

3 Thesis, reasoning, and commentary

– Part 2

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English

Write it 3 times (English)

thesis

line of reasoning

Commentary

Recall

- You have written an essay whose paragraphs each made sense alone.
- You know a list of points is not an argument.
- You have quoted well and explained nothing.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 A thesis

A **thesis** expresses an interpretation and requires defence through evidence and a line of reasoning. It need not list the points or the literary elements to be analysed.

Worked example. 'This essay will discuss imagery, structure and tone' announces topics and takes no position.

■ 2 A line of reasoning

A **line of reasoning** is the logical sequence of claims defending the thesis. Because it is a sequence, the order is itself part of the argument.

Worked example. If two paragraphs can be swapped with nothing lost, they were a list.

■ 3 Commentary

Commentary explains the logical relationship between the thesis and the evidence. Two students can quote identically and reach opposite conclusions; the difference is entirely in the commentary.

Worked example. Evidence does not interpret itself, so the argument is made in the explanation.

Watch out: Restating a line in plain words is paraphrase, not commentary. Paraphrase says what the line says; commentary says what it does and why that supports the claim.

Practice

2.1 State what a thesis expresses and requires. [2]

2.2 State what the CED says a thesis need not do. [2]

2.3 Define a line of reasoning. [2]

2.4 State the test for whether paragraphs form a sequence. [2]

2.5 Distinguish paraphrase from commentary. [2]
