

Organization, Coherence, and Style

AP English Language ■ Unit 5

AP English Language



What we will cover

- 1 Describing the Line of Reasoning
- 2 Developing a Line of Reasoning and Commentary
- 3 Organization, Unity, and Coherence
- 4 Using Transitional Elements
- 5 Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax
- 6 Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

1

Describing the Line of Reasoning

Describing the Line of Reasoning

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** 文体.

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.**

2

Developing a Line of Reasoning and Commentary

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.

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* – because those words cannot be followed by a restatement.

3

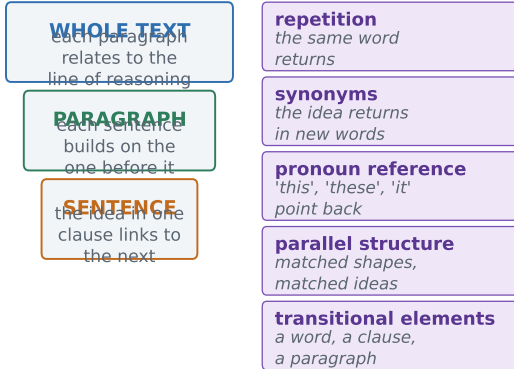
Organization, Unity, and Coherence

Three levels, and five named devices

- In a **sentence**, the idea in one clause 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.
- **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.

Three levels, and five named devices, in detail

Coherence happens at three levels built by these devices



A "structure" question is asking which of these the writer used, and what it made the reader do next.

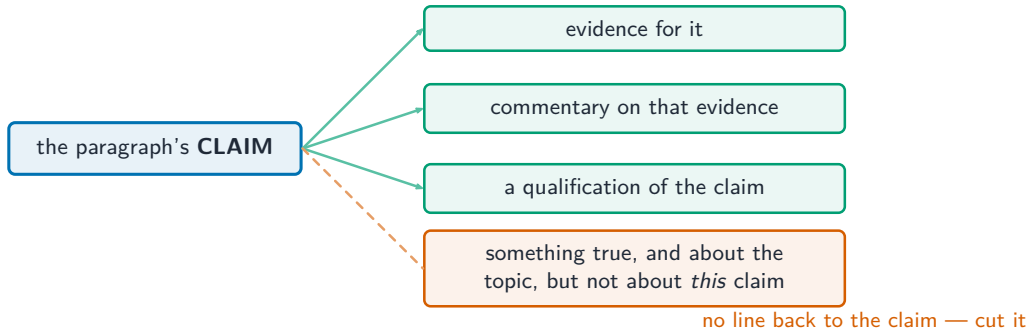
In a **paragraph**, each sentence builds on the one before it.

Organization, Unity, and Coherence

The CED then names the devices that create those links:

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- Across the **whole text**, each paragraph relates to the line of reasoning.
- **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



Run it on a draft: draw the line from each sentence **back** to the claim. The sentence without one is not a bad sentence – it is in the wrong paragraph

4

Using Transitional Elements

Using Transitional Elements

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

Choose transitions that carry information about the relationship, not ones that merely mark a boundary.

Transitions, by relationship

- Words have both **connotative and denotative meanings** 内涵义与外延义. Denotation is what a word refers to; connotation is what it carries.
- **Descriptive words** - adjectives and adverbs - not only qualify or modify what they describe but **convey a perspective** toward it.

Transitions, by relationship, in detail

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

Denotation is what a word refers to; connotation is what it carries.

5

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

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** 内涵义与外延义.
Denotation is what a word refers to; connotation is what it carries.
- **Descriptive words** – adjectives and adverbs – not only qualify or modify what they describe but **convey a perspective** toward it.
- **Precise word choice** reduces confusion and helps the audience perceive the writer's perspective.

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax, continued

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 has.

That is a rhetorical choice, and it is exactly what the question asks you to explain.

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Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

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.

Exam tips

- Every body paragraph: **claim, evidence, commentary**. Lost points are nearly always the third.
- Draft your **claims as a list first**. It is the only way to see whether the reasoning moves.
- Begin commentary with *because, which means, so* – words that cannot be followed by a restatement.
- 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* usually carries nothing.
- **Connotation** is where diction analysis lives. Same denotation, different disposition, is a rhetorical choice worth explaining.

Shape, effect – and risk

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Shape, effect – and risk, in detail

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

Draft your **claims as a list first**.

Worked example – a shift in connotation

A writer describes a proposal's supporters as “*determined*” in one paragraph and “*unyielding*” in the next.

- **Low-scoring:** *“The writer uses strong diction.”*
- **Scoring:** *“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.”*

Connotation, tone and effect on audience in one move – and the audience's judgment shifts before any counter-argument is made.

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Recap

Unit 5 – key takeaways

1

Body paragraph

claim, evidence, commentary –
lost points are the third

2

Draft claims

as a list first, to see whether
reasoning moves

3

Because/so

words that cannot be followed by
restatement

4

Coherence

name the device: repetition,
synonym, pronoun, parallel

Check yourself

- 1 What three parts does every body paragraph need?
- 2 How should you draft claims?
- 3 Begin commentary with which words?
- 4 A transition should carry what?

Answers: claim, evidence, commentary ■ as a list first ■ because / which means / so ■ the relationship