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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

Unit 3 Skills Guide: Methods of Development and Commentary (Skills 3.C, 4.C, 5.B, 5.C, 6.B, 6.C, 7.B, 8.B)

This guide teaches how writers qualify claims, organize a text for unity and coherence, choose methods of development, connect ideas with transitions, and build sentences whose clauses show how ideas relate. Study the concepts, work the two examples, try the practice set, and check the Answer Key.

How to use this guide

Unit 3 is about **how a text is built**. In Unit 2 you traced a line of reasoning; here you ask what organizing patterns and sentence structures carry that line. Every skill in this unit has a reading side and a writing side, and the exam tests both: in the Reading sets you explain how a published passage is organized and developed; in the Writing sets you fix a student draft; in the essays you do it yourself.

Several skills here will return in later units. Qualification (3.C and 4.C) is the heart of Unit 7 and Unit 9, and clause structure (7.B and 8.B) is the heart of Unit 4 and Unit 7. Treat this guide as a first pass.

The skills in this unit, in plain English

SKILL	WHAT THE CED SAYS (PARAPHRASED)	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
3.C (Reading)	Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.	Notice how a writer limits or refines a claim so it is easier to defend, and say what that limiting does for the argument.
4.C (Writing)	Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.	Make your own claims precise and defensible by limiting them, and acknowledge other views without losing your position.

SKILL	WHAT THE CED SAYS (PARAPHRASED)	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
5.B (Reading)	Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.	Explain how the arrangement of parts holds the text together and moves the reader along.
5.C (Reading)	Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.	Name the method (narration, comparison, definition, cause and effect, and so on) and explain why that method suits the purpose.
6.B (Writing)	Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.	Use words, phrases, and sentences that show how one idea relates to the next.
6.C (Writing)	Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.	Choose the pattern (example, comparison, cause and effect, and so on) that best proves the point at hand.
7.B (Reading)	Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.	Read sentences for what their structure says: which idea is main, which is supporting, which is contrasted.
8.B (Writing)	Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.	Combine and arrange clauses so the relationships among your ideas are clear.

Key concepts and definitions

Qualifying claims (3.C and 4.C)

To **qualify** a claim is to limit or refine it so that it is more precise and more defensible. A writer who says “Social media harms teenagers” can be refuted by any counterexample. A writer who says “Heavy use of image-based social media appears to harm some teenagers’ sleep and self-image” is harder to defeat, and the claim is more honest.

The CED names three ways to qualify:

METHOD	WHAT IT DOES	EXAMPLE
Modifiers	Words or phrases that limit scope, frequency, or certainty.	<i>often, usually, in some cases, tends to, largely, perhaps, may, one of the main reasons</i>
Counterarguments	Acknowledges an opposing claim and responds (by conceding part, or by refuting).	“Critics say the plan costs too much. That is true in the first year, but...”

METHOD	WHAT IT DOES	EXAMPLE
Alternative perspectives	Recognizes that other people or groups would view the issue differently.	"For commuters the change is a convenience; for residents of the street it is a burden."

Distinguish three moves:

- **Concession:** granting that an opposing point has some validity. ("Admittedly, the lanes cost money.")
- **Rebuttal (or refutation):** responding to the opposing point and showing why your claim still stands. ("But the cost is smaller than the cost of the injuries the lanes prevent.")
- **Qualification:** limiting your own claim so it fits the evidence. ("Protected lanes make streets safer *where traffic speeds are moderate.*")

A common test question asks you to identify what a writer's concession *does*: it usually builds credibility with skeptical readers and lets the writer pivot to a stronger claim ("Though..., nevertheless..."). Writers use qualification to be **honest about limits**, not to hedge everything. Over-qualified writing ("maybe sort of possibly") is a flaw, just as an absolute claim is.

The Chief Reader Reports warn against two errors: **token counterarguments** (a one-sentence objection dismissed with no real engagement) and **formulaic counterargument paragraphs** bolted onto the essay. Qualification works best when built into the line of reasoning.

Organization, unity, and coherence (5.B)

- **Unity** means every part of the text contributes to the central idea. A paragraph that wanders off-topic breaks unity.
- **Coherence** means the parts connect so the reader can follow. Coherence comes from order, repeated key terms, pronoun reference, and transitions.

Common organizing patterns:

PATTERN	DESCRIPTION
Chronological	Events or steps in time order.
Spatial	Arranged by physical position.
Order of importance	Least to most important (building to a climax) or most to least.
Problem to solution	Define a problem, then propose a response.
Claim, counterclaim, resolution	State a position, consider the opposition, resolve.
General to specific or specific to general	Move from a principle to examples, or from examples to a principle.

When you explain organization on the exam, name the pattern **and** its effect. "The writer moves from a personal anecdote to national statistics, which first draws the audience in emotionally and then shows that the experience is not isolated." That is more than "the writer moves from the personal to the general."

Methods of development (5.C and 6.C)

A **method of development** is the pattern a writer uses to elaborate an idea in a paragraph or a whole text. The same topic can be developed differently depending on purpose.

METHOD	WHAT IT DOES	TYPICALLY USED TO
Narration	Tells a story or sequence of events.	Make an idea concrete, create emotional connection, illustrate a principle.
Description	Presents sensory or concrete detail.	Put the reader in a scene, establish mood.
Exemplification (examples)	Offers specific instances.	Prove a general claim, clarify an abstraction.
Definition	Explains what a term means (sometimes by contrast).	Fix a key term so the argument cannot slip.
Comparison and contrast	Shows similarities or differences.	Clarify the unfamiliar by the familiar, or evaluate two options.
Analogy	Extended comparison between unlike things.	Explain a complex idea or persuade by parallel.
Cause and effect	Explains why something happens or what follows.	Argue about origins or consequences.
Process analysis	Explains how something happens or is done, step by step.	Instruct or clarify.
Classification and division	Sorts into categories, or breaks into parts.	Make a large subject manageable.
Problem and solution	Diagnoses and proposes a remedy.	Argue for action.

On the exam, a method of development is rarely an end in itself; the question is **why this method here**. A narrative opening in a speech develops a human stake before the abstract argument; a definition in an argument about “freedom” blocks equivocation; a comparison to a familiar institution (a hospital, a household) makes a policy easy to grasp.

Transitions (6.B)

Transitions show how ideas relate. They work at three levels: words and phrases within sentences, sentences that open paragraphs, and the order of ideas itself.

RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES
Addition	additionally, furthermore, moreover, in the same way
Contrast	however, but, yet, on the other hand, by contrast, nevertheless
Concession	admittedly, granted, although, even so

RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES
Cause and effect	therefore, consequently, as a result, because, thus
Example	for instance, for example, to illustrate, specifically
Elaboration	in other words, that is, in fact
Sequence	first, next, then, finally, subsequently
Conclusion	ultimately, in short, in the end

A transition is correct only if the **relationship is real**. Writing “therefore” between two sentences that do not follow logically is worse than no transition. On Writing questions, the right transition is the one whose relationship matches how the two sentences actually relate: if the second sentence limits the first, choose a concession or contrast word, not an additive one.

The strongest transitions are often **ideas**, not words: a topic sentence that picks up a term from the previous paragraph and moves it forward (“This silence, however, was not neutral...”).

Clauses and sentence structure (7.B and 8.B)

An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence (subject plus verb, complete thought). A **dependent clause** has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone; it begins with a subordinating word (*although, because, when, if, who, which, that*).

SENTENCE TYPE	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
Simple	One independent clause	“The council voted.”
Compound	Two or more independent clauses (joined by a coordinating conjunction or semicolon)	“The council voted, and the room fell silent.”
Complex	One independent plus one or more dependent clauses	“When the council voted, the room fell silent.”
Compound-complex	Two or more independent plus at least one dependent clause	“When the council voted, the room fell silent, and the mayor left.”

Why this matters for argument: **coordination** (equal weight) and **subordination** (unequal weight) tell the reader which idea matters most. Compare:

- “The plan is expensive, and it will save lives.” (Two equal ideas; no relationship stated.)
- “Although the plan is expensive, it will save lives.” (The cost is granted but subordinated; the lives are the main point.)
- “The plan will save lives, although it is expensive.” (Now the cost gets slightly more weight by position.)

Placement also matters. The beginning and end of a sentence carry emphasis. A **periodic sentence** holds its main idea until the end (suspense, emphasis); a **loose (cumulative) sentence** states the main idea first and adds detail after (natural, informative).

Modifier placement can create errors. A **dangling modifier** has no clear noun to modify ("Walking to school, the rain began" suggests the rain walked). A **misplaced modifier** sits too far from what it modifies ("She served sandwiches to the guests on paper plates").

For 8.B, the aim is **clarity**: combine short, choppy sentences by subordinating the less important ideas, split sentences that bury the main point, and make sure each sentence's structure matches the relationship you mean.

Worked example, reading side: an original passage on method of development

The following passage was written for this guide, in the style of a magazine essay. It is original, not a historical text.

1. When my grandmother arrived in the city in 1952, she carried a single suitcase and the address of a cousin who no longer lived there. (2) For three nights she slept in a train-station waiting room, folding her coat into a pillow, until a night watchman, noticing her, wrote down a name on a scrap of paper and sent her across town to a boarding house run by a widow. (3) That scrap, which she kept in a recipe tin for fifty years, is the reason I am a citizen of this place at all.
2. We like to say that cities are built by buildings. They are not. A city is a set of introductions. (5) Consider what a boarding house is: a machine for turning strangers into neighbors. A hospital turns the sick into the well; a school turns the ignorant into the learned; a boarding house turns the unconnected into the connected. (6) Most of what we call opportunity is only this, the knowledge of whom to ask.
3. That is why the closing of small gathering places, the lunch counters, the barber shops, the church basements, should concern anyone who cares about newcomers. (8) These places did not look like programs. Nobody funded them to help immigrants. (9) Yet they did, usually, more reliably than the programs that followed, because they let strangers meet without anyone declaring that they needed help. (10) A city that loses them may still have a library and a job center. It will have lost its introductions.

Step 1: Identify the thesis and organization

Thesis (implied in 4 and 7): Cities function by connecting strangers, and the small informal places that make such connections are worth preserving.

Organization: The passage moves from narrative (¶1) to definition and analogy (¶2) to cause and effect plus argument (¶3). It is organized **specific to general**: a single story leads to a principle, which leads to an argument about public policy.

Step 2: Name the methods and their purpose (5.C)

PARAGRAPH	METHOD	WHAT IT DOES FOR THE PURPOSE
1	Narration (the grandmother's arrival)	Puts a face on an abstraction; establishes the writer's personal stake and credibility; makes the audience care about "newcomers" before any argument is made. Sentence 3 turns the story into evidence: the scrap of paper literally decided where the writer lives.
2	Definition ("A city is a set of introductions") and analogy (a boarding house as "a machine"; the parallel with hospital and school)	The definition redefines the key term "city" on the writer's terms. The three-part parallel ("turns the sick into the well...") frames a boarding house as an institution as legitimate as a hospital, which raises the value of informal places.
3	Cause and effect and argument	Explains why informal places work ("because they let strangers meet without anyone declaring that they needed help") and what follows from losing them.

Step 3: Analyze qualification (3.C)

Look at the modifiers: "usually" in sentence 9 ("Yet they did, usually, more reliably") and "Most of what we call opportunity" in sentence 6. The writer does not say always or all. The qualifier makes the claim defensible: any skeptic who knows of an informal place that failed cannot refute "usually." Sentence 10 also uses a **concession**: "A city that loses them *may still have* a library and a job center." The writer grants that other institutions exist, then pivots ("It will have lost its introductions") to the claim that matters most.

Step 4: Analyze clause structure (7.B)

Take sentence 5: "A hospital turns the sick into the well; a school turns the ignorant into the learned; a boarding house turns the unconnected into the connected." This is a **compound sentence** with three parallel independent clauses joined by semicolons. Parallel structure signals that the three institutions belong in the same category. The third clause is the point, but its identical form hides its novelty until the reader sees what is being compared.

Take sentence 9: "Yet they did, usually, more reliably than the programs that followed, because they let strangers meet without anyone declaring that they needed help." The independent clause ("they did") carries the claim; the dependent clause beginning with *because* carries the reason and sits at the end, where emphasis lands. The structure says: the explanation is the heart of the argument.

Step 5: Organization, unity, and coherence (5.B)

Coherence comes from the repeated key term (**introductions**, introduced in ¶12, returned to in the last sentence) and from the pronoun **“That”** in sentence 7, which refers back to the whole idea of the previous paragraph. Unity: even the narrative in ¶11 is not decoration; it sets up the thesis. The final sentence (“It will have lost its introductions”) closes the loop by returning to the central metaphor.

Worked example, writing side: revising a draft for qualification, transitions, and clarity

The following is an original student paragraph, numbered by sentence, for an argument essay on whether schools should ban cell phones.

Draft 1

1. Cell phones should be banned in schools. (2) They distract students. (3) Students check their phones during class. (4) Some students use phones to look up answers in class. (5) Teachers lose time telling students to put phones away. (6) Phones are also useful in emergencies. (7) Parents want to reach their children. (8) Schools should ban phones.

Diagnosis

PROBLEM	SKILL	WHERE
Absolute claim, easy to refute (“banned,” no limits)	4.C	Sentence 1
Counterpoint appears (6–7) but is dropped with no response	4.C	Sentences 6–8
No transitions; sentences read as a list	6.B	Entire paragraph
Choppy, same-length sentences; no subordination	8.B	2–5
Evidence is general	4.A (Unit 1)	3–5
Only one method of development (assertion)	6.C	Entire paragraph

Revision

Schools should restrict cell phones during instructional time, with an exception for emergencies, because phones in classrooms cost more learning than they provide. Although some parents worry about being unable to reach their children, schools already have front-office phone lines, and a policy that holds phones in lockers until the final bell would still allow a call in a genuine emergency. By contrast, the daily cost of an unrestricted policy is certain: in a typical class period, a teacher who must stop twice to ask for

phones to be put away loses several minutes of instruction, and students who glance at a notification take longer to return to their work than the glance itself lasted. Therefore, a restriction during class, not a total ban, protects instruction while answering the one legitimate concern that critics raise.

What changed

SKILL	REVISION
Qualification (4.C)	"Restrict... during instructional time, with an exception for emergencies" replaces "banned." The modifier "typical" and the word "several" limit the evidence's reach.
Counterargument and concession (3.C/4.C)	The parent concern is stated fairly, conceded as legitimate ("the one legitimate concern"), then answered with a specific alternative (front-office line; lockers).
Transitions (6.B)	<i>Although</i> (concession), <i>By contrast</i> (contrast), <i>Therefore</i> (conclusion). Each matches the real relationship.
Clarity and subordination (8.B)	Short sentences combined; the key reason follows <i>because</i> ; the main point sits in the independent clause.
Methods of development (6.C)	Cause and effect (distraction costs instruction), problem and solution (restriction instead of ban), and a brief comparison (certain cost vs. rare emergencies).

Note the thesis changed: "Schools should restrict... because phones in classrooms cost more learning than they provide" is now defensible, narrow, and previews its reasoning.

How this shows up on the multiple-choice section

Skill categories 3 and 5 (reading) and 4 and 6 (writing) carry 11–16 percent of the section each; category 7 and 8 add a further 11–14 percent each. Unit 3 skills therefore appear in several kinds of items.

Typical stems:

- "In the third paragraph the writer qualifies the claim made in the second paragraph by..." (3.C)
- "The writer's concession in the sentence beginning '...' functions to..." (3.C)
- "The writer wants to qualify the claim in sentence 4 so that it is more defensible. Which version is best?" (4.C)
- "The writer wants to address a counterargument in the third paragraph. Which sentence would best accomplish this?" (4.C)
- "The function of the fourth paragraph in the passage as a whole is to..." (5.B)
- "The organization of the passage is best described as moving from..." (5.B)
- "The writer develops the passage primarily through which method of development?" (5.C)
- "The writer wants to add a transition at the beginning of sentence 10 to clarify the relationship between sentences 9 and 10. Which of the following best accomplishes this?" (6.B)

- "The writer wants to develop the second paragraph using a comparison. Which of the following would best accomplish this?" (6.C)
- "The dependent clause that opens the sentence primarily serves to..." (7.B)
- "The writer wants to combine sentences 6 and 7 to clarify the relationship between the ideas. Which is best?" (8.B)

Sample MCQ set

Passage for Questions 1–2. *Original passage written for this guide.*

1. Critics of the new recycling rule point out that sorting waste costs households time. (2) That is true, and a household that sorts carefully may spend an additional ten minutes a week. (3) But a rule that reduces what the city must bury or burn also reduces what every household pays in disposal fees. (4) Over a year, the typical family saves more in lower fees than it spends in time valued at even a modest wage. (5) The rule, in short, is a bargain that asks households to pay in minutes and returns the payment in dollars.

1. The writer's statement in sentence 2 ("That is true...") primarily functions to
 - A. refute the critics by showing that the time cost is exaggerated
 - B. concede the validity of an opposing point in order to answer it from a position of credibility
 - C. introduce evidence that the rule is unpopular with households
 - D. suggest that the writer is uncertain about the rule's benefits
2. The sentence "But a rule that reduces what the city must bury or burn also reduces what every household pays in disposal fees" (sentence 3) accomplishes which of the following?
 - A. It develops the passage by narration, recounting how the rule was passed.
 - B. It uses cause and effect to turn the critics' concern into an argument for the rule.
 - C. It defines the term "disposal fees" for readers who may not know it.
 - D. It qualifies the writer's earlier claim by adding a modifier.

Draft for Question 3. *Original student draft.*

1. The library extended its hours in March. (2) ____ Visits to the library rose by nearly a fifth over the following three months.

3. Which transition, inserted at the beginning of sentence 2, best clarifies the relationship between sentences 1 and 2?
 - A. However,
 - B. For example,
 - C. As a result,
 - D. In contrast,

Answers are in the Answer Key.

How to attack Unit 3 MCQ items

1. **For concession questions**, look for the pivot word (*but, yet, however, still*) after the concession. The concession's job is to set up what comes after.
2. **For organization questions**, label each paragraph with a verb ("introduces," "complicates," "answers," "applies"). The correct answer matches your labels.
3. **For method-of-development questions**, confirm the method actually appears. Distractors name a method (narration, comparison) that the passage does not use.
4. **For transition questions**, state the relationship between the two sentences in your own words first (cause, contrast, example), then pick the transition that matches.
5. **For clause questions**, ask which idea is in the independent clause. That is the idea the writer treats as main.
6. **For combining questions**, the best version uses subordination that matches the logic and keeps all key information.

How this shows up on the free-response questions

Rhetorical analysis (FRQ 2)

Methods of development and organization are some of the best "choices" to analyze. Describe the move, not the label: "She opens with a short story of her first day of school, then widens to a statistic about enrollment, which lets the audience feel the problem before measuring it." Chief Reader Reports reward essays that track shifts chronologically through the speech. Sentence-level choices count too: a short declarative sentence after three long ones, or a parallel series building to a final item. Tie each choice to purpose, and avoid naming a syntactic device without showing it in the text; unsupported claims about "polysyndeton" or "asyndeton" hurt credibility.

Argument (FRQ 3)

Use methods of development deliberately: define a key abstraction, give an example, compare, trace consequences. Qualify your thesis so it is defensible ("to a large extent, but only when...") and build the opposing view into the line of reasoning. Transition with ideas, not just words.

Synthesis (FRQ 1)

Qualification is your friend: the sources disagree, so a precise thesis ("Rewilding programs are worthwhile in cities where..., but not when...") is more defensible than a sweeping one. Transitions that put sources in conversation ("While Source A emphasizes cost, Source C shows why the cost may be worth bearing") demonstrate a line of reasoning.

Rubric links

RUBRIC ROW	UNIT 3 SKILLS AT WORK
Row A (Thesis)	A qualified thesis is easier to defend and still counts as a position.

RUBRIC ROW	UNIT 3 SKILLS AT WORK
Row B (Evidence and Commentary)	A clear line of reasoning requires organization and transitions. Methods of development choose the right evidence type for each claim.
Row C (Sophistication)	Exploring tensions, qualifying with purpose, and situating the claim in a broader context are routes to the point. Token counterarguments are not.

Practice exercises

Complete on paper. Answers are in the Answer Key.

Exercise 1: Qualify the claim (4.C)

Rewrite each claim with a modifier or limiting phrase so it is more defensible. Do not change the topic.

- "Video games make students violent."
- "Everyone benefits from a college degree."
- "Homework never helps."

Exercise 2: Concession and rebuttal (3.C/4.C)

For the claim "Cities should ban cars from downtown," write a two-sentence move: a concession to a reasonable objection, then a rebuttal that keeps your position.

Exercise 3: Name the method (5.C)

Identify the main method of development in each excerpt (original) and explain in one sentence why it fits the likely purpose.

- "In 1969, the town had one traffic light. By 1989 it had nine. Today it has forty, and the main road takes twenty minutes to cross at five o'clock."
- "Democracy is like a group project: everyone gets a say, nothing is efficient, and the people who show up end up doing more of the work."
- "By 'fair,' I mean something narrower than 'equal': a rule is fair when the people it affects could have predicted it."
- "The ice melts. The meltwater darkens the surface. The darker surface absorbs more heat. More ice melts."

Exercise 4: Choose the transition (6.B)

Choose the best transition for each blank, and state the relationship in one word.

- The museum raised its prices. _____ attendance fell by a quarter.
- Many people think the lake is safe to swim in. _____ the water-quality report shows high bacteria counts after rain.
- The new bus route serves the hospital. _____ it serves the college and the shopping center.

Options: *Consequently*, / *However*, / *Moreover*, / *For example*,

Exercise 5: Explain the organization (5.B)

Original paragraph.

I used to think a good map was one that showed everything. Then I tried to use one. The map of my university campus showed every tree, every bench, every drinking fountain, and I could not find the library. A good map, I now think, is defined less by what it includes than by what it leaves out.

- a. What is the organizing pattern? (b) What does the last sentence do for coherence? (c) What method of development does the writer use before the thesis, and why?

Exercise 6: Clause analysis (7.B)

For each sentence, label the structure (simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex), and state which idea the writer treats as main.

- a. "Although the committee praised the design, it rejected the budget."
b. "The design was praised, but the budget was rejected."
c. "The committee, which had met for six weeks, rejected a budget that it had earlier praised."

Exercise 7: Combine and clarify (8.B)

Combine each set of sentences into one clear sentence that makes the relationship among the ideas explicit.

- a. "The river flooded. The town had no warning. The sirens were broken."
b. "Sarah wanted to join the team. She was worried about practice times. Her job started at four."

Exercise 8: Revise a dangling modifier (8.B)

Fix each sentence.

- a. "Walking down the hall, the lockers seemed to stretch on forever."
b. "She served the cake to the guests with strawberries."

Exercise 9: Revise for qualification, transitions, and clarity

Revise the following paragraph so that it has a qualified claim, a fair concession with a rebuttal, at least two transitions, and combined sentences. Keep it to about 100 words.

Zoos are cruel. Animals live in cages. Zoos say they help save species. Some species have been saved. Zoos should be closed.

Common misconceptions

MISCONCEPTION	WHY IT IS WRONG	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
"Qualifying a claim means being wishy-washy."	Qualification makes a claim precise and defensible. A qualified claim still takes a stand.	Limit scope (when, where, for whom), not commitment.

MISCONCEPTION	WHY IT IS WRONG	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
"A counterargument paragraph proves complexity."	A bolted-on paragraph that dismisses an objection in one sentence earns nothing for sophistication.	Build engagement with other views into the line of reasoning.
"Concession weakens the argument."	A well-chosen concession builds credibility and sets up the stronger point.	Concede what is true, then pivot with a contrast word.
"Transitions are words like <i>however</i> and <i>therefore</i> ."	They are also ideas, topic sentences, and repeated terms.	Pick up a key term from the last paragraph in the first sentence of the next.
"Any transition is better than none."	A transition that states the wrong relationship misleads the reader.	Identify the actual relationship first, then choose the word.
"Naming the method of development is the answer."	The exam asks why the method serves the purpose.	Always add the effect: "narration, in order to..."
"Long sentences show sophistication."	Complexity must serve clarity.	Ask what relationship each clause shows.
"Short sentences are always weak."	A short sentence after long ones can emphasize or conclude.	Vary sentence length for a reason, and name the reason.
"Dependent clauses are less important."	They carry reasons, concessions, and conditions that often shape the argument.	Read each dependent clause for the relationship it sets up.

Quick reference: Unit 3 checklist

QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
Where does the writer limit or qualify a claim, and with what word or move?	_____
Where is there a concession, and what does the writer pivot to?	_____
How is the text organized, and what is the effect?	_____
What methods of development appear, and why those?	_____
Which transitions (or transitional ideas) connect the paragraphs?	_____
Which sentence uses subordination to rank ideas?	_____
In my own writing, is each transition's relationship real?	_____

Answer Key

Sample MCQ set

1. **(B).** The writer grants the critics' point ("That is true") and then pivots with "But" in sentence 3. (A) is wrong because the writer accepts rather than refutes the time cost. (C) gives the passage evidence it does not offer. (D) mistakes concession for uncertainty.
2. **(B).** Sentence 3 argues that reducing waste (cause) reduces fees (effect), turning the cost objection into support. (A) no narration appears. (C) no definition is given. (D) The sentence does not add a modifier to an earlier claim; it answers an objection.
3. **(C).** The longer hours (cause) led to higher visits (effect). (A) and (D) signal contrast, which does not exist. (B) signals an example; sentence 2 is a result, not an instance.

Exercise 1 (model answers)

- a. "Playing violent video games may increase aggression in some players, at least in the short term." (b) "A college degree tends to improve earnings and job security for most graduates, though not for all." (c) "Homework that repeats what students have already mastered rarely helps."

Exercise 2 (model)

"Admittedly, downtown merchants fear that drivers will shop elsewhere. But cities that have closed central streets have often seen foot traffic rise, and a ban with delivery windows for businesses would protect merchants while still clearing the streets."

Exercise 3

- a. Chronological sequence with comparison (past vs. present): shows growth and congestion over time, to argue the town has outgrown its planning. (b) Analogy: explains an abstract system through a familiar experience, to make a critical but humorous point. (c) Definition: narrows a key term so the argument can't slide between meanings of "fair." (d) Process / cause and effect (feedback loop): shows how a change accelerates itself, to convey urgency.

Exercise 4

- a. *Consequently*, (cause and effect). (b) *However*, (contrast). (c) *Moreover*, (addition). *For example*, does not fit any blank: none of the second sentences is an instance of the first.

Exercise 5

- a. Narrative leading to a claim (personal experience to principle), with a reversal ("I used to think... Then"). (b) It returns to the opening idea ("a good map") and reverses it, closing the loop and making the thesis a direct answer to the first sentence. (c) Narration/anecdote of the failed map: it lets the reader experience the problem before the claim, making the thesis feel earned.

Exercise 6

- a. Complex. Main idea: the committee rejected the budget (the praise is subordinated). (b) Compound. Both ideas get equal weight. (c) Complex (independent clause with two dependent clauses, one relative "which

had met for six weeks" and one "that it had earlier praised"). Main idea: the committee rejected a budget, with the hint of inconsistency carried by the final clause.

Exercise 7 (model)

- a. "Because the sirens were broken, the town had no warning when the river flooded." (b) "Although Sarah wanted to join the team, she worried about practice times because her job started at four."

Exercise 8

- a. "Walking down the hall, I thought the lockers seemed to stretch on forever." (b) "She served the guests cake with strawberries." (or "She served the cake with strawberries to the guests.")

Exercise 9 (model)

Zoos raise a serious ethical problem: keeping wide-ranging animals in enclosures can cause stress and abnormal behavior. Defenders point out that accredited zoos have helped save some species from extinction, and that claim deserves weight. However, those successes are limited to a small number of species, and most animals in zoos are not part of a recovery program. Therefore, zoos should be phased out except where they run genuine conservation programs, not closed all at once.

Check: qualified claim (phased out except...), concession ("deserves weight") with rebuttal ("limited to a small number"), transitions (However, Therefore), combined sentences.

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