

# 9.7 Developing commentary

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ **Total: 19 marks**

**KEY WORDS** sophisticated reasoning 高层次推理

## Objective

Build the skills to sustain **sophisticated reasoning** 高层次推理.

**You must be able to:**

- define a line of reasoning
- state the three sophisticated moves
- explain what a broader context means for a novel
- connect sophistication to the line of reasoning

## 1 Worked examples

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

■ **Line of reasoning**

**The logical sequence of claims that work together to defend the overarching thesis statement**, communicated through commentary.

■ **Three moves**

**Significance within a broader context; alternative interpretations; relevant analogies.**

■ **Broader context for a novel**

What the reading shows about how the novel works, about a problem it shares with other texts, or about why the interpretation matters to a reader — anchored to the argument, not appended to it.

■ **Connected, not decorative**

A sophistication move belongs inside the line of reasoning. An alternative interpretation raised and dismissed in one sentence at the end has been mentioned, not used; the same alternative used to sharpen a claim mid-essay does real work.

## 2 Practice

**2.1** Define a line of reasoning. [2]

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**2.2** State the three sophisticated moves. [3]

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**2.3** Sophistication belongs inside the reasoning.

(a) State the difference between mentioning and using an alternative. [2]

(b) State what “broader context” can mean for a novel. [1]

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## 3 Exam-style questions

**3.1** An alternative interpretation dismissed in one final sentence has been [1]

- **A** mentioned, not used
- **B** fully used
- **C** proved
- **D** cited

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**3.2** A sophisticated move should be [1]

- **A** anchored to the argument
- **B** appended at the end
- **C** omitted
- **D** repeated

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**3.3** An essay raises a rival reading in its third paragraph to sharpen its own claim.

- State whether this is mentioning or using. [1]
- Explain why the placement matters. [2]

**3.4 Full free-response task.** Choose a novel, play or poem of literary merit in which the ending withholds an answer the work has spent its length preparing the reader to expect. Write an essay that argues an interpretation of what the withheld answer accomplishes.

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

[6]

## Solutions

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**2.1** the logical sequence of claims that work together to defend the overarching thesis, communicated through commentary.

**2.2** significance within a broader context; alternative interpretations; relevant analogies.

**2.3** (a) mentioning names the alternative; using it lets the alternative change how the claim is stated. (b) what the reading shows about how the novel works or about a problem it shares with other texts.

**3.1 A.** mentioned.

**3.2 A.** anchored to the argument.

**3.3** (a) using. (b) mid-essay the alternative can affect the claims that follow, whereas at the end it can only be noted after the argument is complete.

**3.4 Row A — Thesis (1).** An interpretive claim about the **withholding**, not the plot. **Earns it:** “The novel’s refusal to say what happened is not evasion but the last move of its argument: having taught the reader to need the answer, it makes the wanting the subject.” **Does not:** “The ending is ambiguous, which makes the reader think.”

*Row B — Evidence and Commentary (0–4).* This task marks **sustained** reasoning, so a single insight repeated cannot reach 4. The strongest responses build: how the work manufactures the expectation, what it does to keep the expectation alive, what the last available piece of evidence is, and why supplying an answer would have cost the work something specific. Each stage needs its own textual evidence. An essay that argues the ending is meaningful and repeats that claim with three examples caps at 3, however well written.

*Row C — Sophistication (1).* This is the row the task exists to teach, and it is rarely earned by decoration. It is earned by **complexity that survives**: reading the withholding against the possibility that it is a failure of nerve, and showing from the text why it is not; or situating the ending in a broader context the work has been building. A closing flourish about how “literature reflects life’s uncertainty” is the classic non-earning move.