

Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices

AP English Language ■ Unit 6

AP English Language



Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices

What we will cover

- 1 Identifying Claims and Evidence
- 2 Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence
- 3 Identifying the Overarching Thesis
- 4 Writing a Thesis Statement
- 5 Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax
- 6 Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

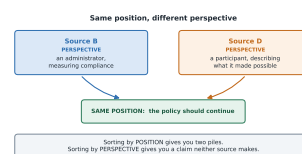
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Identifying Claims and Evidence

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Identifying Claims and Evidence

The distinction the synthesis question is built on



- When synthesising, writers **draw on arguments from multiple sources**, strategically select the most relevant information, and...
- A source **provides information** for an argument, and **some sources are more reliable or credible than others** 可靠性与可信度。

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Identifying Claims and Evidence

Identifying Claims and Evidence

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

- When synthesising, writers **draw on arguments from multiple sources**, 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 than others** 可靠性与可信度。
- A **position** and a **perspective** 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 the other positions** that exist.
- The degree to which a source considers other positions reflects the degree to which that source is **credible** – a test you can apply to any source on the exam.

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Identifying Claims and Evidence

The verb positions the source

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

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Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices
↳ Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

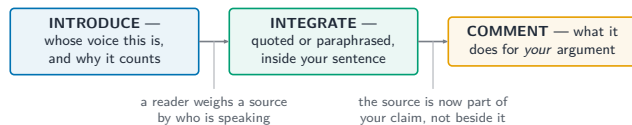
Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

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:

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

Evidence, Thesis, and Stylistic Choices
↳ Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

A source becomes evidence in three moves



A synthesis essay is not a tour of the sources. Move three is where the **synthesis** happens, and it is the one most often missing

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Identifying the Overarching Thesis

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↳ Identifying the Overarching Thesis

Identifying the Overarching Thesis

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

Reading a text, this means a writer's thesis may be *responsive* – shaped by the evidence rather than imposed on it.

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Writing a Thesis Statement

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 thesis written after the evidence is nearly always better than one written before it.

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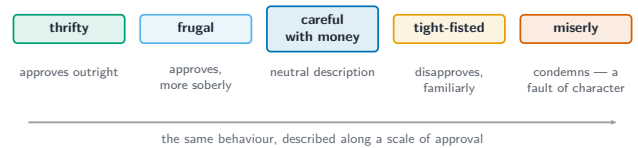
Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

Word Choice, Comparisons, and Syntax

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.

- 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** tone from word choice – especially from the **positive, negative, or otherwise charged** 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, refinement, or a change in perspective**.

Same denotation, five judgements



The denotation barely moves; the **judgement** moves the whole way. Naming which word was chosen, from what alternatives, is the analysis

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Using Words and Syntax for Tone and Style

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 part of an opposing one.

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**: a source that ignores all other positions is weaker, and you may say so.
- If the evidence does not fit the thesis, **change the thesis**. There are no marks for consistency with your first idea.
- 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.