

3.8 Developing commentary

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write **commentary** 评述.

You must be able to:

- define a line of reasoning
- state how a line of reasoning is communicated
- distinguish commentary from evidence
- explain why commentary is where the essay's argument lives

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Line of reasoning

A line of reasoning is the logical sequence of claims that work together to defend the overarching thesis statement. A sequence, so the order of claims is itself an argument.

■ How it is communicated

Through commentary that explains the logical relationship between the overarching thesis statement and the claims/evidence within the body of an essay.

■ Commentary and evidence

Evidence is from the text; commentary is the writer's. Commentary says what the evidence shows and why that supports the claim. An essay of quotations has no argument.

■ Where the argument lives

Two students may use identical quotations and reach different conclusions. The difference is entirely in the commentary, which is why it carries the reasoning.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a line of reasoning. [2]

2.2 State how it is communicated. [2]

2.3 Commentary is not evidence.

(a) State the difference. [2]

(b) Explain why commentary carries the argument. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A line of reasoning is a logical [1]

- **A** sequence of claims
- **B** list of quotations
- **C** summary of the plot
- **D** set of definitions

3.2 Commentary explains the logical relationship between the thesis and [1]

- **A** the claims and evidence
- **B** the author's life
- **C** the page numbers
- **D** the genre

3.3 Two essays use the same quotations and disagree.

(a) State where the disagreement lies. [1]

(b) Explain what this shows about commentary.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **3.8 Developing commentary** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Longer Fiction or Drama I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the logical sequence of claims that work together to defend the overarching thesis statement.

2.2 through commentary that explains the logical relationship between the thesis and the claims and evidence in the body.

2.3 (a) evidence comes from the text; commentary is the writer's explanation of what it shows and why it supports the claim. (b) the interpretation is made in the commentary, not in the quotation.

3.1 A. a sequence of claims.

3.2 A. the claims and evidence.

3.3 (a) in the commentary. (b) evidence does not interpret itself, so the essay's argument is made entirely in the writer's explanation of it.