judge better against something familiar: **comparison-contrast**.
- They need to feel the situation: **narration**.

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** A Question 3 argument prompt asks you to take a position on whether a common practice is beneficial. A student who reaches for description writes a **vivid** 生动的 paragraph nobody disputes. A student who reaches for **definition** writes: *"Whether the practice is beneficial depends on what we count as benefit. If benefit means measurable short-term gain, the practice succeeds; if it means durable capability, the same evidence shows it failing."* That paragraph has relocated the argument onto ground where the evidence actually decides something - which is the kind of move the **sophistication** point exists to reward.

METHOD	USE IT TO SHOW	IT FAILS WHEN
NARRATION	how something unfolded, and that the order mattered	the order carries no argument
CAUSE AND EFFECT	that one thing produced another	the link is asserted, not shown
COMPARISON	that two cases differ where it counts	they are compared on something irrelevant
DEFINITION	that a disputed word is the crux	nobody was disputing the word
DESCRIPTION	that a detail has to be seen to be believed	it becomes scene-setting

Read the **middle** column first. The method is chosen from what the paragraph has to prove, not from the order things happened in

Read the middle column first: the method follows from what the paragraph must prove

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Rewrite this thesis so it is defensible: "Social media has both advantages and disadvantages."
2. A writer argues that a city's "success" should be judged by how its poorest residents live, not by its average income. Which method of development is this, and why is it powerful here?
3. An audience already accepts that a river is polluted but not that a factory caused it. Which method of development do they need?
4. Write one sentence that could open an essay arguing that homework should be limited in primary school.
5. A student's conclusion lists the three body paragraphs again. Explain what is missing.

Model answers

1. For example: "Schools should teach students to use social media critically rather than ban it, because the skills transfer to every platform they will use." A defensible thesis takes a side someone could reasonably dispute.
2. Definition. Changing what counts as "success" moves the argument to ground where the writer can win: on average income the city looks good, but on the new standard it does not.
3. Cause-effect: they accept the facts, but not the connection.
4. For example: "A seven-year-old who spends two evening hours on worksheets has learned one lesson well: that school never ends." A good opening is concrete and points toward the claim.
5. It repeats instead of concluding. A conclusion should say what follows from the argument (its significance, implication or wider application); the reader has just read the paragraphs.

Exam tips

- Introductions should be **short and load-bearing**: position the subject, state a defensible thesis, move on.
- There is no separate conclusion score. Avoid merely restating: Say what the argument means or obliges.
- A thesis **may** preview the reasoning; it is **not required** to list reasons. Both errors are common.
- **Comparison needs a stated category.** Without one you have written two descriptions, not a comparison.

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- **Definition** is the strongest move available in an argument essay whose terms are **contestable** 有争议的.
- Pick a method of development from **what the audience needs**, not from what the topic suggests.

Vocabulary card meanings

comparison-contrast: Setting two things beside each other to show likeness and difference. definition: Explaining exactly what a word or idea means. description: Showing how something looks, sounds or feels.

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Organization, Coherence, and Style

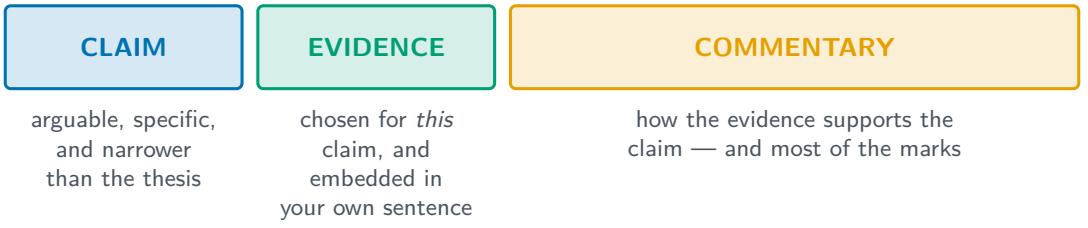
AP English Language and Composition

Describing the Line of Reasoning

On 19 November 1863 two men spoke at the opening of a soldiers' cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The main speaker, Edward Everett, spoke for about two hours. President Abraham Lincoln then spoke for about two minutes: 272 words. The next day Everett wrote to Lincoln that he wished he had come as close to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as Lincoln had in two minutes. Lincoln's speech is short, but every sentence is tied to the one before it. That tightness, called coherence, is what this unit teaches you to see and to build.

Unit 5 turns from *what* an argument contains to *how it holds together*. It has two subjects: **coherence** 连贯 and the beginnings of **style** 风格.

The CED's statement of the body paragraph is exact and worth memorising: **the body paragraphs of a written argument make claims, support them with evidence, and provide commentary that explains the relationship of the evidence to the claim**.



The widths are the point. The commonest failure on these essays is a paragraph where the evidence is present and the **explanation is absent**

Claim, evidence, commentary: the third part carries most of the marks.

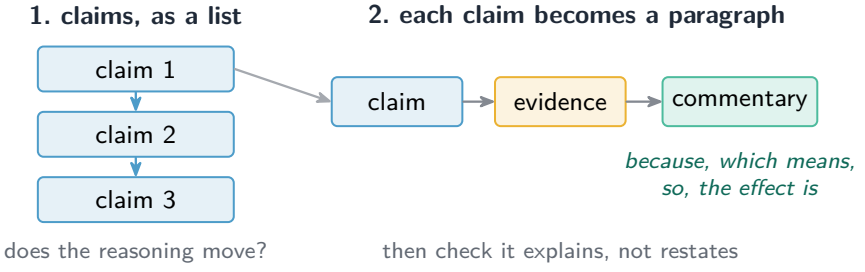
Three parts, in that order, in every body paragraph. When an AP essay loses evidence-and-commentary points, it is almost always because the third part is missing from paragraphs that have the first two.

Developing a Line of Reasoning and Commentary

Applied to your own writing: draft the **claims first, as a list**, before writing any paragraph. You then have the line of reasoning in front of you and can check that it moves.

Then, for each claim, write the paragraph in its three parts deliberately. A useful habit under exam conditions is to make the commentary sentence begin with a word

that forces a relationship - *because*, *which means*, *so*, *the effect of this is* - but those words can still introduce a restatement: check that the sentence actually explains the connection.



List the claims, then build the paragraphs

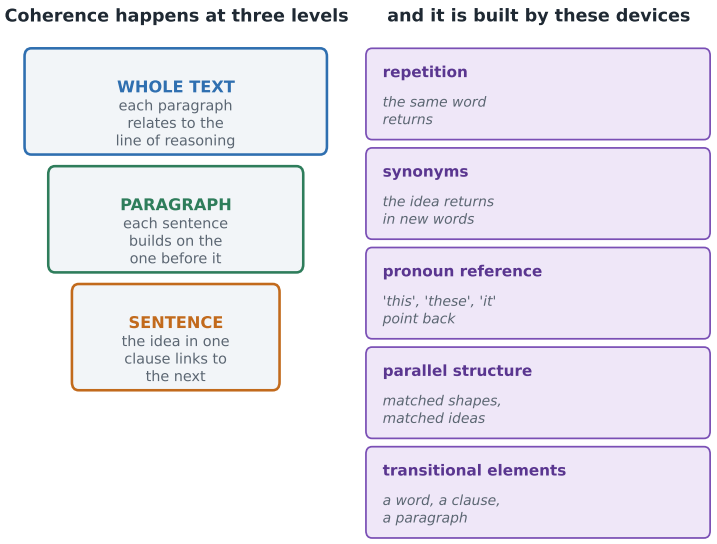
> **Worked example: one body paragraph, weak and strong.** Prompt: *Should schools ban phones during the school day?*

Weak: "Phones are very distracting. Many students use them in class. For example, my friend checks TikTok in maths. This shows phones are bad. So schools should ban them." The claim is vague, the evidence is one friend, and "this shows phones are bad" only repeats the claim.

Strong: "**(claim)** Classroom phone restrictions may help students concentrate. **(evidence)** From January 2024 the Netherlands asked schools to keep phones out of classrooms, and in a 2025 study for the Dutch government about three quarters of surveyed secondary schools said that students concentrated better. **(commentary)** Because a rule removes the choice, a student no longer has to win the same small fight against a notification forty times a day, which may help protect attention. The schools' reports support that possibility, but do not establish which students benefited most or prove the rule caused the improvement." The commentary uses *because* and *which means*, and it explains *why* the evidence supports the claim.

Organization, Unity, and Coherence

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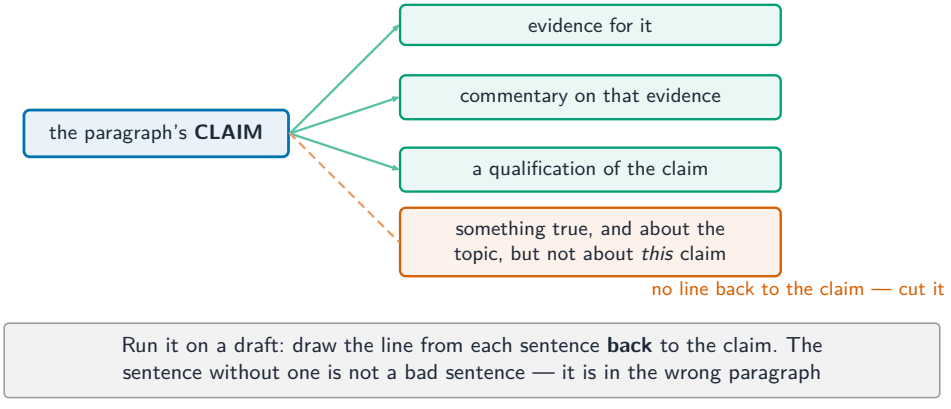
The devices are examinable by name - and they are what a "structure" question is actually asking about

Coherence occurs at different levels in a piece of writing:

- In a **sentence**, the idea in one **clause** 分句 logically links to the idea in another.
- In a **paragraph**, each sentence builds on the one before it.
- Across the **whole text**, each paragraph relates to the line of reasoning.

The CED then names the devices that create those links:

- **Repetition** 重复, **synonyms** 同义词, **pronoun references** 代词指代, and **parallel structure** 平行结构 may indicate or develop a relationship between ideas.
- **Transitional elements** 过渡成分 are words or other elements - phrases, clauses, sentences, or whole paragraphs - that **assist in creating coherence**.



The unity test: draw a line from each sentence back to the claim

Worked example: the devices in a real text. Each line below is from the Gettysburg Address.

Words from the speech	Device	What it links
"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived ... can long endure."	repetition ("nation", "conceived" from the first sentence)	ties the war to the founding idea of the first sentence
"But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate–we can not consecrate–we can not hallow–this ground."	transition ("But") and parallel structure	turns the speech from what the crowd came to do to what they cannot do
"The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it"	pronoun reference ("it" = the ground)	carries the ground from the last sentence into this one
"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work"	repetition of "dedicate" in a new sense	moves the duty from the dead to the living listeners
"government of the people, by the people, for the people"	parallel structure	ends the line of reasoning with one memorable statement of the purpose

A rhetorical-analysis sentence about it: *"Lincoln repeats 'dedicate' but shifts its object from the ground to the living audience, so the ceremony becomes a duty: the listeners leave with a task, not only a memory."* The device is named, its effect is traced, and the audience is in the sentence.

Using Transitional Elements

Transitions have a second job the CED names explicitly: they **introduce evidence** or **indicate its relationship to other ideas or evidence**.

That is the difference between decorative and functional transitions. *Furthermore* signals an additional supporting point; it is misleading when the relationship is contrast or cause. *Even in the cases where the effect is smallest* tells the reader what relationship is coming. Choose transitions that carry information about the relationship, not ones that merely mark a boundary.

Note also that a transitional element may be a **whole paragraph**. In a long argument, a short paragraph whose only job is to turn the reasoning is legitimate and often elegant.

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THE RELATIONSHIP	THE WORDS	WHAT YOU HAVE PROMISED
ADDING	moreover, furthermore, in addition	another reason of the same kind
CONTRASTING	however, yet, nevertheless, on the other hand	something that cuts against what you just said
CONCEDING	admittedly, granted, of course	you will now answer the point you have granted
CONCLUDING	therefore, thus, consequently	what follows is entailed by what came before
EXEMPLIFYING	for instance, in particular	a case of the general claim, not a new one

A transition is a **promise** about the next sentence.
Breaking it is a reasoning error, not a matter of style

A transition is a promise about the next sentence - breaking it is a reasoning error

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

Unit 5 opens the course's treatment of style with three claims about diction:

- Words have both connotative and denotative meanings. **Denotation** 外延义 is what a word refers to; **connotation** 内涵义 is what it carries.
- **Descriptive words** - **adjectives** 形容词 and **adverbs** 副词 - not only qualify or **modify** 修饰 what they describe but **convey a perspective** toward it.
- **Precise word choice** 用词 reduces confusion and helps the audience perceive the writer's perspective.

The second is the analytically useful one. When a rhetorical-analysis passage calls a policy *ambitious* rather than *expensive*, no fact has changed and the reader's **disposition** 倾向 has. That is a rhetorical choice, and it is exactly what the question asks you to explain.

Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

For your own writing, precision is worth more than range. A concrete rule: prefer the word that is exactly right to the word that is impressive. Examiners reward control, and an inflated word used slightly wrongly reads as loss of control.

Worked example (original AP-style practice). In a rhetorical-analysis passage a writer describes a proposal's supporters as *"determined"* in one paragraph and *"unyielding"* in the next. A low-scoring answer notes that the writer uses "strong diction". A scoring answer explains the shift: *"Both words denote persistence, but 'determined' carries approval and 'unyielding' carries obstruction. By moving from one to the other without changing the facts described, the writer withdraws sympathy from the supporters while appearing only to continue describing them - so the audience's judgement shifts before any counter-argument is made."* That is connotation, tone, and effect on audience in one move.

THE SHAPE	WHAT IT DOES	THE RISK
a short sentence after long ones	lands — the reader has nowhere to look away	used often, nothing lands
a long cumulative sentence	accumulates, so the weight arrives with the last clause	the reader loses the subject
parallel structure	makes items feel equivalent, and rhythm does the arguing	it can equate things that are not alike
a question	makes the reader supply your answer themselves	if they supply a different one

Name the shape, the effect **and** the risk. Analysis that only praises the effect is describing, and description does not earn the commentary marks

Name the shape, the effect and the risk - praise alone is description

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Choose the transition that fits: "The plan saves money. _____, it may reduce service quality." (Moreover / However / Therefore)
2. Choose again: "Fares fell. _____, more people took the bus." (As a result / Similarly / In contrast)
3. What makes a paragraph **unified** 统一的?
4. Rewrite to improve coherence: "Buses are cheap. Trains are fast. People like speed."
5. A student uses "Furthermore" to begin every paragraph. Explain the problem.

Model answers

1. However: it signals a contrast with the saving.
2. As a result: it signals cause and effect.
3. Every sentence in it serves one controlling claim, stated or clearly implied in its **topic sentence** 主题句.
4. For example: "Buses are cheap, but trains are fast, and people who value speed may prefer trains."
5. "Furthermore" signals addition only. If a paragraph contrasts, concludes or explains a cause, the transition misleads the reader about the relationship between ideas.

Exam tips

- Every body paragraph: **claim, evidence, commentary.** Lost points are nearly always the third.
- Draft your **claims as a list first**. This is one way to check whether the reasoning moves.
- Begin commentary with *because*, *which means*, *so* - then check that you explain rather than restate.
- Know the coherence devices **by name**: repetition, synonyms, pronoun reference, parallel structure, transitions.
- A transition should **carry the relationship**, not just mark a boundary. *Furthermore* signals addition, so use it for an additional supporting point.
- **Connotation** is where diction analysis lives. Same denotation, different disposition, is a rhetorical choice worth explaining.

Vocabulary card meanings

coherence: The way sentences and paragraphs connect into one clear whole. pronoun reference: Making clear which noun a word such as it or they points back to. parallel structure: Repeating the same grammatical shape in a list or a pair. transitional element: A word or sentence that shows how the next idea relates to the last. denotation: A word's dictionary sense. connotation: The feeling or association a word carries beyond its dictionary sense.

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Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices

AP English Language and Composition

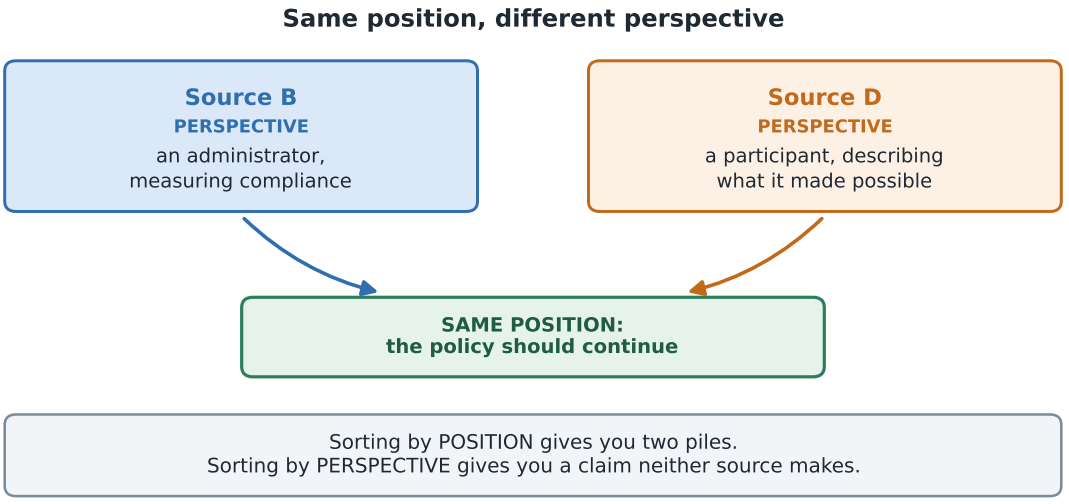
Identifying Claims and Evidence

In 2014 the American Academy of Pediatrics, a body of children's doctors, said that middle and high schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later, because teenagers' body clocks make them sleep later. In 2019 California made it law: from 2022 most public high schools could not start before 8:30. Doctors supported the change because of health. Some economists supported it because better-rested students learn more. Many parents and coaches worried about later sports practice, after-school jobs and bus timetables. Everyone was looking at the same clock, from a different place. A synthesis essay asks you to use voices like these, not just count them.

Unit 6 is the synthesis unit, and it contains the single sharpest distinction in the course.

- When **synthesising** 综合, writers draw on arguments from multiple **sources** 来源, strategically select the most relevant information, and integrate it into their own argument.
- A source **provides information** for an argument, and some sources are more reliable or **credible** 可信的 than others.
- **A position** 立场 **and a perspective** 视角 **are different.** Sources may hold the **same position** on a subject and yet each come from a **different perspective**.
- The strongest arguments recognise and **acknowledge** 承认 the other positions that exist.
- **Considering other positions can strengthen credibility**. Also assess expertise, evidence, accuracy and purpose; acknowledging opposition alone does not establish reliability.

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Two sources can agree and still be doing completely different work in your argument

THE VERB	WHAT IT COMMITS YOU TO	USE IT WHEN
states, reports	nothing — you are relaying	the fact is not in dispute
argues, contends	that this is a position, and defensible	you will engage with it
claims, asserts	quiet doubt — a position without shown support	you are about to qualify it
concedes, admits	that this costs the source something	it is evidence against their own side
demonstrates, shows	that the source has proved it	you are building on it, not testing it

Says wastes the slot. The verb positions the source **before** your commentary begins, and costs no extra words

The verb positions the source before your commentary begins

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

The position-and-perspective distinction is what makes synthesis possible. If you sort the sources only by position, you get two piles - for and against - and a paragraph per pile. If you sort them by **perspective**, you can say things like:

Both the economist and the teacher support the measure, but they support it for reasons

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that do not survive together: one values the measurable gain, the other the change in what students attempt.

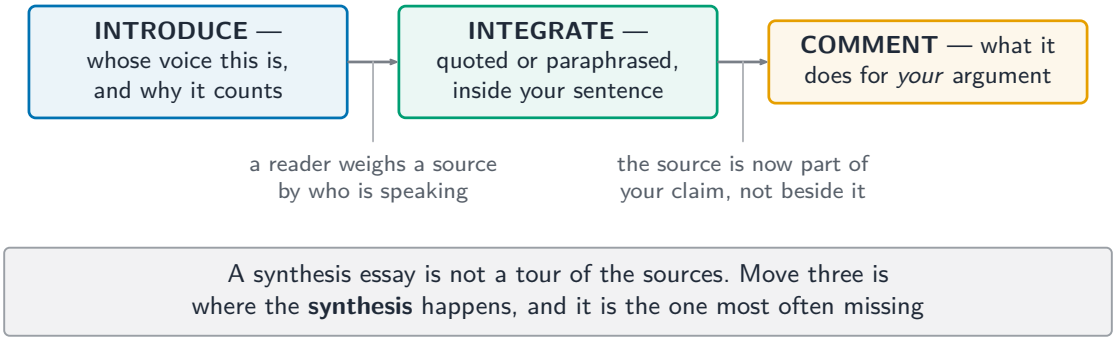
That sentence is synthesis. It uses two sources, is grounded in what each actually says, and produces a claim neither source makes.

> **Worked example: sorting four sources on school start times.** Source A is a real statement; B–D are illustrative source descriptions, not identified published documents.

Source	Position	Perspective
A: the pediatricians' 2014 statement	for a later start	health: teenagers need 8.5–9.5 hours of sleep
B: an economics paper on school reforms	for a later start	cost and benefit: a cheap change with a gain in test scores
C: a parents' and coaches' letter	against	family life: sports, jobs and childcare after school
D: a school district's transport report	against, unless funded	operations: one fleet of buses serves several schools in turn

Sorting by position gives two piles. Sorting by perspective gives a claim: *"A and B agree that a later start helps students, but D shows why schools still resist it: the cost is not in the classroom but in the bus timetable, so the real question is who pays for more buses, not whether sleep matters."* That claim uses three sources, and none of them says it.

Also examinable: use the credibility test. Ignoring a relevant objection can weaken credibility, but a brief factual report need not survey every position. Explain why an omission matters rather than treating it as proof of unreliability.



Three moves turn a source into evidence - the third is where synthesis happens

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Identifying the Overarching Thesis

A short but load-bearing point: **consideration and use of new evidence may require revision 修改 of the thesis statement and/or changes to the line of reasoning**.

Reading a text, this means a writer's thesis may be *responsive* - shaped by the evidence rather than imposed on it. Look for where an argument turns.

Writing a Thesis Statement

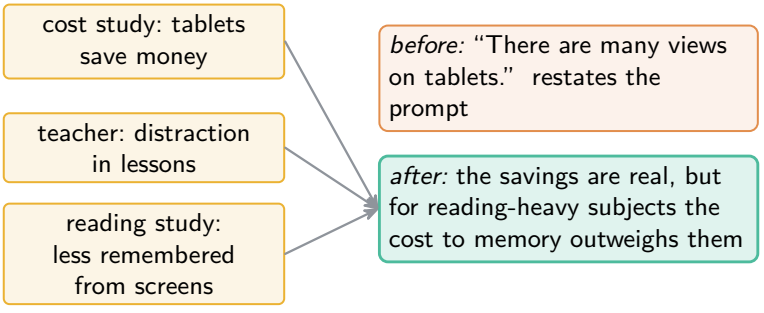
Writing under time pressure, this is permission you should use. If, while drafting, you find the evidence does not support the thesis you began with, **change the thesis**, not the evidence. Examiners reward an argument that fits its evidence; there are no marks for having predicted your own conclusion.



A geometry lesson on tablets: should tablets replace printed textbooks? A thesis takes a position the sources can support

In practice, spend the first minutes reading sources and sketching claims *before* fixing the thesis. A thesis written after the evidence is nearly always better than one written before it.

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A thesis written after the evidence fits it

Worked example: from first idea to a thesis that fits. Prompt: *Should schools replace printed textbooks with tablets?* The sources include a cost study, a teacher's account of distraction in lessons, and a reading study that found students remember less from screens.

- **Restates the prompt:** *"There are many views on whether schools should replace textbooks with tablets."* Not a claim: nobody could disagree with it.
- **First idea:** *"Schools should replace textbooks with tablets because they are cheaper and more modern."* This is a claim, but the reading study contradicts it, and "more modern" is not a reason.
- **Revised to fit the evidence:** *"Tablets may lower costs, but because students remember less from screens, schools should keep printed textbooks for core reading and use tablets for practice and research."*

The revised thesis is **defensible** 可辩护的: a reasonable reader could disagree, and the sources give evidence for each part. It is **qualified** (it keeps part of the opposing case), and it already shows the line of reasoning: costs first, then memory, then the divided solution. That order can become the order of the body paragraphs.

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

- A writer's **tone** 语调 is the writer's **attitude or feeling about a subject**, conveyed through word choice and writing style.
- Readers **infer** 推断 tone from word choice - especially from the positive, negative, or otherwise **charged** 带感情色彩的 associations of the words chosen.
- A writer's **shifts in tone** 语调转变 from one part of a text to another may suggest **qualification** 限定, **refinement** 完善, or a change in perspective.



A public riverside walk: a writer's word choice (improvement, or enclosure?) shapes how readers see the same plan

The third is the analytical gold. A tone shift is a visible event in a text: something changed at that point, and explaining what the writer wanted the reader to do differently after it is exactly the kind of answer that scores.

Word choice is not the only tool. **Comparisons** (an **analogy** 类比 or a **metaphor** 隐喻) explain something unfamiliar through something the audience already knows, and carry that thing's associations with them. **Syntax** 句法, the way sentences are built, also shapes how a point lands:

Choice	**What it often does**
a very short sentence after long ones	stops the reader; puts weight on one point
parallelism 平行结构 (repeated structure: *"We waited. We asked. We were ignored."*)	builds rhythm and makes items feel equal, or the pressure grow
a question the writer then answers	anticipates the reader's doubt and takes control of the answer
a sentence that delays its main clause	can build suspense by postponing the main assertion

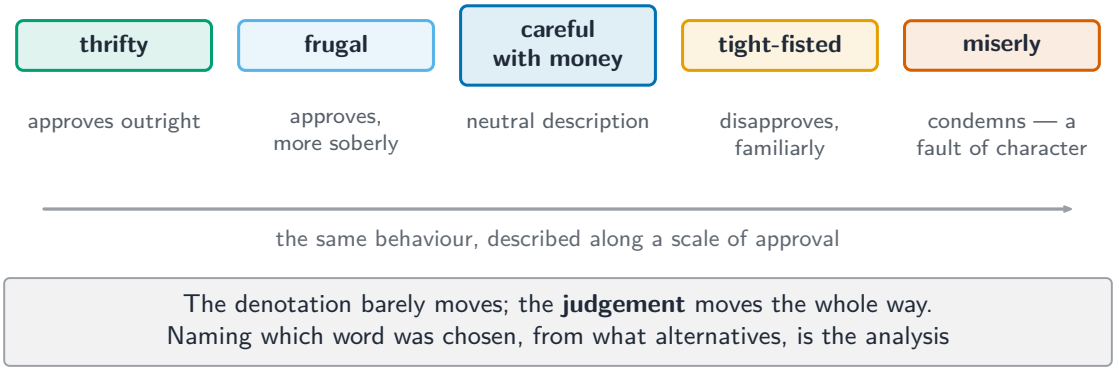
> **Worked example: analysing a choice.** A writer argues that a town's riverside should stay public: *"The developers describe the plan as an improvement. They have drawn new paths, new benches, new lights. They have not drawn a single gate that is open after six."*

- **Weak analysis:** "The writer uses repetition and a short sentence to make the passage effective." This only names devices.

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- **Strong analysis:** "The repeated *new paths, new benches, new lights* lets the developers' promises pile up, so that the last sentence, built in the same pattern as the one before it, turns that list against them: everything is new except public access. The parallel structure makes the missing gate feel like a deliberate absence, which supports the writer's claim that the plan improves the riverside while quietly closing it to the public."

The strong answer names the choice, explains **how** it works on the reader, and connects that effect to the writer's **purpose**. That last link is what the analysis marks reward.



Same denotation, five judgements - which word was chosen is the analysis

Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

In your own writing, tone should be **consistent and controlled**, and deliberately shifted only where the argument turns - for example when moving from stating your position to **conceding** 让步 part of an opposing one.

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** On a synthesis prompt, compare two uses of the same two sources. Weak: *"Source B agrees with Source D that the policy should continue."* That is position-sorting, and it produces nothing. Strong: *"Sources B and D both defend the policy, but B defends it as an administrator measuring compliance while D defends it as a participant describing what it made possible - so the agreement is thinner than it appears, and the case rests on whether we are measuring the policy's operation or its effect."* Same two sources, but the **perspectives** are doing the work, and the claim belongs to the writer.

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Two sources both support a four-day school week: a head teacher writing about staff **burnout** 职业倦怠, and an economist writing about energy costs. Same position or same perspective? Explain.

2. Write one sentence that synthesises the two sources in question 1 into a claim neither makes alone.
3. A source on a new road never mentions any objection to it. What does the course's credibility test say about it?
4. Halfway through your essay you find that your best source contradicts your thesis. What should you do?
5. A passage moves from mocking a plan to "Yet the plan's defenders are not fools." What does this tone shift suggest?

Model answers

1. Same position (for the four-day week) but different perspectives: one argues from teachers' wellbeing, the other from cost.
2. For example: "A four-day week appeals to schools for two unrelated reasons, staff wellbeing and energy savings, which suggests its support is broader than either group's interest."
3. Check whether the omitted objection matters to the source's purpose and conclusion. Its absence may weaken credibility, but does not by itself establish unreliability.
4. Revise the thesis to fit the evidence, for example by qualifying it. There are no marks for keeping your first idea.
5. A shift toward qualification or concession: the writer is about to treat the opposing view more seriously, and wants the reader to judge the plan more fairly from this point.

Exam tips

- **Position and perspective are different.** This one distinction lifts most synthesis essays out of the middle band.
- Sort sources by **perspective**, not by side. Sorting by side produces a paragraph per pile and no argument.
- Use the CED's **credibility test**: explain how omitted relevant objections affect credibility, alongside evidence, expertise and purpose.
- If the evidence does not fit the thesis, **change the thesis**. There are no marks for consistency with your first idea.
- A thesis must be **defensible**: if nobody could disagree with it, it is not yet a claim.
- In analysis, name the choice, explain how it works on the reader, then link it to the writer's purpose.
- A **tone shift** is a visible event. Say what changed and what the reader was meant to do after it.
- Keep your own tone controlled. Shift it only where the argument genuinely turns.

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Vocabulary card meanings

shift in tone: A change in the writer's attitude partway through a text. position: The side a writer takes on an issue. perspective: The point of view or background a writer argues from.

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Qualifying Arguments, Syntax, and Conventions

AP English Language and Composition

Introductions and Conclusions Revisited

For centuries Europeans said "all swans are white", and used "a black swan" to mean something impossible. In 1697 the Dutch sea captain Willem de Vlamingh sailed up a river in Western Australia and saw black swans. One sighting destroyed a claim that thousands of white swans had seemed to prove. A writer who had said "every swan I and other Europeans have seen is white" would have been fine. That small difference, between a claim that says *all* and a claim that says exactly how far its evidence reaches, is what this unit calls **qualification**.

Unit 7 returns to introductions and conclusions with more experience behind you, then moves to the two things that most separate competent writing from strong writing: **qualification** 限定 and **sentence structure** 句子结构.

On introductions and conclusions, the CED's statements are unchanged - the introduction introduces subject and writer to the audience; the conclusion brings the argument to a **unified end** and may present the thesis, explain its significance, or situate the argument in a broader context.

Writing Introductions and Conclusions

At this stage the useful upgrade is to make the conclusion do the work the CED permits. A conclusion may:

- **Explain the significance** of the argument - why it matters that this is true;
- **Situate it in a broader context** - what larger question it belongs to;
- **Present the thesis** in its final, now-earned form.

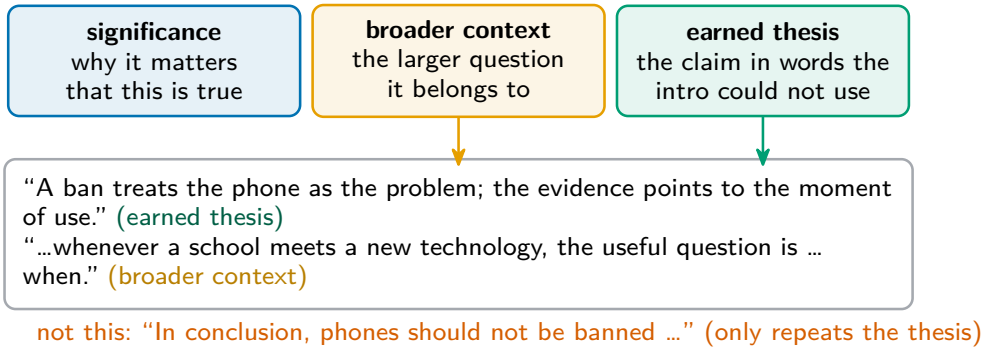
The third is the strongest under exam conditions: restate the thesis in language you could not have used in the introduction, because the argument had not yet been made.

> **Worked example: one essay, two openings and two endings.** Prompt: *Should schools ban phones?*

- **Weak introduction:** *"Throughout history, technology has changed the world. Phones are a big part of modern life. This essay will discuss whether schools should ban phones."* Two sentences of filler, then an announcement instead of a claim.
- **Strong introduction:** *"Every school day, a teacher competes with a device designed to hold attention for profit. Schools should not ban phones outright, but they should keep them out of lessons, because the harm comes from use during learning, not from owning a phone at all."* It starts with the real problem, then gives a **qualified** thesis and previews the line of reasoning.

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- **Weak conclusion:** *"In conclusion, phones should not be banned but should be kept out of lessons."* It only repeats the thesis.
- **Strong conclusion:** *"A ban treats the phone as the problem; the evidence points to the moment of use. That distinction matters beyond phones: whenever a school meets a new technology, the useful question is not whether to allow it, but when."* It states the thesis in its earned form and then places it in a **broader context**.

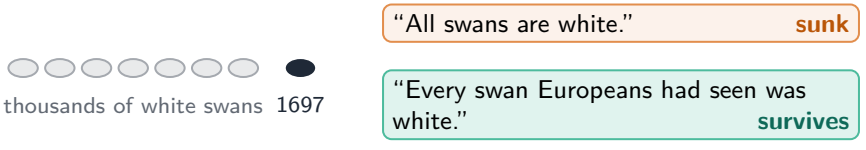


A conclusion earns its place by saying what follows from the argument.

How Claims Are Qualified

- A lack of understanding of the **complexities** 复杂性 of a subject can lead to **oversimplification** 过度简化 or **generalisation** 以偏概全.
- Because arguments are usually part of an ongoing **discourse** 讨论, effective arguments often avoid expressing claims in **absolute** 绝对化的 terms.
- Writers may strategically use words, phrases, and clauses as **modifiers** 修饰成分 to qualify or limit the **scope** 范围 of an argument.

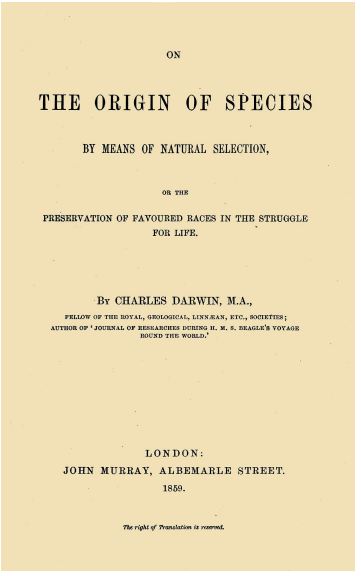
This is counter-intuitive for many students, who assume that a stronger-sounding claim scores better. The opposite is true: an unqualified claim is easy to defeat with one **counter-example** 反例, while a suitably qualified claim may survive an exception outside its stated scope. *Schools should ban phones* invites a single exception. *Schools should restrict phone use during instructional time, where the cost to attention is measurable* does not.



One counter-example sinks an absolute claim

Qualifying a Claim

The tools are ordinary words used deliberately: *in most cases*, *where X holds*, *for this population*, *unless*, *to the extent that*. Each narrows the claim to the ground the evidence actually covers.



ON

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION,

OR THE

PRESERVATION OF FAVOURED RACES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

By CHARLES DARWIN, M.A.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL, GEOLOGICAL, LINNEAN, ETC., SOCIETIES;
AUTHOR OF 'JOURNAL OF RESEARCHES DURING H. M. S. BEAGLE'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.'

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1859.

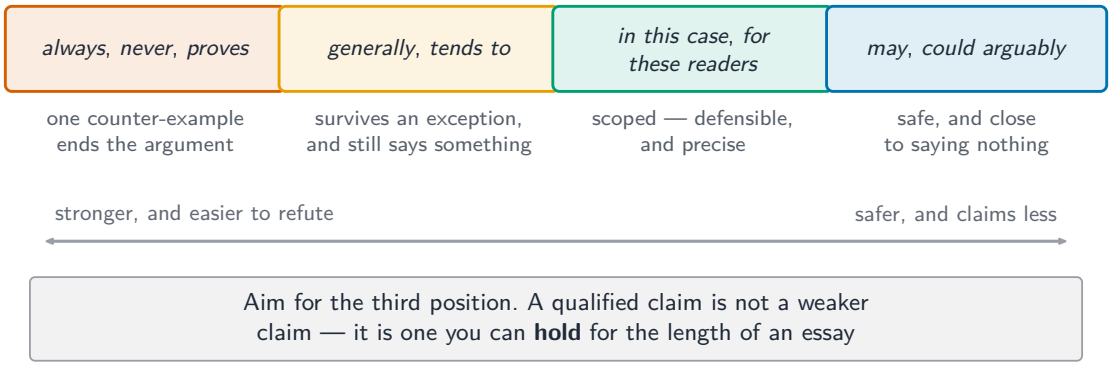
The right of Translation is reserved.

The first edition of On the Origin of Species, 1859: Darwin qualifies his claims with may, probably and if, and invites the reader to test them

> **Worked example: a scientist who names his own counter-example.** In *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Charles Darwin wrote: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. But I can find out no such case." Darwin does not claim his theory cannot be wrong. He says exactly what evidence would defeat it, then reports that he has not found it. The effect on a doubting reader is trust: a writer who shows where his claim could fail seems to have nothing to hide.

Exploring a claim's limits can contribute to the **sophistication point**, but a qualifier or concession alone does not earn it. The complexity must be developed as part of the argument; a consistently vivid and persuasive style is another possible route.

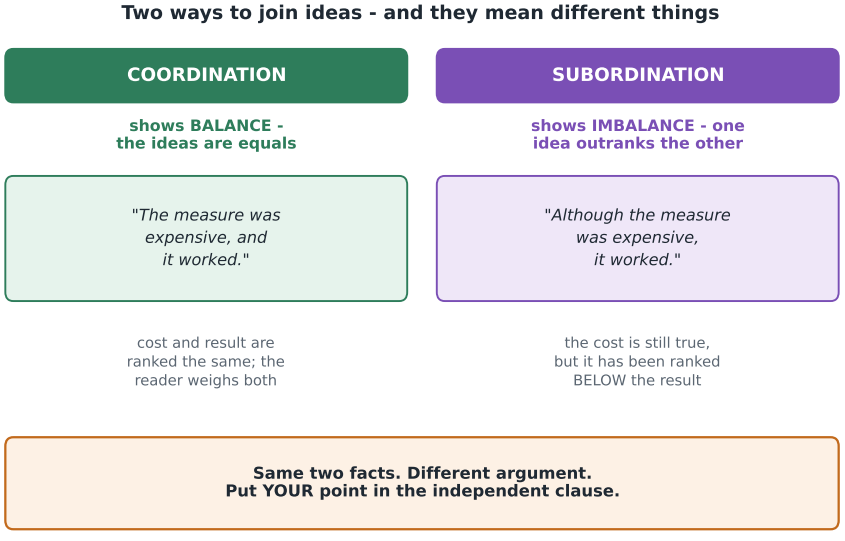
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A qualified claim is not a weaker claim - it is one you can hold for a whole essay

Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

- Writers express ideas in **sentences**, made up of **clauses**, at least one of which must be an **independent clause** 独立分句.
- **The arrangement of sentences** in a text can **emphasise particular ideas**.
- **Subordination** 从属 and **coordination** 并列 express the intended relationship between ideas in a sentence.
- Writers use **coordination to illustrate balance or equality** between ideas.
- Writers use **subordination to illustrate imbalance or inequality** between ideas.
- The arrangement of clauses, phrases, and words within a sentence can **emphasise ideas**.



The CED is explicit: coordination shows balance, subordination shows imbalance

Those two middle statements make sentence structure analysable rather than decorative. *The measure was expensive, and it worked* treats cost and effect as equals. *Although the measure was expensive, it worked* subordinates the cost - it is still true, but it has been ranked below the result. Same facts, different argument.

Writing Clear Sentences

For your own writing: decide the relationship first, then choose the structure that expresses it. If two ideas genuinely carry equal weight, coordinate them. If one is a concession and the other your point, subordinate the concession - and put your point in the independent clause, where the emphasis falls.

THE FAULT	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	THE FIX
COMMA SPLICE	*The data was clear, the committee ignored it.*	full stop, semicolon, or add *but*
RUN-ON	*The data was clear the committee ignored it.*	the same three repairs — the comma was never the problem
FRAGMENT	*Although the data was clear.*	attach it to the sentence it depends on

All three are about **where a sentence ends**. Naming the fault is worth nothing on its own — the mark is for the repair

All three faults are about where a sentence ends - the mark is for the repair

Grammar, Mechanics, and Clarity

- **Grammar and mechanics** that follow established conventions **enable clear communication**.
- Writers use **punctuation strategically** to demonstrate relationships among ideas.
- **Punctuation** 标点 - commas, **colons** 冒号, **semicolons** 分号, **dashes** 破折号, **hyphens** 连字符, **parentheses** 括号, quotation marks, end marks - **advances the argument**.
- **Design features** such as **italics** 斜体 or boldface create emphasis.

Conventions of Grammar and Mechanics

The examinable framing is that punctuation is **argumentative**, not merely correct. A colon promises that what follows explains what preceded. A semicolon asserts that two independent statements belong together. A dash interrupts, and the interruption is the point.

Worked example: structure and punctuation in Lincoln's Second Inaugural (1865). "Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came."

Choice	Effect
the semicolons join three clauses into one long sentence	the two sides are held in balance, as equals, while Lincoln weighs them
"make war" against "accept war"	coordination shows the sides as parallel, but the verbs are not equal: one side started it
"And the war came." is four words, a new sentence	after the long, balanced sentence, the short one makes war feel abrupt after the contrasting choices; the preceding verbs still assign responsibility

Worked example (original AP-style practice). A rhetorical-analysis passage reads: *"The programme was popular; it was also, by every measure the department itself proposed, ineffective."* A low answer notes "the writer uses a semicolon". A scoring answer explains the structure: *"The semicolon joins two complete clauses; "also" and "ineffective" make popularity and failure a pointed contrast, so the reader cannot dismiss the failure as an objection to popularity - both are simply true at once. The parenthetical 'by every measure the department itself proposed' then removes the department's escape route before the word 'ineffective' arrives."* That is syntax analysed as argument.

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MARK	WHAT IT PROMISES	AN EXAMPLE
semicolon ;	two complete statements, closely related and of equal weight	*The policy was cheap; it was also useless.*
colon :	what follows *delivers* what the first half announced	*The result was predictable: nobody applied.*
dash —	an interruption, or a turn the reader did not expect	*The scheme worked — for the six people who heard of it.*

Each mark is a **promise** about the second half of the sentence,
in the same way a transition is a promise about the next one

Each mark is a promise about the second half of the sentence

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Qualify this claim: "Video games make children violent."
2. Fix the **misplaced modifier** 错位修饰语 (here, a dangling modifier): "Running for the bus, my bag fell open."
3. Combine into one clear sentence that shows the relationship: "The library extended its hours. Exam season began."
4. Correct the **comma splice** 逗号粘连句: "The policy failed, it ignored local needs."
5. A student says: "Grammar does not matter on AP essays." Correct the student.

Model answers

1. For example: "Some studies suggest that heavy play of violent games is linked to short-term aggression in some children."
2. "As I was running for the bus, my bag fell open." The bag was not running.
3. "The library extended its hours because exam season began."
4. "The policy failed because it ignored local needs." (Or use a semicolon or a full stop.)
5. Grammar errors that obscure meaning cost credit, and clarity alone does not earn sophistication. Grammatical errors that interfere with communication prevent the fourth evidence-and-commentary point. Clarity serves the argument.

Exam tips

- **Qualify your claims.** An absolute claim is defeated by one counter-example; a qualified one still needs evidence and can be refuted within its stated scope.
- Developing a qualification may support the **sophistication point**; adding a qualifier alone does not earn it.
- **Coordination = balance. Subordination = imbalance.** The CED says so, and it makes syntax analysable.
- Put your point in the **independent clause**. Concessions belong in the subordinate one.
- Punctuation **advances the argument**. A colon explains, a semicolon joins as equals, a dash interrupts.
- Never write "the writer uses a semicolon" without saying **what relationship it asserts**.

Vocabulary card meanings

oversimplification: Treating a complex matter as simpler than it is. generalisation: Treating something true of some cases as true of all. subordination: Joining a less important idea under a main one. coordination: Joining two ideas as equals. comma splice: Two full sentences wrongly joined with only a comma.

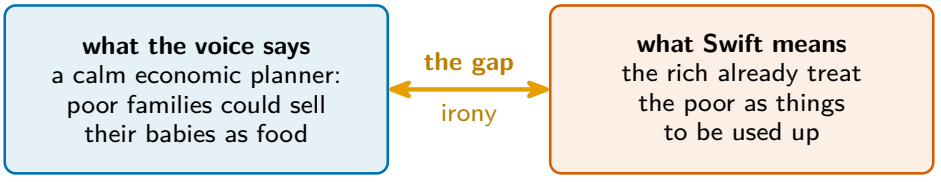
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Audience, Tone, and Sentence Craft

AP English Language and Composition

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

In 1729 Ireland was suffering from hunger and deep poverty, and much of its land was owned by landlords who lived in England. That year Jonathan Swift published a short pamphlet, *A Modest Proposal*. In the calm, careful voice of an economic planner, it suggests that poor Irish families could sell their babies as food for the rich. Swift did not want anyone to eat children. He wanted his readers to feel how the rich already treated the poor, and he made them feel it through a voice that never once sounds angry. That gap between what a text says and what it means is irony, the hardest and most rewarding thing in this unit.



the voice never sounds angry, so the reader has to supply the outrage; Ireland 1729: hunger, landlords living in England

The calm voice leaves the reader to supply the anger.

Unit 8 is the course's most advanced treatment of **style** 风格 - the point at which word choice, syntax, and audience stop being separate topics.

- Writers may make **comparisons** - **similes** 明喻, **metaphors** 隐喻, analogies, or anecdotes - in an attempt to relate to an audience.
- Writers' choices regarding **syntax** 句法 and **diction** 措辞 influence **how the writer is perceived** by an audience.
- Word choice may reflect a writer's **biases** 偏见 and may affect their **credibility** 可信度 with a particular audience.
- Because audiences are unique and **dynamic** 动态的, writers must consider the **perspectives, contexts, and needs** of the intended audience.

The third point is worth dwelling on. Diction does not only characterise the subject - it characterises the writer. **Loaded** 带有倾向的 word choice may weaken credibility with sceptical readers or strengthen identification with readers who share its values. Explain the audience-specific effect.

Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

The instruction here is that **audiences are dynamic**: they change as they read. An argument that has just conceded something is being read by a slightly different audience than the one that began the essay.



An old school clock and bell: argue for a later start differently to parents, teachers and students, because each audience values different things

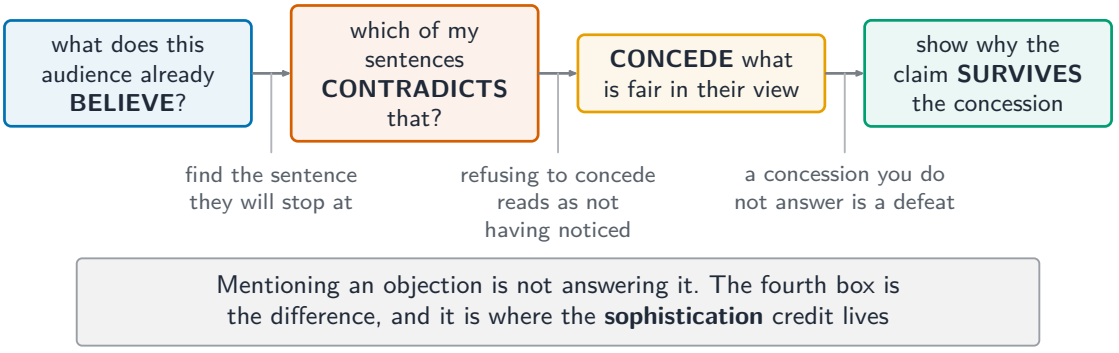
Practically, this means the ordering of **concession** 让步 and claim matters. Conceding first may build trust; a later concession may instead refine an established claim. Effects depend on wording, audience and purpose.

> **Worked example: one claim, two audiences.** The claim is the same: *the school day should start at 9:00, not 8:00.* Only the audience changes.

- **For parents**, who care about their children's health and mornings at home: *"Most teenagers are not lazy in the morning; their body clocks run later. An extra hour lets them arrive awake, and it ends the daily battle at the breakfast table."* The appeal is to experience they recognise.
- **For the school's budget committee**, who must approve the cost: *"The change needs no new staff. Buses would run one hour later on the same routes, and the trial school nearby reports fewer late arrivals, which saves teachers' time."* The appeal is to cost and evidence, and it answers the committee's first question before it is asked.

Neither version is more "correct". Each starts from what that audience already believes and needs, and each answers that audience's most likely objection. Audience awareness can shape an argument, but Question 3 has no separate reasoning point: reasoning is assessed within evidence and commentary.

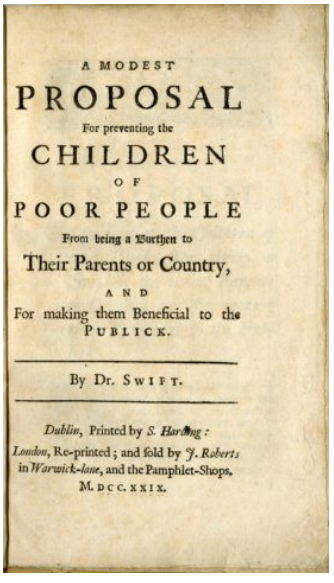
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Mentioning an objection is not answering it - the fourth box is the difference

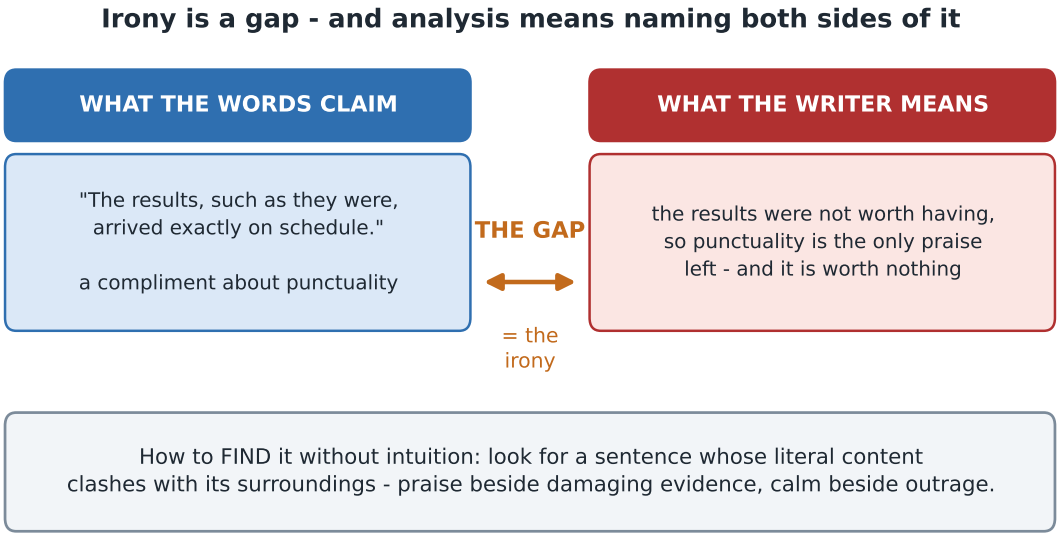
Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

- A writer's **style** is the **mix of word choice, syntax, and conventions** employed by that writer. Style is a *composite* 综合体, which is why "the writer's style is formal" is not analysis - it names the result without any of the components.
- Writers may signal a **complex or ironic perspective** through stylistic choices. **Irony** 反讽 may emerge from the difference between what is said and what is meant, or between what is expected and what occurs.


A MODEST
PROPOSAL
For preventing the
CHILDREN
OF
POOR PEOPLE
From being a Burthen to
Their Parents or Country,
AND
For making them Beneficial to the
PUBLICK.
By Dr. SWIFT.
Dublin, Printed by *S. Harding*:
London, Re-printed; and fold by *J. Roberts* in *Warwick-lane*, and the Pamphlet-Shops.
M.DCC.XXIX.

A Modest Proposal (1729): Swift's calm, reasonable tone is the satire, because it does not fit the monstrous proposal

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Say what the words claim, say what the writer means, and the gap is the argument

Irony is the hardest thing on this exam for a second-language reader, because it cannot be looked up. The workable method is structural rather than intuitive: find a sentence whose **literal content does not match its surroundings** - excessive praise beside damaging evidence, calm **register** 语域 beside an outrageous fact - and the mismatch is the signal.

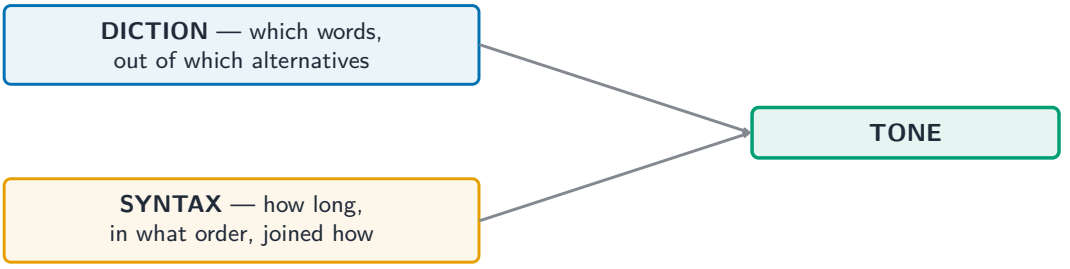
Worked example: finding the gap in *A Modest Proposal*.

> "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled."

Signal	In the sentence	What it does
calm register beside an outrageous fact	"a very knowing American", "I have been assured"	sounds like a polite report of expert advice, so the horror arrives with no warning
the language of food and markets for a child	"delicious nourishing and wholesome", "stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled"	the list of cooking methods treats a baby exactly as the rich treat any product
a gap between speaker and writer	the speaker is a planner; Swift is the writer	the reader must reject the speaker, and in rejecting him, rejects the way the poor are already treated

A scoring sentence: *"By giving a monstrous plan the polite register of an economic*

report, Swift makes the reader's own disgust the argument: if eating children is unthinkable, so is the landlords' treatment of the poor, which the proposal only describes more honestly."



the same words in a different sentence shape carry a different attitude — which is why syntax is evidence and not decoration

The test: rewrite the passage keeping the **words** and changing the **shape**. Whatever changes was being carried by the syntax

Tone has two inputs, and most analyses name only one

Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

For your own writing, the safest use of irony is none. Those choices can help clarity. The sophistication point requires developed complexity or a consistently vivid and persuasive style; clarity and control alone do not guarantee it.

THE TONE	THE WRITER'S STANCE	POINT AT
measured	confident, and not trying to win by volume	qualifiers, concessions, low-temperature verbs
urgent	the cost of delay is the argument	short sentences, imperatives, time words
wry	amused, and not quite committed	understatement, an unexpected register
indignant	a norm has been broken and someone is at fault	loaded nouns, rhetorical questions
elegiac	something valuable is already lost	past tense, concrete detail, slow rhythm

A tone word is a **claim** like any other. If you cannot point at the third column, you have not established it

A tone word is a claim - if you cannot point at the third column, you have not made it

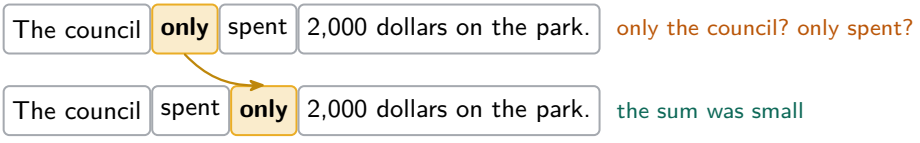
Clauses and Relationships Between Ideas

- **Modifiers** 修饰成分 - words, phrases, or clauses - **qualify, clarify, or specify** information about the thing they modify.
- **Parenthetical elements** 插入成分 - though not essential to understanding what they describe - **interrupt** the sentence to add information, comment, or emphasis.

Both are stylistically rich and analytically useful. A modifier is where a writer's judgement hides: *the long-delayed report* has evaluated the report while appearing only to identify it. A parenthetical is an **aside** 题外话 the writer chose to make - and the choice to interrupt is itself an emphasis.

Writing Clear Sentences

A concrete discipline: **place modifiers next to what they modify**, and use parentheticals sparingly. One well-placed interruption creates emphasis; three in a paragraph destroy it, because a reader cannot tell which interruption mattered.



Put the modifier next to what it modifies

Worked example: repairing sentences.

Problem	Unclear	Clear
misplaced modifier 错位修饰语	*The council only spent 2,000 dollars on the park.* (Only the council? Only spent?)	*The council spent only 2,000 dollars on the park.*
dangling modifier	*Walking into the hall, the noise was terrible.* (The noise was not walking.)	*Walking into the hall, we heard terrible noise.*
ideas not ranked	*The plan is cheap. It will not help most students.*	*Although the plan is cheap, it will not help most students.*
too many interruptions	*The report (written, it seems, in a hurry) says, at least on page 3, that…*	*The report, apparently written in a hurry, says on page 3 that…*

The third row matters most in argument. **Subordination** 从属 ranks ideas: the idea in the *although* clause is conceded, and the main clause carries the claim. Swap them (*"Although the plan will not help most students, it is cheap"*) and the sentence now

argues **for** the plan. Choose which idea goes in the main clause on purpose.

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** A rhetorical-analysis passage says of a policy: *"The results, such as they were, arrived exactly on schedule."* A low answer says the writer "uses a parenthetical phrase". A scoring answer explains both parts: *"The parenthetical 'such as they were' dismisses the results in four words, without offering an argument against them - and placing it before 'arrived exactly on schedule' means the praise for punctuality lands on results the reader has just been told to discount. The sentence appears to compliment the programme and in fact withdraws the only thing it could be complimented for."* Modifier, parenthetical, irony, and effect on audience, all in one.

Practice

Answer each before reading the model answers below.

1. Explain what the modifier does in "the long-awaited, much-delayed opening of the bridge".
2. "Another triumph for the committee: the meeting lasted only four hours." How can you tell this is ironic?
3. Rewrite for a **sceptical** 持怀疑态度的 audience, removing loaded diction: "This disastrous, reckless scheme will obviously ruin our town."
4. Why should a concession usually come before your main claim in a paragraph?
5. A student writes: "The author's style is formal." Improve it into analysis.

Model answers

1. "Long-awaited" and "much-delayed" judge the opening (slow, frustrating) while appearing only to describe it, so the writer's criticism is built into the noun phrase.
2. The literal praise ("triumph") clashes with the evidence that follows ("only four hours" suggests a meeting the speaker considers excessively long, rather than a triumph). That gap between what is said and what is meant signals irony.
3. For example: "This scheme carries risks for the town that its supporters have not yet addressed." **Neutral** 中立的 words keep a sceptical reader willing to listen.
4. Readers who see a fair concession first may judge the writer reasonable and read the main claim more openly. A later concession can instead refine a claim; neither order guarantees a particular response.
5. Name the components and their effect: for example, "The author's long, balanced sentences and technical vocabulary present her as an **impartial** 公正的 expert, which makes her later criticism seem measured rather than personal."

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Exam tips

- Write for a **named audience**: start from what it already believes, and answer its most likely objection.
- Put the idea you are **arguing for** in the main clause; put the point you concede in the *although* clause.
- **Style is a composite** - word choice, syntax, conventions. Naming the components is analysis; naming the result is not.
- Loaded diction **may affect credibility** differently for different audiences. Explain the effect in context.
- Find irony **structurally**: a sentence whose literal content clashes with its surroundings.
- **Choose concession placement for your purpose.** An early concession may build trust; a later one may refine an established claim.
- A **modifier** is where judgement hides. *The long-delayed report* has already evaluated it.
- Use parentheticals **sparingly** in your own writing. Three in a paragraph cancel each other out.

Vocabulary card meanings

syntax: The way words are arranged into sentences. diction: The particular words a writer chooses. modifier: A word or phrase that limits or describes another word. parenthetical element: Extra information set off inside a sentence, often by commas or dashes. register: How formal or informal a piece of language is.

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Refining Qualified Arguments

AP English Language and Composition

How Claims Are Qualified

On 5 July 1852 the formerly enslaved writer Frederick Douglass spoke to an audience in Rochester, New York, who had invited him to talk about the Fourth of July, the day the United States celebrates its independence. Halfway through, he stopped to voice his listeners' objection for them: "But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say, it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less ... your cause would be much more likely to succeed." He then answered it: "where all is plain there is nothing to be argued." Douglass did not hide the objection; he spoke it aloud, in its strongest form, and then took it apart. That is the skill this unit teaches.

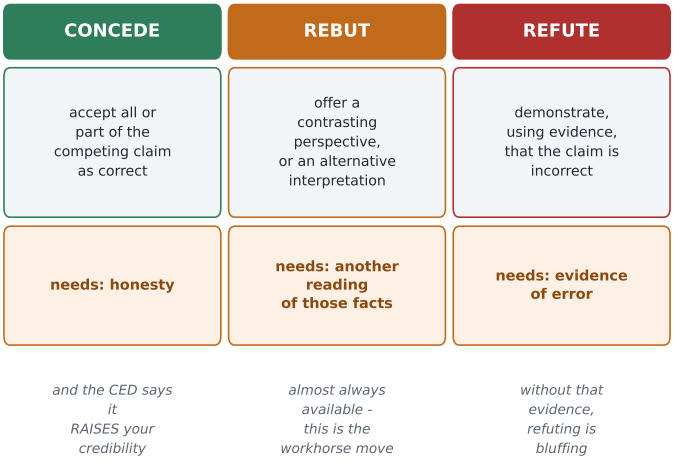
Unit 9 is short and it is the course's final move: **how to handle the arguments that oppose yours**. Everything here is directly rewarded on the exam, and the three key verbs are constantly confused.

The framing first:

- **Effectively entering an ongoing conversation** about a subject means **engaging the positions that have already been taken**. An argument that ignores them is not participating in the discussion, only announcing into it.
- Evidence and sources will either **support** 支持, **complement** 补充, or **contradict** 相矛盾 a writer's thesis. All three are usable - contradicting evidence is not a problem to be hidden but material to be handled.
- **Writers enhance their credibility when they refute, rebut, or concede** opposing arguments and contradictory evidence.

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Three different moves - and the evidence you have decides which one you may make



Then come back to your own position. An unreturned concession reads as agreement.

Concede accepts, rebut counters, refute disproves. Choose the one your evidence can actually support

The three moves, in the CED's own definitions:

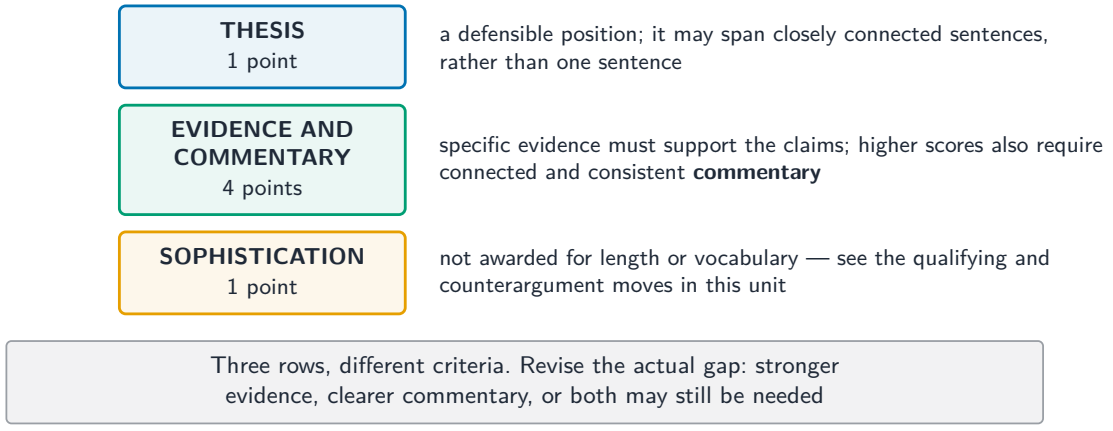
- **Concede** 让步: writers **accept all or a portion of a competing position or claim as correct**, and agree that the opposing point has **merit** 可取之处.
- **Rebut** 反驳: writers **offer a contrasting perspective** on an argument and its evidence, or provide an **alternative interpretation** 另一种解读.
- **Refute** 驳倒: writers **demonstrate, using evidence, that all or a portion of a competing position or claim is incorrect**.

The distinction is what your evidence lets you do. **Refuting requires evidence of error**; if you do not have it, refuting is bluffing and a reader will see it. **Rebutting requires only an alternative reading** of the same facts, which is far more often available. **Conceding requires honesty**, and it costs nothing - the CED says explicitly that it *enhances* credibility.

Two further points:

- Transitions may be used to introduce **counterarguments** 反方论点 - and, as in Unit 5, the transition should signal the relationship. *Critics argue* announces one; *the strongest* ***objection*** 反对意见 *to this is* announces one and ranks it.
- **Not all arguments explicitly address a counterargument.** True of texts you read, and worth noting when analysing - an argument that engages no opposition has told you something about its intended audience.

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Three rows, three different arithmetics - revise the one still paying

Qualifying a Claim

For your own writing, the strongest and most reliable shape on Question 3 is:

1. State your position, **qualified** to the ground your evidence covers.
2. **Concede** the part of the opposing position that is genuinely correct.
3. **Rebut or refute** the rest - rebut if you have an alternative reading, refute only if you have evidence of error.
4. Show why your position **survives** the concession.

Step 4 is the one most students omit, and it can develop complexity, but does not by itself earn the sophistication point. Conceding and then not returning to your own argument reads as having changed your mind.

> **Worked example (original AP-style practice).** On a Question 3 argument prompt, compare two treatments of the same objection. Weak: *"Some people disagree, but they are wrong."* That names an opposing position without engaging it - it is neither concession, rebuttal, nor refutation. Strong: *"The objection that the policy is too costly is correct as far as it goes: the direct expenditure is higher than any alternative considered. But cost is only decisive if the alternatives achieve the same result, and the same report shows they do not - so the comparison the objection depends on is not available."* That paragraph **concedes** the cost, **refutes** the comparison with evidence, and returns to the writer's own position. These moves can strengthen reasoning; the rubric does not award a separate point for each one.

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WHERE YOU PUT IT	WHAT IT SIGNALS	USE IT WHEN
first — before your own case	you know the strongest version of the other side	the reader probably holds it already
inside each paragraph	every claim has been tested as it was made	the objections are specific to each claim
near the end	a duty discharged — or, done well, the real turn	one objection outweighs the rest

Position is a **rhetorical** choice, not a template slot. The default placement is the one that reads most like a box being ticked

Position is a rhetorical choice, not a template slot

DOES NOT EARN IT	POSSIBLE ROUTES
longer words for the same idea	a claim qualified so that it is exactly defensible
a fourth body paragraph	an objection answered, not noted
a counterargument mentioned and dropped	tension between two of your own sources, named
a conclusion that widens to all of humanity	consistently vivid and persuasive style

These routes require **development within the argument**. An isolated qualifier, objection or phrase does not earn the point

Possible routes require development within the argument; isolated moves do not earn the point

Words that qualify

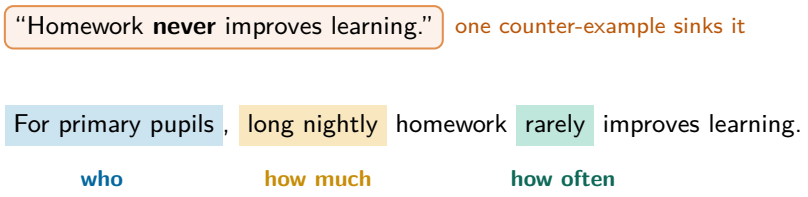
A **qualifier** 限定语 narrows a claim to what the evidence actually covers. Absolute words (*always, never, all, proves*) invite one **counterexample** 反例 to sink the claim. Compare:

- *Overclaim* 夸大的论断: "Homework never improves learning."
- *Qualified:* "For primary pupils, long nightly homework rarely improves learning, and it often costs sleep and reading time."

The qualified version names **who** (primary pupils), **how much** (long, nightly) and

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how often (rarely, often). Each limit makes the claim harder to refute, and so stronger, not weaker.



Who, how much, how often

Worked example: Douglass's moves, named. In the 1852 speech, Douglass first **voices** the objection fairly (argue more, denounce less). He then **rebuts** it: the humanity of the enslaved is already admitted by the law itself, since the slave laws punish enslaved people for crimes, and only a human being can be guilty of a crime. Finally he **returns** to his own position with a new force: "At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed." The objection has not been ignored; it has been used to explain his whole method.

Worked example: the four moves in one paragraph.

> *Phone bans do reduce in-class distraction; teachers in the trial reported fewer interruptions* (**concede**). *But a ban is not the only way to get that result: the same trial's students who kept phones in a locked box at the front saw the same drop* (**rebut**: an alternative reading of the same evidence). *The claim that no student can learn with a phone nearby is contradicted by the locked-box group's demonstrated learning gains* (**refute**: evidence of error). *So the case for a total ban fails, while the case for removing phones from desks during lessons survives the objection* (**return**).

Practice

Answer each before reading the answers below.

1. Label each response to "School uniforms reduce bullying": (a) "That is true in some schools, though the evidence is mixed." (b) "A study of 200 schools found no change in bullying reports after uniforms were introduced." (c) "Fewer reports might mean students stopped reporting, not that bullying fell."
2. Qualify this overclaim: "Online learning is worse than classroom learning."
3. A paragraph concedes an opposing point and then moves straight to a new topic. What is wrong, and how would you fix it?
4. Which transition ranks a counterargument: "Some people think…" or "The most serious objection is…"? Why does ranking matter?
5. A student says: "Conceding a point weakens my essay." Correct the student.

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Answers

1. (a) Concede (it accepts part of the claim). (b) An attempted refutation: this study challenges the general claim, but no change in reports alone does not prove that uniforms never reduce bullying. (c) Rebut (an alternative interpretation of the same evidence).
2. For example: "For students without a quiet place to work, online learning often produces weaker results than classroom learning."
3. The concession is never answered, so it reads as agreeing with the other side. Return to your position: show why it still holds after the concession.
4. "The most serious objection is…" It shows you chose the strongest opposing point; answering the strongest point is more persuasive than answering a weak one.
5. Conceding a point that is genuinely correct raises your credibility, by the course's own description. It only weakens the essay if you do not then show that your position survives.

Exam tips

- **Concede, rebut, refute** are three different claims. Do not use the words interchangeably.
- **Refute only with evidence of error.** Without it, rebut instead - an alternative interpretation is almost always available.
- **Conceding raises credibility**, by the CED's own statement. It is not a weakness.
- After conceding, **come back**. An unreturned concession reads as agreement with the other side.
- Use a transition that **ranks** the counterargument: *the strongest objection to this is* beats *some people say.*
- When analysing a text, notice when it addresses **no** counterargument. That absence tells you who it was written for.

Vocabulary card meanings

support: To back up a claim. complement: To add to a claim without repeating it. contradict: To go against a claim. rebut: To offer a different reading of an opposing argument or its evidence. refute: To show with evidence that an opposing claim is wrong. concede: To accept that part of an opposing argument is right.

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