

# 4.12 Developing commentary

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ **Total: 18 marks**

**KEY WORDS** body paragraph 主体段落 • topic sentences 主题句 • protagonist 主人公

## Objective

Build the skills to build a **body paragraph** 主体段落.

**You must be able to:**

- state what body paragraphs develop and justify
- state what makes a paragraph cohesive
- state the function of a topic sentence
- link a paragraph back to the thesis

## 1 Worked examples

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

### ■ What they do

The body paragraphs of a written argument develop the reasoning and justify claims using evidence and providing commentary that links the evidence to the overall thesis.

### ■ Cohesion

Effective paragraphs are cohesive and often use topic sentences to state a claim and explain the reasoning that connects the various claims and evidence that make up the body of an essay.

### ■ Topic sentences

A topic sentence does two jobs: it states this paragraph's claim, and it shows how that claim follows from the last one. The second job is what makes a sequence a line of reasoning.

### ■ Linking back

Every paragraph must earn its place by advancing the thesis. If a paragraph could be deleted without weakening the argument, it was not part of the line of reasoning.

## 2 Practice

**2.1** State what body paragraphs do. [2]

---

---

**2.2** State the two jobs of a topic sentence. [2]

---

---

**2.3** Paragraphs must earn their place.

(a) State the test. [2]

(b) State what makes a sequence a line of reasoning. [1]

---

---

---

---

## 3 Exam-style questions

**3.1** Commentary in a body paragraph links the evidence to [1]

- **A** the overall thesis
- **B** the author's life
- **C** the next book
- **D** the page number

---

**3.2** A topic sentence states a claim and [1]

- **A** explains the reasoning connecting claims and evidence
- **B** quotes the text
- **C** names the author
- **D** ends the essay

---

**3.3** A paragraph could be deleted without weakening the argument.

(a) State what this shows.

$$[1]$$

(b) Explain the fix.

[2]

**3.4 Full free-response task.** A novel’s protagonist, offered the job she has wanted for years, asks for a week to decide, and spends that week doing nothing but reorganising her bookshelves. She accepts on the last day.

Write an essay that argues an interpretation of what this week reveals about the character, developing your argument in fully built body paragraphs.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A** — Thesis (1), **Row B** — Evidence and Commentary (4), **Row C** — Sophistication (1).

[6]

## Solutions

---

**2.1** they develop the reasoning and justify claims using evidence, providing commentary that links the evidence to the overall thesis.

**2.2** state the paragraph's claim; show how that claim follows from the previous one.

**2.3** (a) ask whether the paragraph could be deleted without weakening the argument.  
(b) each claim following from the last towards the thesis.

**3.1 A.** the overall thesis.

**3.2 A.** the reasoning connecting them.

**3.3** (a) it was not part of the line of reasoning. (b) either give it a claim that advances the thesis or cut it and use the space on a paragraph that does.

**3.4 Row A — Thesis (1).** An interpretive, defensible claim about the character. **Earns it:** “The week is not deliberation but rehearsal: she reorganises the one part of her life she can still put in order, and accepts only once she has proved to herself that she can.” **Does not:** “The week shows that she is nervous about the job.”

*Row B — Evidence and Commentary (0–4).* This task marks the **paragraph**, so structure is assessable. A four-point body paragraph runs: a claim that advances the thesis without repeating it; specific evidence; commentary that explains how the evidence supports **that** claim; and a link that earns the next paragraph. The most common cap at 3 is a paragraph whose evidence is apt and whose commentary paraphrases it — “this shows she is organising her books” is summary, not commentary. Strong responses read the delay against the wanting: she asked for the week, which means the obstacle is internal, and she used none of it to gather information, which means the decision was never about the job.

*Row C — Sophistication (1).* Earned by carrying an alternative reading — the week as avoidance rather than preparation — far enough to be genuinely tempting, then showing what the final-day acceptance settles. A dismissive nod to “some may argue” does not earn the point.