

Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence

AP English Language • Unit 2

AP English Language



Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence

What we will cover

- 1 Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 2 Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs
- 3 Identifying Claims and Evidence
- 4 Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence
- 5 Identifying the Overarching Thesis
- 6 Writing a Thesis Statement

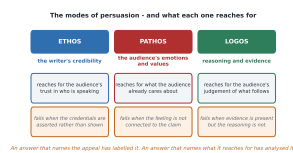
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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

Each appeal reaches for something different in the reader



- Writers' perceptions of an audience's values, beliefs, needs, and background guide the choices they make. Note the word...
- To achieve a purpose, writers make choices in an attempt to **relate to an intended audience's emotions and values** 情感与价值观.

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Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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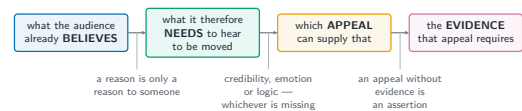
Unit 1 established that a text has an audience. Unit 2 makes that audience the engine of every choice a writer makes.

- Writers' perceptions of an audience's values, beliefs, 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's emotions and values** 情感与价值观.
- Arguments seek to persuade or motivate action through **appeals** 诉求 – the **modes of persuasion** 说服方式.

Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence

Understanding an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

From audience to appeal



The audience comes **first**. Choosing an appeal and then hunting for an audience it suits is the order that produces essays nobody could be persuaded by

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Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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↳ Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

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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↳ Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs

Writing for an Audience's Beliefs and Needs, continued

An argument that ignores these produces writing addressed to nobody.

And the CED's framing gives you a useful test for your own drafts: *if this paragraph would read identically to a completely different audience, it has not been shaped by one.*

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Identifying Claims and Evidence

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↳ Identifying Claims and Evidence

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** 举例、澄清、营造氛围、示范、关联或放大. Evidence does a *job*, and naming that job is analysis.
- Strategically selected evidence **strengthens the validity 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.

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↳ Identifying Claims and Evidence

Identifying Claims and Evidence, continued

That third point is often misread as "more is better".

Sufficiency is quantity **and** quality together: three well-chosen pieces of evidence that bear directly on the claim beat six that only touch it.

What each kind of evidence cannot prove

TYPE	WHAT IT CAN ESTABLISH	WHAT IT CANNOT
facts and statistics	scale, and that a pattern is real	that the pattern matters to a reader
anecdotes and examples	that the thing happens, and how it is typical feels	
analogies	a structure the reader already accepts; anything, if the two cases differ where it counts	
expert opinion	that informed people hold the view that they are right	

Name what each kind of evidence *cannot* prove – anecdote is not a trend, and authority is not a warrant.

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Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

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.

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence, continued

Evidence chosen this way produces commentary almost automatically, because you already know what the evidence is doing.

Evidence chosen because it was available produces the blank space where commentary should be.

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Identifying the Overarching Thesis

Identifying the Overarching Thesis

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 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** 论点 is the **main, overarching 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 statement**, and may require a thorough reading to identify.

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Writing a Thesis Statement

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↳ Writing a Thesis Statement

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.

- It must **require defence**. Apply the Unit 1 test again: could a reasonable person disagree? A thesis that states a fact cannot be defended, only repeated.
- 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.

Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence
↳ Writing a Thesis Statement

Writing a Thesis Statement, continued

On the exam, the **thesis point is one of six** and it is the cheapest point on the rubric: a defensible thesis in response to the prompt earns it. A restatement of the prompt does not.

Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence
↳ Writing a Thesis Statement

Exam tips

- The audience drives everything. If a paragraph would read the same to any audience, it has not been shaped for one.
- Name **what evidence does** – illustrate, clarify, associate, amplify. That is analysis; listing evidence is not.
- **Sufficiency is quantity and quality**, not volume. Three apt pieces beat six loose ones.
- 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 earns zero of the six points.
- Previewing your line of reasoning in the thesis is optional but makes the rest of the essay easier to organise.

Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence
↳ Writing a Thesis Statement

Same subject, only one arguable

A TOPIC STATEMENT

This essay will discuss the author's use of humour.

announces a subject; nothing in it could be argued against

A DEFENSIBLE THESIS

The author's humour disarms an audience that would have refused the same argument made plainly.

takes a **position**, and implies the reasoning that will defend it

Both name the same subject. Only one of them can be **disagreed with**, and only that one can be defended for four paragraphs