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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

Units 5-6 Skills Guide: Line of Reasoning, Transitions, Qualification, and Sophistication

This guide covers the skills the CED emphasizes in Units 5 and 6: building and judging a line of reasoning (5.A, 6.A), unity, coherence, and transitions (5.B, 6.B), tone and style (7.A, 8.A), and, in Unit 6, working with sources, judging credibility and bias, and revising a thesis after research (3.A, 4.A, 3.B, 4.B). It then turns these into the habits that earn the sophistication point. Read the concepts, study the two worked examples, do the practice set, and check the Answer Key.

How to use this guide

Units 1-4 gave you the parts: claims, evidence, commentary, thesis, methods of development, tone, and syntax. Units 5 and 6 are about **assembly and judgment**. In Unit 5 (CED: argument essay focus) you learn to make the parts cohere into a line of reasoning a skeptical reader can follow. In Unit 6 (CED: synthesis focus) you learn to bring in other people's words as sources, judge them, and use them to refine your own position.

These two units contain most of what separates a 4 from a 5 on the exam. The Chief Reader Reports for 2023, 2024, and 2025 name the same recurring weaknesses: lines of reasoning that are lists, commentary that restates, sources that sit side by side without talking to each other, and "sophistication" attempts that are really just sweeping statements.

Skills at a glance

SKILL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHERE IT APPEARS IN THIS GUIDE
5.A	Describe a line of reasoning and judge whether it supports the thesis.	Line of reasoning section; Worked example 1
6.A	Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.	Worked example 2; practice exercises
5.B	Explain how organization creates unity and coherence.	Coherence section

SKILL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHERE IT APPEARS IN THIS GUIDE
6.B	Use transitions to guide the reader through the line of reasoning.	Transitions section
7.A / 8.A	Explain / use word choice, comparisons, and syntax to convey tone.	Tone for argument section
3.A / 4.A	Identify claims and evidence; write a paragraph with a claim and evidence.	Sources and synthesis section
3.B / 4.B	Identify / write a thesis; revise it as your thinking develops.	Thesis revision section
Row C	Sophistication (complexity, implications, rhetorical choices, vivid style).	Sophistication section

Key concepts and definitions

What a line of reasoning is, and what it is not

A **line of reasoning** is the sequence of claims by which a writer moves from a thesis to a conclusion, with each claim depending on, developing, or complicating the last. The test is simple: **cover the topic sentences and shuffle the paragraphs. If nothing breaks, you do not have a line of reasoning.**

LIST	LINE OF REASONING
Three parallel reasons, each tied to one example	Each claim builds on the one before
"First... Second... Third..." with no dependence	"Because of that, then..." / "That raises a harder question..."
Paragraphs interchangeable	Paragraphs in a fixed order
Reader finishes knowing what the writer thinks	Reader finishes knowing why the writer thinks it and what follows

Ways to build dependence between paragraphs:

1. **Definition then application.** Paragraph 1 defines a key term; paragraph 2 applies it to the case.
2. **Cause then consequence then response.** Each paragraph takes the previous one's conclusion as its premise.
3. **Complication.** Paragraph 2 raises a limit to paragraph 1; paragraph 3 resolves it by refining the claim.
4. **Escalation.** Each paragraph raises the stakes: individual, community, society.
5. **Chronology of a text.** (Rhetorical analysis) each paragraph covers a stretch of the speech, tracking how purpose and tone shift.

A useful drafting device is the **"which means" chain**: write your claims so each can be connected to the next by "which means" or "so" or "but then." If you cannot, the connection is missing.

Evaluating a line of reasoning (5.A)

When you read an argument, ask four questions.

1. **Does each step follow from the last?** Look for leaps.
2. **What does each step assume (warrant)?** Name the unstated belief.
3. **Is the evidence sufficient, relevant, and representative?** One example for a general claim is thin; evidence about one thing used for another is irrelevant.
4. **Does the conclusion go further than the steps justify?** Overreach is the most common flaw.

Common reasoning flaws (these also appear in MCQ items and in strong Q3 essays):

FLAW	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Hasty generalization	Too little evidence for a broad claim	"I know two students who dropped out, so college is a scam."
Post hoc	Assuming sequence means cause	"Crime fell after the new mayor arrived, so the mayor reduced crime."
False dilemma	Only two options offered when more exist	"Either we ban cars or we accept gridlock."
Slippery slope	Claiming a small step inevitably leads to extreme result	"If we allow one exception, the whole law collapses."
Straw man	Distorting an opposing view to refute it	"Critics want to let children do whatever they please."
Ad hominem	Attacking the person instead of the argument	"She's a professor; what does she know about real life?"
Appeal to authority (false)	Citing an authority outside their field	"A famous actor says the vaccine is dangerous."
Circular reasoning	The conclusion is used as a premise	"It's wrong because it's illegal, and it's illegal because it's wrong."
Equivocation	Shifting a word's meaning mid-argument	"Free speech is free, so it should cost nothing."
Correlation vs. causation	Two things move together; no evidence that one causes the other	"Cities with more ice cream shops have more drownings."

Name the flaw, but more importantly state **where the chain breaks and what it would take to repair it**.

Coherence and unity (5.B)

- **Unity** means every sentence serves the paragraph's claim, and every paragraph serves the thesis.
- **Coherence** means the reader can follow: ideas are ordered logically and the connections are visible.

Coherence tools:

TOOL	HOW IT WORKS
Repeated key terms	A term from the thesis returns in topic sentences, so the reader senses one argument.
Echo transitions	The first sentence of a paragraph picks up an idea from the end of the last.
Pronoun and demonstrative reference	"This tension," "that choice," "such reasoning" point back.
Parallel structure	Similar form signals similar function.
Signposting	Short announcements ("The harder objection is...") that tell the reader where they are.
Consistent point of view and tense	Literary present for analysis; consistent person.

Transitions (6.B), at four scales

SCALE	EXAMPLE
Within a sentence	<i>although, because, so that, while, whereas</i>
Between sentences	<i>however, therefore, in contrast, for instance</i>
Between paragraphs	A first sentence such as "Yet this reasoning has a cost the first paragraph ignored."
Across the essay	The return in the conclusion to an image or term from the introduction.

A good transition names the **relationship** (contrast, cause, concession, elaboration, escalation) and is true to the logic. The most useful transitions at the paragraph level are not single words but **bridging sentences** that restate the previous paragraph's conclusion in a clause and then turn: "If libraries are a form of public infrastructure, as the previous paragraph argued, then the question is not whether the town can afford them but who it expects to pay."

Transition relationship bank:

RELATIONSHIP	WORDS AND PHRASES
Addition	moreover, furthermore, in addition, equally important
Contrast	but, yet, however, by contrast, on the other hand, whereas
Concession	admittedly, granted, to be sure, although, even so
Cause	because, since, due to, owing to
Effect	therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, hence
Example	for instance, for example, specifically, in particular
Elaboration	in other words, that is, put differently
Sequence	first, then, next, subsequently, finally

RELATIONSHIP	WORDS AND PHRASES
Emphasis	indeed, in fact, above all
Conclusion	ultimately, in short, taken together

Tone for argument (7.A and 8.A)

Tone must fit the rhetorical situation. A tone mismatch (sarcasm toward the people you are trying to persuade; stiff jargon to a general audience) weakens the argument. Strong argumentative writing is usually **measured but confident**: precise verbs, concrete nouns, minimal intensifiers, no insults. Tone can shift deliberately within an essay: a respectful concession followed by a firm rebuttal.

Qualification and concession (building on Unit 3)

Qualification limits a claim to what the evidence supports. A well-qualified thesis often uses a **concessive structure**: "Although [limited truth in opposing view], [claim] because [reason]." Concession is more than politeness; it shows you have considered the view, which readers (and the rubric) reward when the concession is engaged with, not dismissed.

Sources, credibility, and bias (Unit 6)

Synthesis asks you to **use sources to develop your own position**, not to summarize them. For each source, ask:

QUESTION	WHY IT MATTERS
Who wrote or produced it, and what credentials or interests do they have?	Credibility and possible bias.
Who is the audience and purpose?	A trade-group brochure and a peer-reviewed study have different aims.
What type of source is it? (news report, opinion, government document, academic study, chart, cartoon, photograph)	Determines what it can prove.
What is its claim and evidence?	You cannot use a source without understanding its argument.
How current and specific is it?	Dated or vague data weakens a case.
How does it relate to the other sources?	The key synthesis question: agree, extend, complicate, contradict.

For **quantitative sources** (graphs, tables), translate the data into a plain sentence: what is measured, what changes, and what it does and does not show. For **visual sources** (cartoons, photographs), use the OPTIC steps: Overview, Parts, Title/text, Interrelationships, Conclusion.

Bias is not disqualifying. An advocacy group's data may still be accurate; the point is to notice what the source has reason to emphasize and to say so ("Source C, published by an industry association, emphasizes savings; Source E, a city audit, includes costs that C leaves out").

Citing sources. In the exam you may cite by letter ("Source B") or by author or description. Integrate the source into your own sentence rather than dropping a quote in. Specific references beat vague bundles like "as seen in Sources B, C, and E."

Putting sources in conversation. Sentence frames from the Chief Reader Reports and teacher resources:

- "While Source A emphasizes , **Source B reveals** ."
- "Source D develops this argument further by ____."
- "Although Source C may oppose this position, it also concedes ____."
- "Source E offers a slightly different perspective: ____."

Revising a thesis after research (3.B and 4.B)

A first thesis written before you have read the sources (or thought about the prompt) is a hypothesis. After reading, ask: *Does my thesis still fit what I found? What did the sources complicate?* A good revision usually narrows or qualifies:

FIRST THESIS	AFTER READING	REVISED THESIS
"Napping is good for you."	Sources show benefits for short naps but harms for long ones and for people with sleep disorders.	"Short, scheduled naps improve alertness for most healthy adults, but their value depends on length and timing, so workplaces should offer them as an option rather than a norm."

Sophistication (Row C), made practical

The rubric awards one point for sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation, shown by **any** of:

1. **A nuanced argument**, consistently identifying and exploring complexities or tensions (across sources, or within the passage in FRQ 2).
2. **Articulating implications or limitations** by situating the argument in a broader context.
3. **Rhetorical choices that consistently strengthen the argument's force and impact.**
4. **A consistently vivid and persuasive style.**

The rubric also lists what does **not** earn the point: sweeping generalizations offered as context ("Throughout history, humans have..."), only hinting at other arguments, token counterarguments, examining individual choices without relating them to one another (FRQ 2), oversimplifying complexities, and ornate language that does not enhance the argument. Sophistication must be **part of the argument**, not a single phrase.

Practical moves, with a model sentence for each:

MOVE	WHAT IT DOES	MODEL SENTENCE
Define the key term with a distinction	Prevents a binary; shows control.	"Being present is not the same as being passive: the first is a discipline of attention, the second an absence of it."

MOVE	WHAT IT DOES	MODEL SENTENCE
Name a tension and explore it	Treats the topic as contested.	"Optimism that never meets pessimism is not hope but denial."
Layered ("this and that")	Holds two truths.	"The speech comforts the grieving and, in the same breath, assigns them work."
Contradictory ("this, but also that")	Shows a complication.	"She appeals to unity while quietly distinguishing those who belong from those who do not."
Paradoxical ("this, in spite of that")	Shows apparent contradiction.	"Her humility is what gives her authority."
Limit or implication	Shows where the claim stops.	"The argument holds for cities with dense transit, which suggests it says less about rural towns."
Relate choices to each other (FRQ 2)	Shows the speech is a designed whole.	"The opening anecdote makes the final statistic feel personal, which is why the statistic can then carry a demand."

Sophistication is earned **on top of** strong Row B work. Saying "this is complex" is not complexity. Do not chase it at the expense of a clear thesis and well-explained evidence.

Worked example, reading side: tracing and evaluating a line of reasoning

The following is an original editorial written for this guide, in the style of a newspaper column about a proposed ban on single-use plastic bags.

1. The city's plan to ban plastic bags has drawn the usual applause and the usual groans. (2) Both reactions miss what is interesting about it. (3) The ban will not save the oceans; plastic bags make up a small share of the waste that reaches them. (4) What the ban can do is something smaller and more durable: change what a trip to the store feels like. (5) A shopper who must remember a bag is a shopper who, for a moment, notices what she is carrying out of the store.
2. That noticing matters because most environmental harm is invisible to the person causing it. (7) The packaging disappears into the trash, the trash disappears into a truck, and the truck disappears from the street. (8) Behavioral researchers who study small frictions in daily life find that a minor inconvenience, repeated, can shift habits more reliably than a lecture or a fine. (9) A bag fee in one large city, for example, reduced bag use by well over half within a year, even though the fee was only a few cents.
3. Skeptics respond that people will simply buy thicker reusable bags and throw those away. (11) Some will. (12) But that objection argues for a better-designed rule, not for none: a minimum reuse requirement and a modest fee would address it. (13) The goal of the ban is not to solve plastic

pollution. (14) It is to teach a city to notice, and a city that notices is easier to ask for more.

Step 1: Thesis and structure signals (3.B)

Thesis: The ban's real value is not environmental cleanup but changing habits by making consumption visible (sentences 3-4); a city that learns to notice is easier to ask for more (14). The introduction (sentences 1-2) sets up a reframing; sentence 4 states the pivot: "What the ban can do is something smaller and more durable."

Step 2: Trace the line of reasoning (5.A)

STEP	CLAIM	LINK TO PREVIOUS
1	Both cheering and groaning miss the point.	Sets up a reframing.
2	The ban won't save the oceans (concession).	Concedes the critics' strongest point to clear ground.
3	It can change how shopping <i>feels</i> (thesis).	Pivot: "What the ban can do..."
4	Noticing matters because environmental harm is invisible.	Explains why the pivot is important (cause).
5	Small frictions change habits (evidence: researchers; bag fee example).	Supports step 4 with evidence.
6	Objection: thicker bags. Response: improve the rule.	Anticipates the strongest objection.
7	The goal is to teach a city to notice.	Returns to the thesis; adds the implication ("easier to ask for more").

Step 3: Evaluate (5.A)

Strengths. The concession in sentence 3 buys credibility. The chain is real: the claim about *noticing* (step 3) is needed to understand why invisible harm matters (step 4), which is needed to justify the friction evidence (step 5). The objection in step 6 is engaged with and converted into support for a refined policy rather than dismissed.

Weaknesses and unstated warrants. The argument assumes that a changed shopping habit **generalizes** into other environmental behavior ("easier to ask for more"). That is a warrant, not proved. The evidence (a bag fee reduced bag use) supports the narrower claim that fees change *bag* behavior, not the broader claim that cities become more receptive. The phrase "well over half" is also general: no source is named. An AP reader would say the reasoning is sound through step 5 and leaps at step 7. One piece of evidence that would repair it: a study of whether communities with bag fees later adopted other environmental measures more readily.

Step 4: Tone and word choice (7.A)

The tone is **wry and measured**. “The usual applause and the usual groans” treats both camps with mild irony. “Small and more durable” uses understatement to claim a modest but lasting goal. The verb “notice” repeats (sentences 5, 6, 14), becoming a key term that provides coherence: the word moves from a shopper’s experience to a civic habit. The effect is to make a policy argument feel observational rather than preachy, which suits a skeptical newspaper audience.

Step 5: Sophistication moves in the passage (Row C analysis)

The writer explores a **tension**: a policy can be inadequate to its stated goal and still be worthwhile for a different reason. That is a nuanced argument rather than a binary (good or bad). It also states an implication (a city trained to notice) and acknowledges a limit (the ban does not solve pollution).

Worked example, writing side: building an argument with sources

Task (original, in the style of FRQ 1): *Several sources discuss whether school districts should adopt a four-day school week. Write an essay that develops a position on the factors districts should consider most important before adopting it.*

The following are original source summaries written for this guide; they are fictional and for practice only.

- **Source A** (district budget report): A rural district reports saving about 2 percent of its budget in the first year after moving to four days.
- **Source B** (a teachers’ union survey): 61 percent of teachers in four-day districts say they would not return to a five-day week; 28 percent report longer workdays on class days.
- **Source C** (a graph from a state education agency): Average reading scores in districts that adopted a four-day week were flat in the two years after adoption, while math scores fell slightly in the first year and partly recovered in the second.
- **Source D** (a newspaper opinion piece by a working parent): The off day creates child-care costs that fall hardest on low-income families.

Step 1: First thesis (before synthesis)

“A four-day school week has benefits and drawbacks, and districts should consider both.” This is not a position (Row A: 0).

Step 2: Look for tensions among the sources

- A reports savings; D shows those savings may shift costs to families.
- B shows teacher satisfaction; C shows no academic gain, and a possible short-term math loss.
- B’s survey is by a union (interest: teacher working conditions); A is by a district (interest: budget); D is an opinion (interest: parents). Each source emphasizes what its author has reason to care about.

Step 3: Revised thesis

“Districts should weigh the four-day week less by its savings than by who bears the hidden costs: the modest budget gains reported in Source A and the teacher satisfaction in Source B must be set against the child-care burdens in Source D and the stalled academic results in Source C, so adoption makes sense only where districts

can fund off-day care and monitor achievement.”

This is defensible, qualified (only where...), and previews a structure: savings, hidden costs, results.

Step 4: Plan a line of reasoning

PARAGRAPH	CLAIM	SOURCES	WHY THIS ORDER
1	The savings that drive adoption are real but small.	A	Establishes the appeal; sets up the question: is it worth it?
2	The savings are partly shifted, not eliminated: they move to families, unevenly.	D, with A	Complicates paragraph 1: who pays?
3	The educational payoff does not offset those hidden costs; teacher satisfaction does not equal student benefit.	B, C	Brings in the evidence that would justify the shift, and finds it thin.
4	Therefore, adoption is justified only where the district can fund off-day care and track outcomes.	A, C, D	Resolution: refines the thesis into a condition.

Step 5: A body paragraph with commentary and source conversation

The savings that make the four-day week attractive are real but modest, and they are not the whole ledger. Source A, a rural district’s own budget report, credits the schedule with a 2 percent saving in its first year, a figure a board under pressure will welcome. But Source D, a working parent’s account, shows where part of that money goes: the extra day at home costs a family in child care or lost wages, and low-income families, who have the least flexibility, pay the most. The district’s saving, in other words, is partly a transfer. A budget report, written by the party that benefits from the saving, is the least likely to list that transfer, which is why a board that reads only Source A would be deciding with half the evidence.

What this paragraph does

FEATURE	WHERE
Claim as a topic sentence that advances the line of reasoning	First sentence
Specific evidence, attributed	“Source A... 2 percent”; “Source D... child care”
Source in conversation with another source	“But Source D... shows where part of that money goes”
Commentary that says something new	“The district’s saving... is partly a transfer”
Attention to source credibility/bias	“written by the party that benefits”

FEATURE	WHERE
Link to the thesis (the hidden costs)	Final sentence
Tone	Measured, precise, slightly dry ("half the evidence")

How this shows up on the multiple-choice section

Typical stems for these skills:

- "Which of the following best describes the line of reasoning the writer develops across paragraphs 2-4?" (5.A)
- "The writer's discussion of ___ in paragraph 3 is connected to the thesis in paragraph 1 by..." (5.A)
- "The function of the fourth paragraph in the passage as a whole is to..." (5.B)
- "The writer's shift in the fifth paragraph from narration to analysis serves to..." (5.B)
- "Which of the following sentences, if placed after sentence 5, would best provide commentary explaining how the evidence supports the claim?" (6.A)
- "The writer wants to add a transition at the beginning of sentence 10 to clarify the relationship between sentences 9 and 10." (6.B)
- "The writer wants to improve the logical sequence of the third paragraph. Where should sentence 14 be placed?" (6.A/6.B)
- "The writer wants to add a topic sentence to the fourth paragraph that connects it to the line of reasoning." (6.A)
- "The writer is considering deleting sentence 8. Should the writer keep or delete it?" (6.A, unity)
- "Which of the following pieces of evidence, if added after sentence 11, would most effectively support the writer's claim about...?" (4.A)

Sample MCQ set

Passage for Questions 1-2. *Original passage.*

1. Many assume that the way to attract young people to a small town is to build things for them: a skate park, a coffee shop, a festival. (2) These projects are pleasant, and some succeed. (3) But young people who leave small towns rarely cite a missing skate park. (4) They cite the absence of jobs that pay enough to rent an apartment. (5) A town that wants to keep its young people should therefore begin with employers, and let the coffee shop follow the paycheck.

1. Which of the following best describes the line of reasoning of the passage?

- A. It lists several amenities and ranks them by cost.
- B. It presents a common assumption, concedes its partial merit, identifies a different cause of the problem, and draws a conclusion about where to begin.
- C. It tells a story of one town's decline and uses it as proof that all small towns will fail.
- D. It argues that young people should be asked what they want before towns spend money.

2. Sentence 2 ("These projects are pleasant, and some succeed") primarily serves to

- A. show that the writer favors building amenities
- B. concede a limited truth so that sentence 3 can redirect the argument
- C. provide a statistic that supports the writer's thesis
- D. introduce a new topic that is developed in the rest of the passage

Draft for Question 3. *Original student draft.*

1. Our school's recycling program collects bottles and cans from the cafeteria each day. (2) Last year it kept roughly four tons of material out of the landfill. (3) _____ (4) Therefore, the program is worth expanding to the classrooms.

3. Which sentence, placed at position (3), best provides commentary that connects the evidence in sentence 2 to the claim in sentence 4?

- A. Recycling has been practiced in many countries for decades.
- B. That much material from one cafeteria alone suggests that the classrooms, which produce paper in even larger quantities, could add a substantial amount.
- C. The cafeteria staff is very supportive of the program.
- D. Some students do not take recycling seriously.

Answers are in the Answer Key.

How to attack these MCQ items

- 1. **Label each paragraph with a verb** ("states," "concedes," "redirects," "applies") before reading the choices.
- 2. **For "function of a sentence" questions**, ask what the paragraph would lose if the sentence were removed.
- 3. **For transitions**, name the relationship in your own words before reading the options.
- 4. **For commentary items**, the answer explains how or why. It does not add a new fact, restate the claim, or change the subject.
- 5. **For delete-or-keep items**, keep a sentence only if it supports the paragraph's claim; the reason given in the answer must also be true of the sentence.
- 6. **For logical-sequence items**, look for pronouns and transitions that depend on earlier sentences ("This," "However").

How this shows up on the free-response questions

Synthesis (FRQ 1)

This is the Unit 6 essay. The rubric requires specific evidence from at least three sources (Row B). The Chief Reader Reports say the highest-scoring responses (a) put sources in conversation, (b) explain how each source supports the line of reasoning, and (c) are not organized source by source. Warning signs: "Source A says...; Source B says...; Source C says..."; vague bundling ("Sources B, C, and E show"); quotations followed by paraphrase; and ignoring part of the prompt (for example, arguing about preservation in general when the prompt asks about preservation *laws*).

Timing suggestion: during the 15-minute reading period, annotate each source's stance in one phrase and note what each source's author has reason to emphasize; draft a thesis before writing. Aim for three or four sources, deeply used, rather than all six.

Argument (FRQ 3)

This is the Unit 5 essay. A strong response (a) defines the abstract key term, (b) takes a qualified position, (c) develops claims in an order that builds, and (d) uses evidence from history, literature, current events, observation, or experience, always explaining how the example bears on the abstract claim. Avoid binary framing and formulaic counterargument paragraphs (2025 Chief Reader Report); build complexity into the line of reasoning.

Rhetorical analysis (FRQ 2)

A chronological line of reasoning works well: each body paragraph covers a stretch of the text and claims what the writer does there, with the claims building toward a final understanding of how the whole is designed. For Row C, relate the choices to each other and explain the function of any tension in the passage.

Rubric summary for these skills

ROW	WHAT EARNS IT	WHAT BLOCKS IT
A (0-1)	A defensible thesis responding to the prompt	Restating the prompt; listing sides; stating a fact
B (0-4)	Specific evidence in a line of reasoning, with consistent commentary	General evidence; commentary that summarizes; no line of reasoning; mechanics that interfere with communication
C (0-1)	Nuance, implications, or consistently effective rhetorical choices, as part of the argument	Sweeping generalizations; token counterarguments; ornate language

Practice exercises

Complete on paper. Answers are in the Answer Key.

Exercise 1: List or line? (6.A)

Each set below is a body-paragraph plan for an essay. Label each as a LIST or a LINE of reasoning and, for any list, rewrite it as a line.

- Thesis: Social media harms teenagers. P1: It harms sleep. P2: It harms self-esteem. P3: It harms grades.
- Thesis: Cities should plant more trees. P1: Define "urban heat island" and show which neighborhoods suffer. P2: Show that trees lower temperatures in those neighborhoods. P3: Argue that the cost is justified by savings in emergency health care.

Exercise 2: Find the flaw (5.A)

Name the reasoning flaw and state how it could be repaired.

- a. "Since the school adopted uniforms, test scores rose. Uniforms improve learning."
- b. "Either we raise taxes or we lose every public service."
- c. "My uncle smoked for fifty years and lived to ninety, so smoking is not dangerous."
- d. "The mayor wants to cut the bus line, which proves that he hates the poor."

Exercise 3: Name the warrant (5.A)

State the unstated warrant for each argument.

- a. "The town should build a new library because children's reading scores are low."
- b. "The speaker is credible because she is a physician."

Exercise 4: Write the bridge (6.B)

Write a bridging first sentence for the next paragraph in each case.

- a. Paragraph 1 argued that sleep is essential to learning. Paragraph 2 will argue that school start times prevent adequate sleep.
- b. Paragraph 1 argued that remote work saves commuting time. Paragraph 2 will argue that it weakens mentoring of new employees.

Exercise 5: Source analysis (Unit 6)

Original source summaries.

- **Source 1** (press release from a coffee-industry trade group): "Coffee drinkers are 20 percent less likely to report fatigue at work."
 - **Source 2** (a peer-reviewed review of sleep studies): Caffeine improves alertness short term but can reduce sleep quality when consumed within six hours of bedtime.
 - **Source 3** (a chart): Average hours of sleep among workers who report daily coffee use have declined slightly since 2010.
- a. For each source, state who benefits from the claim. (b) Write one sentence that puts Sources 2 and 3 in conversation. (c) Write one sentence about the credibility of Source 1.

Exercise 6: Revise the thesis (4.B)

A student wrote this thesis before reading the sources: "Space exploration is important." After reading sources that show benefits (technology, inspiration), costs (public funding while other needs go unmet), and risks (debris), write a revised thesis that takes a defensible, qualified position and previews a line of reasoning.

Exercise 7: Tone fix (8.A)

Rewrite the following sentence for a skeptical school-board audience, keeping the argument but changing the tone: "Anyone who opposes later start times clearly doesn't care about kids."

Exercise 8: Sophistication moves

For each prompt-response fragment, say which sophistication move is being used (define with a distinction, name a tension, state a limit or implication, relate choices) and whether it would earn the point on its own.

- a. "Throughout history, people have debated the value of perfection."
- b. "Striving for perfection is valuable only when it is distinguished from perfectionism, which values the appearance of flawlessness over the work itself."
- c. "Obama's quiet, almost conversational opening makes the later formal language of the dedication feel earned rather than imposed."
- d. "This is a complex issue with many sides."

Exercise 9: Write the paragraph

Using the four-day school week sources summarized above (A-D), write a 120-170 word body paragraph that puts **Source B and Source C** in conversation, includes a sentence of commentary that says something new, and notes the source's credibility or bias.

Exercise 10: Full plan

Prompt (original, FRQ 3 style): *A writer recently claimed, "The best way to understand a place is to leave it."* Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which the claim is valid. Write: (a) a defensible, qualified thesis; (b) a four-paragraph line-of-reasoning plan with a "which means" link between each paragraph; (c) the sophistication move you will use and where.

Common misconceptions

MISCONCEPTION	WHY IT IS WRONG	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
"Three body paragraphs on three reasons is a line of reasoning."	It is a list unless the paragraphs depend on each other.	Test by shuffling. Rebuild with "which means" links.
"A counterargument paragraph proves sophistication."	The Chief Reader warns against formulaic counterargument paragraphs and token objections.	Work complexity into the reasoning.
"Sophistication is fancy vocabulary."	The rubric excludes ornate language that does not enhance the argument.	Use precise, vivid language and genuine nuance.
"Saying 'this is complex' shows complexity."	It names it without exploring it.	Explore a specific tension.
"Synthesis means using as many sources as possible."	Row B requires at least three, used well.	Use three or four in depth.
"Each source belongs in its own paragraph."	That produces a source-by-source structure, which the Chief Reader criticizes.	Organize by claim; bring two or more sources into each paragraph.
"A biased source is useless."	Biased sources can supply accurate data.	Identify the bias and note what the source has reason to emphasize.
"Quote, then say 'this shows that...'"	If the words after "shows that" restate the quote, it is still summary.	Add the why or how that the quote does not say.

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"A transition word creates logic."	If the relationship is false, the transition misleads.	Identify the actual relationship first.

Quick reference: Units 5-6 checklist

QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
If I shuffle my paragraphs, does the essay break?	_____
What is the "which means" link between paragraphs 1 and 2?	_____
What does each paragraph assume (warrant)?	_____
Have I put at least two sources in conversation in a paragraph?	_____
What does each source's author have reason to emphasize?	_____
Where is my one deliberate move toward complexity, and is it part of the argument?	_____
Does my last paragraph say what follows, not merely what was said?	_____

Answer Key

Sample MCQ set

- 1. (B).** The passage opens with a common assumption (sentence 1), concedes partial merit (2), redirects to a different cause (3-4), and concludes with where to begin (5). (A) no ranking by cost. (C) no story of decline. (D) the passage does not argue for asking young people.
- 2. (B).** The concession ("some succeed") makes the writer appear fair, and "But" in sentence 3 redirects. (A) misreads the concession as favor. (C) No statistic is given. (D) The sentence does not introduce a topic that is developed.
- 3. (B).** It explains how the evidence supports the claim: the amount from one cafeteria suggests more from classrooms. (A) is background. (C) and (D) do not connect evidence to the claim.

Exercise 1

- LIST: the three harms could be shuffled. Rebuilt: P1: Define the harm as loss of attention and rest, showing how sleep disruption is the entry point. P2: Show that loss of sleep makes self-esteem and mood more fragile. P3: Show that both together explain grade declines. Each paragraph builds on the previous. (b) LINE: definition, then effect, then justification.

Exercise 2

- a. Post hoc / correlation vs. causation; repair by controlling for other changes (new curriculum, new teachers) or citing studies with comparison groups. (b) False dilemma; repair by acknowledging other options (reallocating funds, user fees). (c) Hasty generalization (one case); repair by citing population-level data. (d) Ad hominem / unsupported motive; repair by addressing the actual reasons for the cut and their consequences.

Exercise 3

- a. Warrant: libraries improve children's reading. (b) Warrant: physicians are experts on the topic being discussed (credibility transfers from medicine to this subject).

Exercise 4 (model)

- a. "If sleep is essential to learning, then the question for schools is whether their schedules allow students to get it, and the answer, for most teenagers, is no." (b) "The time that remote workers save on the road, however, is not free; it is paid for in a loss that is harder to count, the informal guidance that new employees once absorbed simply by sitting nearby."

Exercise 5 (model)

- a. Source 1: coffee-industry trade group (sales). Source 2: researchers/publishers (scientific reputation, accuracy). Source 3: agency or organization that compiled the data (accurate reporting, though interests may vary). (b) "While Source 2 shows that caffeine improves short-term alertness, Source 3's slight decline in sleep among daily coffee users suggests that the alertness may come at the expense of the rest that sustains it." (c) "Source 1, issued by a trade group whose members profit from coffee sales, has reason to emphasize benefits and gives no information about method or sample, so its 20 percent figure should be treated as promotional rather than as independent evidence."

Exercise 6 (model)

"Space exploration is worth public funding when it produces technologies and knowledge that can be applied on Earth, but its value is conditional: the benefits in Sources A and B justify continued investment only if agencies address the debris risks in Source D and weigh the costs against other public needs."

Exercise 7 (model)

"Some board members worry that later start times will disrupt after-school schedules; those concerns are reasonable, but the research on adolescent sleep suggests that students' health and learning may benefit enough to justify finding solutions."

Exercise 8

- a. None; a sweeping generalization. Would not earn the point. (b) Define with a distinction. Could contribute to the point if the distinction organizes the argument. (c) Relate choices to each other (FRQ 2). Could contribute if sustained. (d) None; names complexity without exploring it. Would not earn the point.

Exercise 9 (model)

The appeal of the four-day week to teachers is easy to see, but it is a weaker argument for adoption than it appears. Source B, a teachers' union survey, reports that 61 percent of teachers in four-day districts would not go back, a figure that reflects the union's interest in working conditions as well as classroom experience. Source C, a state agency's graph, supplies what the survey cannot: flat reading scores and a small, partly recovered drop in math after adoption. Taken together, they show that a schedule can be popular with the adults who work in it without producing gains for the students it is meant to serve. A board that treated teacher satisfaction as evidence of educational benefit would be mistaking one kind of success for another.

Exercise 10 (model)

- a. "Leaving a place can reveal what its residents cannot see, but distance only sharpens understanding for those who return with questions; so the claim is valid to the extent that leaving is a way of seeing, not a substitute for knowing." (b) P1: Define "understand" as seeing patterns that familiarity hides. → which means → P2: Leaving gives contrast that makes the unnoticed visible (example: someone who notices a town's quiet only after living in a city). → which means → P3: But contrast without knowledge can produce caricature (example: the returning visitor who judges a place by one visit), so distance needs depth. → which means → P4: The best understanding comes from a cycle of leaving and returning, which implies that those who never leave and those who never return each see only half. (c) Define with a distinction (P1) and state a limit/implication (P3-P4).

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