



AP English Language and Composition

Giáo trình luyện thi chuyên sâu

Song ngữ Anh-Việt

8020 ENGLISH

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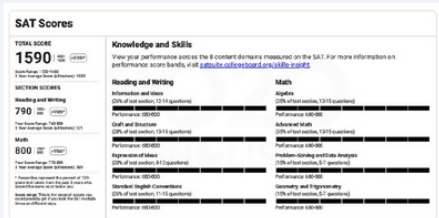
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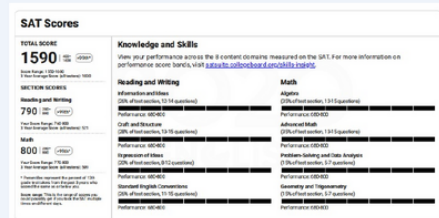
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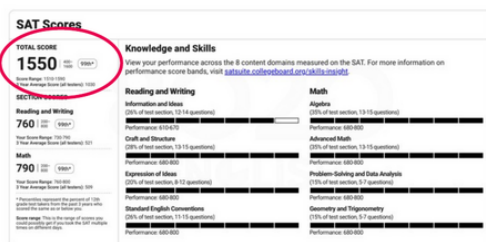
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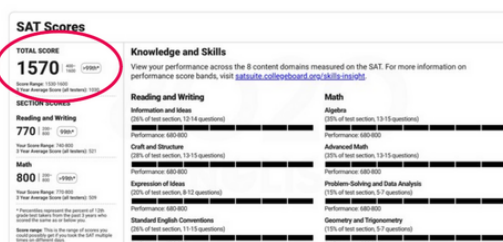


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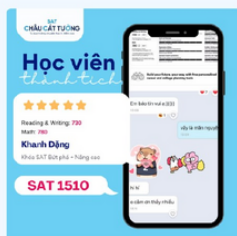
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SAT Năng cao



Bé Lê Tâm Anh

SAT Bứt phá + Năng cao Cam kết 140++ => Bứt phá kết quả 1530

KHÁNH ĐĂNG – SAT 1510

"SAT Bứt phá + Năng cao cam kết 140++ → 1510"

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"SAT Năng cao → 1520"

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The Rhetorical Situation

Mục tiêu Unit: Định nghĩa tu từ học (rhetoric) và mô hình tình huống tu từ (rhetorical situation) của Bitzer; khung SOAPSTone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone) phân tích chi tiết từng thành tố; tam giác tu từ và ba phương thức thuyết phục ethos–logos–pathos cùng các tiểu loại của chúng; khái niệm exigence, kairos, và constraints; phân tích đối tượng độc giả (audience analysis) và các quy ước thể loại (genre conventions) — nền tảng bắt buộc để phân tích bất kỳ văn bản phi hư cấu nào trong AP English Language.

1.1 What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is the art of using language effectively and persuasively. Aristotle defined it as “the faculty of observing, in any given case, the available means of persuasion” — in other words, rhetoric is not a trick or an ornament added to communication after the fact; it is the deliberate set of choices a writer or speaker makes about words, structure, and evidence in order to move a specific audience toward a specific end. AP English Language and Composition is built entirely around this idea: every nonfiction text you will read on the exam — a speech, an editorial, a memoir excerpt, an advertisement, an open letter, a court opinion, a eulogy — is the product of hundreds of deliberate choices, and your job as a reader is to reconstruct *why* those choices were made and *what effect* they were built to produce.

This chapter builds the toolkit you will use in every later chapter: a vocabulary and a method for describing *who* is speaking, *to whom*, *why*, *about what*, *in what circumstances*, and *with what attitude*. Every multiple-choice passage and every free-response prompt in this course assumes you can answer these questions quickly and precisely.

Rhetoric, defined

Rhetoric is the art of using language — spoken, written, or visual — to inform, persuade, or motivate a particular audience in a particular situation. It is a study of *effective communication*, not of decoration; a plain, unadorned sentence can be as rhetorically powerful as an elaborate one if it is the right choice for its audience and purpose.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

Tu từ học (rhetoric) là nghệ thuật sử dụng ngôn ngữ để thuyết phục hoặc tác động đến một đối tượng cụ thể trong một hoàn cảnh cụ thể. Đây không phải là “nói cho hoa mỹ” — một câu văn giản dị vẫn có thể rất “tu từ” nếu nó là lựa chọn đúng đắn cho đúng đối tượng và đúng mục đích. Cả môn AP English Language xoay quanh một câu hỏi trung tâm: *tác giả đã chọn viết như thế nào, và lựa chọn đó phục vụ mục đích gì?*

1.2 The rhetorical situation

In 1968, the rhetorician Lloyd Bitzer proposed that no text is written in a vacuum: every text is a response *called into being* by a specific situation. Bitzer identified three components that define any **rhetorical situation**: **exigence**, **audience**, and **constraints**. Understanding this triad is the single most

efficient way to begin analyzing an unfamiliar passage, because it forces you to ask not just “what does this text say?” but “what problem made this text necessary, who can act on that problem, and what limited the writer’s choices?”

Bitzer’s rhetorical situation

- **Exigence** — an urgent problem, need, or imperfection that can be at least partly resolved through discourse. Not every problem is an exigence: a problem that language cannot address (a hurricane in progress) is not rhetorical; a problem that persuasion *can* change (public apathy about hurricane preparedness) is.
- **Audience** — the people capable of being influenced by the discourse and of acting to modify the exigence. A rhetorical audience must have the power to act, not merely the ability to listen.
- **Constraints** — the people, events, objects, beliefs, and conventions that limit the decisions and actions needed to modify the exigence, including the speaker’s own credibility, the audience’s existing beliefs, time and space limits, and the norms of the genre or medium.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Theo Bitzer, một văn bản luôn ra đời để đáp lại một **tình huống** cụ thể, gồm ba yếu tố: **Exigence** (vấn đề cấp thiết cần được giải quyết *bằng ngôn từ* — ví dụ: sự thờ ơ của công chúng có thể thay đổi bằng lời nói, nhưng một cơn bão đang diễn ra thì không); **Audience** (đối tượng có *khả năng hành động* để giải quyết vấn đề đó, không chỉ là người nghe thụ động); và **Constraints** (những giới hạn — niềm tin có sẵn của người nghe, quy ước thể loại, thời lượng, phương tiện truyền tải — định hình cách người nói có thể lập luận).

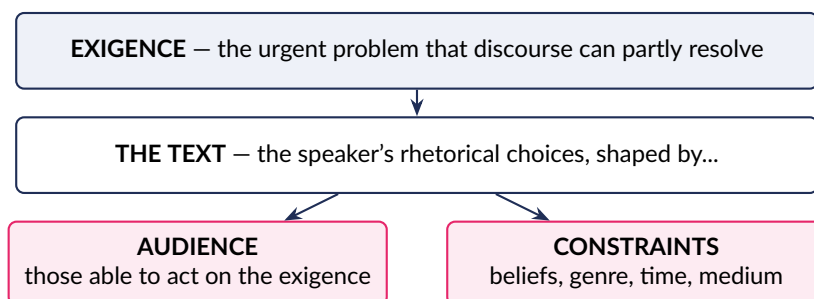


Figure 1.1: Bitzer’s rhetorical situation: a text is a response to an exigence, shaped for a capable audience under real constraints.

1.2.1 Exigence versus a merely interesting topic

A common error is treating any topic mentioned in a passage as the exigence. Exigence is specifically the *urgent, discourse-solvable problem* that makes the text necessary *now*. A history teacher’s lecture about the Dust Bowl has a topic (the Dust Bowl) but its exigence might be a school-board vote next week on cutting environmental science electives — the lecture exists to influence that vote, not merely to inform.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not confuse the *subject* of a passage with its *exigence*. Ask: “What specific, timely problem made the writer feel they had to speak *right now*?” If a question gives you a choice that only restates the topic, it is testing whether you can tell the difference.

1.3 SOAPSTone: a fast diagnostic

While Bitzer's triad explains *why* a text exists, the classroom mnemonic **SOAPSTone** gives you a fast, six-part checklist for describing *what* that situation looks like on the page. Work through it in order every time you open a new passage; the whole process should take under a minute once practiced.

SOAPSTone

- **Speaker** — the persona or voice adopted in the text. This is not always the historical author: a senator may write “as a parent,” a company may write “as a neighbor,” a novelist may write in the voice of a fictional narrator.
- **Occasion** — the specific event, moment, or trigger that calls the text into being (the immediate occasion) as well as the broader historical/cultural moment (the larger occasion).
- **Audience** — the particular reader(s) or listener(s) the speaker imagines and directly addresses; may include a primary audience and one or more secondary audiences.
- **Purpose** — the goal of the text: to persuade, to inform, to eulogize, to warn, to inspire action, to apologize, to celebrate.
- **Subject** — the topic, distilled into a short phrase.
- **Tone** — the speaker's attitude toward the subject, conveyed mainly through diction and syntax (covered fully in Chapter 4).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN SOAPSTone là khung 6 câu hỏi giúp em “định vị” một văn bản trước khi phân tích sâu: **Ai nói** (Speaker) — **Trong hoàn cảnh nào** (Occasion) — **Nói với ai** (Audience) — **Để làm gì** (Purpose) — **Về vấn đề gì** (Subject) — **Với thái độ ra sao** (Tone). Lưu ý: Speaker (người nói) có thể chỉ là một “vai” (persona) mà tác giả thật tạo ra, không nhất thiết là chính con người tác giả ngoài đời.

1.3.1 Speaker: persona versus person

Every text has a historical author, but the **speaker** is the persona that author constructs for a specific occasion. A journalist writing a wedding announcement adopts a warmer, more informal persona than the same journalist writing a front-page investigation, even though both texts share an author. Exam questions often test whether you can identify the speaker's implied identity, credentials, or stance from internal clues (word choice, claimed experience, point of view) rather than from any external biographical knowledge.

Identifying the speaker from internal clues

“I have spent every summer of my adult life on a lobster boat, and I can tell you what the water temperature charts cannot: the traps that used to fill in three days now take eight.”

Nothing here names the speaker's profession outright, yet the internal clues — “every summer of my adult life,” “a lobster boat,” the confident correction of what “water temperature charts cannot” show — construct a speaker whose authority comes from decades of direct, physical experience rather than from a credential or title. The speaker's persona is a practitioner, not a scientist, and this shapes an ethos of hands-on, lived expertise.

1.3.2 Occasion: immediate versus larger occasion

Distinguish the **immediate occasion** (the specific event that triggers the text — a funeral, a court ruling, a viral news story) from the **larger occasion** (the broader historical, cultural, or political moment in which that event is embedded). A eulogy's immediate occasion is a particular death; its larger

occasion might be a national reckoning with a public-health crisis that the deceased spent their life fighting.

1.3.3 Audience: primary, secondary, and hypothetical

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Primary audience** — the people the speaker directly addresses and most wants to move to belief or action (e.g., “members of this council”).
- **Secondary audience** — others who will encounter the text (reporters, the general public, future readers) even though they are not directly addressed; savvy speakers often shape language with this audience in mind too.
- **Hypothetical / universal audience** — an idealized, reasonable audience a writer appeals to when making a claim meant to hold up under scrutiny regardless of the immediate crowd’s reaction.

Audiences can also be classified by their starting disposition: **sympathetic** (already agrees), **hostile** (opposed), or **neutral/undecided** (the audience most argumentative writing is actually built to move).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Một bài phát biểu trước hội đồng thành phố có **primary audience** là các thành viên hội đồng (người có quyền biểu quyết), nhưng người nói vẫn chọn từ ngữ phù hợp với **secondary audience** là báo chí và công chúng đang theo dõi. Khi đề hỏi “đối tượng của bài viết là ai”, hãy luôn hỏi thêm: đối tượng đó đang **đồng tình, phản đối, hay trung lập** với vấn đề — vì điều này quyết định chiến lược lập luận nào phù hợp.

1.3.4 Purpose: a taxonomy

Purpose is what the writer wants the text to *do* to the reader, not merely what the text is about. AP passages draw on a recurring set of purposes:

Purpose	Typical signal	Tiếng Việt
To persuade	explicit call to believe or act; counterarguments addressed	Thuyết phục
To inform / explain	neutral tone, emphasis on clarity and completeness	Cung cấp thông tin
To eulogize / commemorate	focus on legacy, shared loss, values embodied by a person	Tưởng niệm / ca ngợi
To warn	emphasis on risk, urgency, consequence of inaction	Cảnh báo
To inspire / mobilize	emotional appeal + explicit call to collective action	Truyền cảm hứng / kêu gọi hành động
To apologize / atone	acknowledgment of harm, responsibility, and a stated remedy	Xin lỗi / nhận trách nhiệm
To entertain / satirize	exaggeration, irony, humor used to critique indirectly	Giải trí / châm biếm
To celebrate	focus on achievement, gratitude, shared identity	Ăn mừng / tôn vinh

1.3.5 Purpose versus subject: the common trap

Students frequently confuse *subject* (what the text is about) with *purpose* (what the text is trying to do to the reader). “Climate change” is a subject; “to persuade city residents to support a composting

ordinance” is a purpose. On the multiple-choice section, an answer choice that only restates the subject is almost always a trap when the question asks for purpose.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Naming the topic is not the same as naming the goal. If a question asks for the *primary purpose* of a passage, eliminate any choice that merely repeats what the passage is about without saying what effect the writer wants to produce in the reader.

1.4 The rhetorical triangle and the three appeals

Classical rhetoric models every communicative act as a triangle connecting the **Speaker**, the **Audience**, and the **Subject**. Each side of the triangle corresponds to one of Aristotle’s three appeals: **ethos** (credibility/trust between speaker and audience), **logos** (the speaker’s reasoning about the subject), and **pathos** (the audience’s emotional response to the subject). No effective argument relies on only one appeal; strong writers blend all three, adjusting the proportion to fit the audience and occasion.

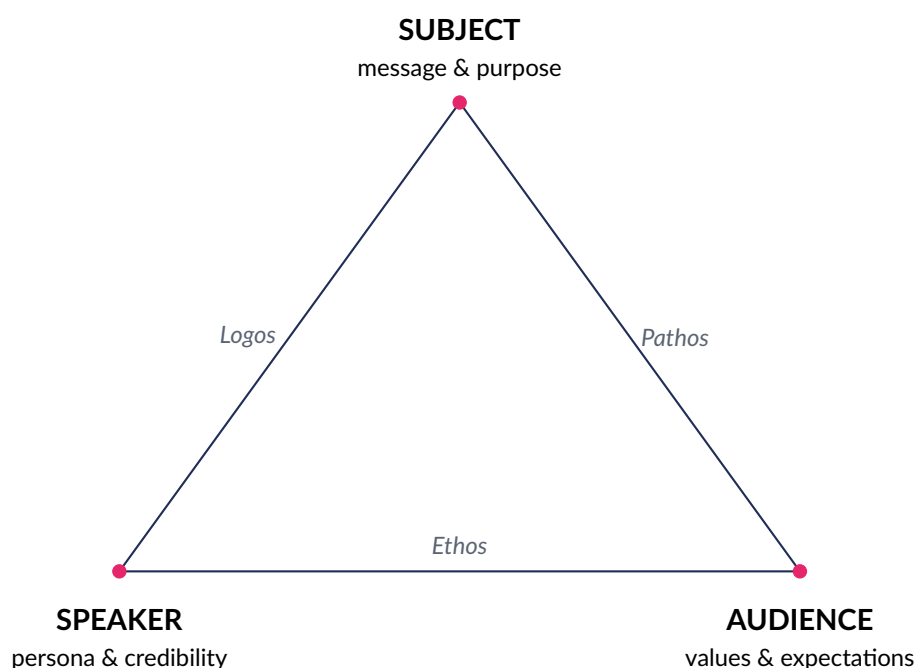


Figure 1.2: The rhetorical triangle: *Ethos* links Speaker and Audience (credibility/trust), *Logos* links Speaker and Subject (reasoning about the topic), *Pathos* links Audience and Subject (emotional response to the topic).

Ethos — credibility, built through expertise, shared values, fairness, or restraint. **Logos** — logical appeal, built through evidence, reasoning, statistics, and structure. **Pathos** — emotional appeal, built through vivid imagery, anecdote, and connotative diction. Strong arguments rarely use only one appeal; they blend appeals to fit the audience.

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Ba phương thức thuyết phục: **Ethos** (uy tín/độ tin cậy của người nói), **Logos** (lý lẽ, số liệu, lập luận logic), **Pathos** (cảm xúc của người nghe). Đề thi AP thường hỏi “phương thức nào chiếm ưu thế” trong một đoạn — em cần chỉ ra **bằng chứng cụ thể** (từ ngữ, số liệu, câu chuyện) chứ không chỉ gọi tên phương thức.

1.4.1 Three routes to ethos

Aristotle further divided credibility into three components, all of which remain useful analytic categories today.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Phronesis** (practical wisdom) — the speaker demonstrates competent, sound judgment (citing relevant experience, showing awareness of complexity).
- **Arete** (virtue) — the speaker demonstrates good character and honest motives (acknowledging inconvenient facts, admitting uncertainty, avoiding self-interest).
- **Eunoia** (goodwill) — the speaker demonstrates that they have the audience's own interests at heart, not merely their own agenda.

Ethos in three registers

Phronesis: “I have audited over four hundred school budgets in this state, and this is the fourth I have seen with an identical clerical error.”

Arete: “I will say plainly that our original estimate was wrong, and I would rather correct it now, in public, than let it stand.”

Eunoia: “I am not asking you to trust my numbers because they are mine — I am asking you to trust them because they were built to protect your child's classroom, not my department's budget.”

1.4.2 Logos: deductive and inductive reasoning previewed

Logos appeals rely on structured reasoning: statistics, cause-and-effect claims, comparisons, and formal or informal logical structures such as syllogisms. Chapter 3 treats deductive and inductive reasoning in full; for now, note that logos is not simply “having facts” — it is arranging facts so that a conclusion follows in a way the audience can verify for themselves.

1.4.3 Pathos: beyond “emotional language”

Pathos is frequently mislabeled on student essays as simply “emotional words.” In practice, pathos is built through concrete, sensory **imagery**, specific **anecdote**, and **connotative diction** that lets the audience feel a consequence rather than merely being told to feel it. A statistic (“12,000 families were displaced”) can be logos; the same fact rendered as a single family's specific story of packing a car at midnight is pathos.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Do not label any passage that “feels sad” as pathos without pointing to the specific textual mechanism (a chosen image, a specific anecdote, a connotative word) producing that feeling. “The author uses pathos” with no textual evidence earns no credit on any AP Lang task.

1.5 Kairos: the rhetoric of timing

Kairos is the ancient Greek concept of the opportune moment — the idea that the same argument can succeed or fail depending on *when* it is delivered. A call for stricter workplace safety rules lands very differently the week after a well-publicized accident than it does in an ordinary month. Recognizing kairos means asking not just what the speaker says, but why saying it *now*, at this exact moment, makes the argument more persuasive than it would otherwise be.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Kairos là khái niệm về “thời điểm vàng” — cùng một lập luận sẽ có sức thuyết phục khác nhau tùy vào *thời điểm* nó được đưa ra. Khi phân tích, hãy tự hỏi: vì sao người nói chọn nói **ngay lúc này**, và điều đó làm lập luận mạnh hơn ra sao (ví dụ: ngay sau một sự kiện gây chú ý công luận)?

1.6 Genre and mode conventions

Different genres carry different built-in expectations, and recognizing a text's genre helps you predict its likely structure, tone, and constraints before you have even finished reading it.

Genre	Typical conventions	Tiếng Việt
Speech / oration	delivered aloud; relies on repetition, parallelism, and rhythm for a listening (not re-readable) audience	Bài diễn văn
Editorial / op-ed	short, timely, explicit thesis near the opening, written for a newspaper's general readership	Bài xã luận / bình luận
Open letter	addresses a named recipient but is written for a public secondary audience	Thư ngỏ
Memoir excerpt	first-person, reflective, often uses extended anecdote and sensory detail	Trích hồi ký
Eulogy	commemorates a person; blends grief, celebration of character, and shared values	Điếu văn
Satire	uses irony and exaggeration to critique indirectly; requires inferring the “real” position	Văn châm biếm
Advertisement	combines image and text; persuasive purpose is often only partly stated outright	Quảng cáo
Legal / policy document	precise, formal diction; anticipates counterarguments and defines terms explicitly	Văn bản pháp lý / chính sách

Genre shapes constraint: two versions of the same message

As a speech (delivered aloud): “*We rebuilt the bridge. We rebuilt the school. We rebuilt trust.*” — short, parallel, easy to follow by ear, built for applause after each repetition.

As a policy memo (read on paper): “*Following the flood, the district completed three capital projects: bridge reconstruction (completed March), school facility repair (completed June), and a community trust-restoration initiative including quarterly public forums (ongoing).*” — longer, more precise, built for a reader who can re-read and check details.

The same underlying claim is shaped almost entirely differently because the **medium** (spoken vs. written, heard once vs. re-readable) is itself a constraint.

1.7 Constraints in depth

Constraints are not only external obstacles; they include the resources a speaker can draw on. Common categories tested on the exam:

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Audience belief constraints** — what the audience already accepts as true, which the speaker must work with (or carefully challenge).
- **Genre/medium constraints** — length limits, expected structure, whether the audience can re-read or only hear once.

- **Speaker credibility constraints** — what the speaker can credibly claim given their own position (a company cannot credibly claim total objectivity about its own product).
- **Time and space constraints** — a eulogy has minutes; a legal brief may run to hundreds of pages.

1.8 Putting it together: a full annotation walkthrough

Annotated Passage — SOAPSTone in Practice

“To the members of the City Council: I stand before you not as an urban planner, but as a mother who has watched her son do his homework by flashlight because the Elm Street library closes at 5 p.m. Three years ago, this council found \$2 million for a new parking structure downtown. Tonight, I am asking for a fraction of that sum — \$400,000 — to keep our branch libraries open until 8 p.m. If we can find money for cars, surely we can find money for children. I am not asking you to imagine a monument. I am asking you to imagine a nine-year-old boy, sounding out his spelling words by the light of a phone.”

Speaker: a parent, not a policy expert (ethos of lived experience, not phronesis-by-credential). **Occasion:** a city council budget meeting; the immediate occasion is the vote itself, the larger occasion is a citywide debate about municipal spending priorities. **Exigence:** the library’s early closing hours are actively harming a working family’s child. **Audience:** a primary audience of council members who control the budget, and a secondary audience of any resident who later reads the meeting minutes. **Purpose:** to persuade the council to fund extended library hours. **Subject:** library funding. **Tone:** urgent but controlled, sharpened by the cars-versus-children contrast (logos through comparison, pathos through the closing image of a child and a flashlight). **Constraint:** the speaker’s lack of technical planning credentials, which she preempts by explicitly naming and reframing as an asset (“not as an urban planner, but as a mother”).

Bài tập luyện tập

Refer to the passage in the box above. The speaker’s use of the \$2 million parking structure is best described as an appeal to

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) pathos, through vivid visual imagery | (C) ethos, by citing the speaker’s professional credentials |
| (B) logos, through a comparison of civic spending priorities | (D) kairos, by referencing a historical precedent in law |

Lời giải chi tiết

The comparison is numerical and reasoning-based (\$2 million spent readily on parking versus a much smaller \$400,000 request for libraries): this is a **logos** move, using a fair comparison to expose an imbalance in priorities. It is not primarily imagery (no sensory description of the structure itself) and the speaker explicitly denies professional authority (“not as an urban planner”), so ethos-by-credentials is wrong. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which phrase most directly signals the *exigence* — the urgent problem prompting this speech?

- (A) “I stand before you not as an urban planner” light
(B) “the Elm Street library closes at 5 p.m.,” forcing a child to do homework by flash- (C) “imagine a monument”
(D) “walking home in daylight”

Lời giải chi tiết

Exigence is the specific problem that makes the text necessary right now. The library’s early closing time directly harming a child’s ability to do homework is the concrete, urgent condition driving the speech; the other phrases are rhetorical framing or conclusion, not the triggering problem. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The speaker’s choice to identify herself as “a mother” rather than “a resident” or “a taxpayer” primarily functions to

- (A) establish ethos rooted in personal, lived experience rather than technical authority (C) undermine her own credibility by admitting she lacks expertise
(B) narrow the intended audience to parents exclusively (D) introduce a logical fallacy that weakens her claim

Lời giải chi tiết

By foregrounding a personal role instead of a civic or financial one, the speaker builds credibility through relatable, first-hand experience rather than expertise — a deliberate ethos strategy, not a weakness. The audience (the council) is not narrowed; anyone on the council can be moved by this appeal. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Based on the passage’s final two sentences, the speaker’s implied audience is best characterized as

- (A) readers who are unfamiliar with how public libraries operate (C) children who will directly benefit from extended library hours
(B) council members who may respond more readily to a concrete human image than to an abstract budget figure (D) professional urban planners evaluating infrastructure costs

Lời giải chi tiết

The closing move — “I am not asking you to imagine a monument. I am asking you to imagine a nine-year-old boy” — deliberately trades an abstract civic image for a concrete human one, which only makes sense as a strategy aimed at decision-makers who need to be moved beyond the raw numbers already given. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The genre of this passage (a direct address beginning “To the members of the City Council”) most strongly constrains the speaker to

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) use highly technical budgetary jargon throughout | (C) avoid any reference to her personal life |
| (B) name and address a specific, identifiable body with the power to act on her request | (D) withhold her request until the very end without stating it clearly |

Lời giải chi tiết

Public-comment addresses to a governing body conventionally open by naming that body directly and require a request the body can actually act on — exactly what Bitzer means by an audience capable of modifying the exigence. (B).

Annotated Passage — A Eulogy Opening

“Coach Alvarez never once told me I was the fastest kid on that field, because I wasn’t. What he told me, every single practice for four years, was that I was the kid who showed up. Today, in this gymnasium he built with his own fundraising letters and his own two hands, I want to tell you what showing up cost him, and what it gave the rest of us.”

Speaker: a former student/athlete, adopting the persona of a grateful mentee rather than a professional obituary writer. **Occasion:** a memorial service (immediate); a broader community reckoning with the loss of a long-serving local figure (larger). **Audience:** primarily mourners who knew the coach; secondarily, anyone who did not know him and is hearing his character established for the first time. **Purpose:** to eulogize — to honor the coach’s character and translate personal grief into shared, communicable meaning. **Genre convention:** eulogies conventionally move from a small, specific anecdote (“I wasn’t the fastest”) toward a larger claim about legacy (“what showing up cost him, and what it gave the rest of us”), a pattern this opening exactly follows.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary rhetorical function of the detail “because I wasn’t [the fastest]” is to

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) criticize the coach for being dishonest with his students | (C) provide statistical evidence about the speaker’s athletic performance |
| (B) establish the speaker’s credibility as an honest narrator, making the coach’s praise of him feel earned rather than empty | (D) shift the eulogy’s tone from serious to comedic |

Lời giải chi tiết

By admitting an unflattering truth about himself first, the speaker signals that he will not simply flatter the coach either — this self-honesty is a classic **arete**-based ethos move that makes the praise that follows more credible, not a criticism of the coach or a joke. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which best describes the organizational strategy signaled by “What he told me... was that I was the kid who showed up”?

- (A) a shift from a specific personal anecdote toward a general claim about the coach's character and legacy with no change in scope
(C) an appeal to statistics to quantify the coach's success
(B) a shift from formal to informal diction (D) a direct rebuttal of a counterargument

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage narrows first to one remembered phrase (“the kid who showed up”), then explicitly widens outward in the final sentence to “what it gave the rest of us” — the classic eulogy move from specific anecdote to general legacy claim. (A).

Annotated Passage — An Advertisement's Implied Argument

Print advertisement copy, beneath a photo of a worn hiking boot resting on a mountain trail: “Ten years. Four continents. Zero replacements. Built by people who actually wear them.”

Speaker: the company, but voiced through an implied persona of a fellow hiker rather than a corporate marketing department. **Audience:** outdoor enthusiasts who value durability and authenticity over brand prestige. **Purpose:** to persuade the audience to purchase the product by establishing durability (logos: “ten years... zero replacements”) and authenticity of design (ethos: “built by people who actually wear them”). **Constraint:** the advertisement's brevity (a genre convention of print ads) forces claims to be compressed into sentence fragments rather than fully developed arguments, relying on the reader to supply the missing logical connections.

Bài tập luyện tập

The sentence fragments (“Ten years. Four continents. Zero replacements.”) most directly compensate for which genre constraint?

- (A) the advertisement's need to appear scientifically peer-reviewed mentation
(C) a legal requirement to disclose product materials
(B) the limited space and reading time typical of print advertising, which favors compressed, memorable claims over full arguments (D) the absence of any visual image in the advertisement

Lời giải chi tiết

Print ads are read quickly, often in passing; compressed fragments deliver maximum claims in minimum time and are easier to remember than fully elaborated sentences, which is exactly the constraint this style responds to. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Built by people who actually wear them” functions primarily as an appeal to

- (A) pathos, through an image of nature
(B) ethos, suggesting the makers' authentic, first-hand expertise as users of the product
(C) logos, through a numerical durability claim
(D) kairos, by referencing a recent event

Lời giải chi tiết

The phrase builds trust by claiming the makers share the customer's own experience as users (not just manufacturers) — an ethos appeal grounded in shared identity and practical expertise, distinct from the numerical claims ("ten years," "zero replacements") that carry the logos in the same ad. (B).

Annotated Passage — Satire

From a satirical column: "The city's new committee to study the feasibility of studying traffic congestion will hold its first meeting next month, pending approval from the subcommittee formed to schedule it."

Speaker: a columnist adopting a deadpan, mock-official tone. **Purpose:** to entertain and to critique — satire always has a second, serious target beneath its humor, here municipal bureaucratic delay. **Device:** the joke depends on escalating absurdity (a committee to study studying something, approved by a subcommittee formed to schedule it) rather than any direct statement of criticism; the reader must infer the columnist's real position (that this process is wastefully slow) rather than being told it outright.

Bài tập luyện tập

The humor in this passage depends primarily on

- (A) a direct, explicit statement that the city government is incompetent
(B) an escalating structure of bureaucratic redundancy that the reader must recognize as absurd without being told outright
(C) a personal insult directed at a named official
(D) a statistic about the city's budget

Lời giải chi tiết

Satire typically withholds direct judgment, instead constructing an absurd scenario (a committee to study studying something) that lets the reader supply the critical conclusion themselves — no explicit judgment, insult, or statistic appears in the sentence. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A reader who takes this passage completely literally (believing the writer sincerely approves of this bureaucratic process) has most likely failed to recognize which element of the rhetorical situation?

- (A) the subject of the passage
(B) the genre convention of satire, which requires inferring an ironic gap between
(C) the speaker's occasion
(D) the passage's use of statistics

Lời giải chi tiết

Satire's core convention is irony: the literal statement and the intended meaning diverge, and readers unfamiliar with the genre's conventions may miss the ironic gap entirely, taking the mock-approval at face value. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Read the passage below and write a full SOAPSTone analysis (one to two sentences per element).

"Fellow graduates: four years ago, half of you did not know the other half existed. Today, I am asking you to remember a stranger's name for the rest of your life — because in forty years, when someone asks what our class was known for, I want the answer to be that we looked out for each other, not that we looked out for ourselves."

Lời giải chi tiết

Speaker: a graduating student giving a commencement address, likely a class-elected speaker (persona: a peer, not an authority figure). **Occasion:** a graduation ceremony (immediate); the transition from shared college experience into separate adult lives (larger). **Audience:** primarily fellow graduates; secondarily, families and faculty in attendance. **Purpose:** to inspire the graduating class toward a shared value (looking out for one another) as they disperse. **Subject:** class unity and legacy. **Tone:** warm but earnest, sharpened by the direct challenge ("I am asking you to remember a stranger's name") and the deliberate contrast between "looked out for each other" and "looked out for ourselves."

Free-Response Practice

Identify the exigence, the primary audience, and one constraint shaping the following passage:

"To the editor: Last Tuesday, for the third time this year, the 6:40 bus to the industrial park did not arrive, and forty people who depend on that shift lost a day's wages. I am not writing to complain. I am writing because the route review board meets in nine days, and unless riders speak up before then, no one with the power to fix this will know it is broken."

Lời giải chi tiết

Exigence: the repeated failure of the 6:40 bus, which has directly cost riders a day's wages, combined with a narrow nine-day window before the only body with power to act meets. **Primary audience:** newspaper readers who are also transit riders and potential public commenters at the review board meeting — people who can plausibly act within the nine-day window. **Constraint:** the tight timeline (the review board meets in nine days) forces the letter to be urgent and action-oriented rather than a general reflection on transit policy; the genre (a letter to the editor) also constrains the writer to brevity and a clearly stated, actionable request.

Bài tập luyện tập

A political candidate's stump speech uses simple, repeated phrases and short sentences far more than her published policy white paper on the same issue. This difference is best explained by

- (A) the candidate's personal preference for informal language
- (B) the constraint of the spoken/heard genre, where audiences cannot re-read and benefit from repetition and simplicity
- (C) a lower level of expertise in the spoken version
- (D) an attempt to mislead the listening audience

Lời giải chi tiết

Speeches are heard once in real time, so repetition and short, memorable phrasing aid comprehension and retention in ways that are less necessary in a written document a reader can pause over and re-read — a genre/medium constraint, not a difference in honesty or expertise. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A company's public apology states: "We recognize the trust our customers placed in us was not honored, and we are changing our data-storage practices effective immediately, with an independent audit to follow in ninety days." The primary purpose of this passage is best classified as

- (A) to entertain ability
- (B) to apologize and outline a concrete remedy, rebuilding ethos through account-
- (C) to advertise a new product
- (D) to eulogize a former employee

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage explicitly acknowledges harm ("was not honored"), states responsibility, and commits to a specific, verifiable remedy (a named timeline and an independent audit) — the defining structure of an apology aimed at restoring credibility. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following would most likely be considered a rhetorical *audience* in Bitzer's sense, as opposed to a mere group of listeners?

- (A) tourists overhearing a street performer by chance on that exact proposal
- (B) a zoning board with the legal authority to approve or deny a proposed construction permit, listening to public comment
- (C) readers who skim a headline without reading the article
- (D) people standing near a loudspeaker announcement in an unfamiliar language

Lời giải chi tiết

Bitzer's audience must be capable of being influenced *and* of acting to modify the exigence. Only the zoning board has both the direct relevance to the specific issue and the formal power to act on it; the other groups merely receive information without capacity or standing to resolve the exigence. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A speaker addressing a hostile audience on a controversial policy is most likely to begin with which strategy?

- (A) an aggressive, dismissive tone toward the audience's existing beliefs tested claim
(B) establishing common ground or shared values before introducing the more con- (C) omitting any appeal to ethos entirely
(D) immediately presenting the most ex-
treme version of the claim

Lời giải chi tiết

With a hostile or skeptical audience, effective rhetors typically build a bridge first — naming shared values or concerns — before asking the audience to accept a claim they are inclined to resist; opening with the most extreme, unqualified claim or a dismissive tone tends to entrench opposition rather than persuade. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An op-ed columnist writes about a school-funding measure the week before the referendum vote, rather than the week after it fails. This timing decision is best explained by which rhetorical concept?

- (A) ethos after
(B) kairos — the argument is more likely to in- (C) genre convention
fluence the outcome before the vote than (D) constraint of audience belief

Lời giải chi tiết

Publishing before the vote, while readers can still act on the argument, is a direct application of **kairos**: the opportune moment for maximum persuasive effect, since the same argument published after the vote could no longer change the outcome. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of the sentence “Our town needs a new bridge” best demonstrates awareness of a specific, capable rhetorical audience (in Bitzer’s sense) rather than a vague, general one?

- (A) “Bridges are important infrastructure.” frastructure budget, to approve funding
(B) “Someone should really fix this.” for the Route 9 bridge repair before the
current structure closes to traffic.”
(C) “I am asking the County Transportation Board, which controls this fiscal year’s in- (D) “Our town needs a new bridge, and ev-
eryone knows it.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Only (C) names a specific body with actual budgetary authority (the County Transportation Board) and a specific, timely request tied to a real consequence (the bridge closing) — exactly what makes an audience rhetorically capable of resolving the exigence, unlike the vague appeals in the other options. **(C)**.

Free-Response Practice

A memoirist opens a chapter: “My grandmother spoke four languages and was fluent in none of them, which is another way of saying she spoke exactly the amount that seven decades of moving between countries required and not one word more.” Identify the speaker’s implied ethos and explain one specific word choice that builds it.

Lời giải chi tiết

The speaker constructs an ethos of intimate, reflective authority — someone who has spent enough time with the grandmother to offer a precise, affectionate reinterpretation of what might otherwise sound like a criticism (“fluent in none”). The phrase “which is another way of saying” signals a deliberate reframing move: the speaker is not simply reporting a fact but actively interpreting it with insight earned through closeness, which is the source of the memoirist’s credibility in this passage.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the eulogy passage analyzed earlier in this chapter (“Coach Alvarez never once told me I was the fastest kid...”), the constraint most directly shaping the speaker’s opening choice is

- (A) a strict word-count limit imposed by a newspaper editor
- (B) the genre convention that eulogies typically move from personal anecdote to broader legacy, and the occasion’s expectation of emotional sincerity over technical detail
- (C) a legal requirement to list the deceased’s academic credentials
- (D) the need to persuade a hostile, skeptical audience

Lời giải chi tiết

Eulogies are governed by strong genre expectations (anecdote-to-legacy structure, sincerity over technical precision) and the occasion of mourning, not by word-count rules, legal requirements, or a hostile audience — the mourners are, if anything, a sympathetic audience already inclined to listen. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A public-health official releasing a report chooses formal, precise, hedge-qualified language (“the data suggest,” “current evidence indicates”) rather than the more confident, urgent language used in the same agency’s public safety warnings. This stylistic difference is best explained primarily by

- (A) genre convention: a technical report is constrained toward precision and appropriate uncertainty, while a public warning is constrained toward urgency and clarity for immediate action
- (B) a change in the underlying facts between the two documents
- (C) the report author’s personal writing style
- (D) an attempt to mislead readers of the report

Lời giải chi tiết

Different genres carry different built-in expectations: a technical report is judged by scientific norms of precision and appropriate hedging, while a public safety warning is judged by its ability to prompt fast, clear action — the same underlying facts can and should be rendered differently depending on genre constraints. (A).

1.9 Audience adaptation: the same message, three audiences

A sophisticated writer does not simply have “a message”; the writer adapts the same underlying claim differently depending on who is listening and what that specific audience is positioned to do. Comparing three versions of a single message side by side makes the adaptation visible.

One claim, three rhetorical situations

Underlying claim: a proposed footbridge over Route 9 would reduce pedestrian injuries near a school.

To the county transportation board (an audience with budget authority): “Board members, over the past three years this crossing has recorded eleven documented pedestrian incidents, four requiring emergency transport. A footbridge, estimated at \$340,000, costs less than the county’s average annual liability payout for crossings with this incident profile.” — precise figures, a direct cost comparison, addressed to the body that can authorize funding.

To parents at a PTA meeting (an audience with no budget authority but real influence through pressure and turnout): “Every morning, some of you watch your child cross six lanes of traffic to get to school on time. I am asking you to come to the March 4th board meeting and say so, because the board has told me repeatedly that they have not heard from enough parents to make this urgent.” — a call to collective action, not a request for funds directly, because this audience cannot approve a budget but can generate visible pressure on the audience that can.

To local newspaper readers (a broad, secondary audience with no direct power over the vote but influence over public opinion): “The county has known about this intersection’s danger for three years and has yet to act. Readers who want to see that change have one more opportunity: the board’s public comment period on March 4th.” — frames the issue as a matter of public accountability and directs the general audience toward the one concrete action available to them.

Notice that none of these three versions is “more honest” than the others — each simply foregrounds the specific appeal (precise cost logic for the board; direct collective-action urgency for parents; public accountability for a general readership) suited to what that particular audience can actually do about the exigence.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Một người viết tu từ giỏi không chỉ có “một thông điệp cố định” – họ **điều chỉnh cách trình bày** thông điệp đó tùy theo **đối tượng cụ thể** và **khả năng hành động** của đối tượng đó. Hội đồng có quyền phê duyệt ngân sách cần **số liệu và so sánh chi phí**; phụ huynh không có quyền đó nhưng có thể tạo **áp lực tập thể**; độc giả báo chí không trực tiếp quyết định nhưng có thể ảnh hưởng đến **dư luận**. Không có phiên bản nào “thật hơn” phiên bản khác – mỗi phiên bản chỉ đơn giản là lựa chọn phù hợp nhất với đối tượng đó.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the three versions above would be least effective if delivered, unchanged, to the county transportation board, and why?

- (A) The version written for parents, because it assumes an audience capacity (approving \$340,000 in funding) that a PTA audience does not have, while the board audience needs the cost data the parent version omits
- (B) The version written for the board, because boards never respond to statistics
- (C) The version written for newspaper readers, because newspapers cannot be quoted in official meetings
- (D) None of the versions would need adjustment for the board audience

Lời giải chi tiết

The parent-audience version is built around a call to public pressure and contains no cost or funding data — exactly what a board with budget authority actually needs to evaluate and act on the proposal. Delivering it unchanged to the board would supply the wrong kind of appeal for an audience capable of directly modifying the exigence. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

The newspaper-reader version's closing sentence ("Readers who want to see that change have one more opportunity...") primarily functions to

- (A) provide statistical evidence about pedestrian injuries
- (B) convert a secondary, non-empowered audience's attention into a specific, actionable next step aligned with the actual decision-making timeline
- (C) apologize to the board for public criticism
- (D) introduce a new, unrelated claim about school funding

Lời giải chi tiết

Newspaper readers cannot vote on the board's budget, so the passage's rhetorical work is to convert their attention into the one concrete action available to them (attending or supporting the public comment period) at the specific moment it matters – not to supply new statistics, apologize, or shift topic. (B).

1.10 Full passage practice: identifying the complete rhetorical situation**Annotated Passage — A Company Blog Post**

"Three months ago, a customer wrote to us describing exactly how our packaging failed her: a torn box, a spoiled shipment, a missed birthday. We do not usually publish complaints. We are publishing this one, in full, along with the seventeen changes we have made to our packaging process since receiving it, because an apology that cannot be checked against real changes is not an apology — it is public relations."

Speaker: a company, adopting an unusually self-critical, transparent persona rather than a typical polished corporate voice. **Occasion:** the immediate occasion is a specific customer complaint from three months earlier; the larger occasion is a broader public skepticism toward corporate apologies that are not followed by verifiable action. **Audience:** primarily current and

prospective customers reading the company blog; secondarily, the media or industry observers who might otherwise accuse the company of empty public relations. **Purpose:** to apologize credibly by pairing acknowledgment of harm with a specific, checkable remedy (seventeen named changes), rebuilding ethos through verifiable accountability rather than assertion alone. **Constraint:** the genre convention that corporate apologies are widely assumed to be insincere, which the company directly names and works against (“an apology that cannot be checked... is public relations”) rather than ignoring.

Bài tập luyện tập

The phrase “in full” in the second sentence primarily functions to

- (A) indicate that the complaint has been edited for length
- (B) signal transparency, preempting the suspicion that the company selectively published only flattering portions of the complaint
- (C) introduce a legal disclaimer
- (D) shift the tone from serious to humorous

Lời giải chi tiết

“In full” directly addresses a predictable audience suspicion — that a company sharing a complaint about itself would quietly edit out the worst parts — by asserting nothing has been cut, which builds credibility rather than indicating editing, a disclaimer, or a tonal shift. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage’s final sentence (“it is public relations”) is best understood as

- (A) a sincere compliment to the public relations industry
- (B) a deliberate self-distancing move, in which the company defines the very category of insincere corporate communication it is trying not to belong to
- (C) an admission that the entire blog post is intentionally misleading
- (D) an unrelated definition inserted for no rhetorical purpose

Lời giải chi tiết

By naming “public relations” as the failure mode it is trying to avoid, the company draws a sharp line between itself and a category of communication widely seen as hollow, using that contrast to make its own apology’s specificity (seventeen named changes) feel more credible by comparison. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Given the constraint named in this passage (public skepticism of corporate apologies), which detail most directly works to overcome that constraint?

- (A) the vague phrase “some changes”
- (B) the specific number “seventeen changes,” which is checkable in a way a vague claim of improvement would not be
- (C) the phrase “we do not usually”
- (D) the mention of a missed birthday

Lời giải chi tiết

A specific, countable claim (“seventeen changes”) is far harder to dismiss as empty rhetoric than a vague assurance, and it is precisely this kind of checkable specificity that responds to the stated constraint of audience skepticism toward corporate apologies. (B).

1.11 Exigence across genres: a comparative view

Exigence looks different depending on genre, and recognizing genre-typical exigence patterns speeds up your very first read of an unfamiliar passage.

Genre	Typical exigence	Typical audience capable of acting
Eulogy	a death, and the community's need to process shared loss and preserve legacy	mourners; no formal action required, so the “action” is emotional/communal, not legislative
Op-ed / editorial	an upcoming decision, vote, or unresolved public controversy	voters, officials, or the general public whose opinion can shift the outcome
Award acceptance speech	the recognition itself, used as a rare platform to advocate for a cause the speaker cares about	an audience with unusually high, temporary attention and possibly some influence or resources
Open letter	a grievance or request directed at a named recipient, written for public visibility	the named recipient, plus a broader public that can pressure that recipient
Public apology	a specific harm caused, requiring acknowledgment before trust can be rebuilt	the harmed parties, plus a broader audience judging the sincerity of the response

Annotated Passage – An Award Acceptance Speech

“Thank you – truly. But I have thirty seconds before the orchestra starts playing me off, and I have decided to spend twenty-five of them on something other than thanking my agent. Four years ago, a youth arts program in my hometown lost its funding. Tonight, in front of more cameras than that program will ever see again, I am asking anyone in this room who has ever benefited from an unglamorous, underfunded program like that one to match tonight’s ticket price in a donation before you go home.”

Speaker: an award recipient, adopting a persona that deliberately breaks the genre’s usual script (thanking collaborators) in favor of advocacy. **Occasion:** an awards ceremony; the immediate occasion is the win itself, but the larger occasion the speaker actually cares about is the funding loss from four years earlier. **Exigence:** the funding loss is the real urgent problem, and the acceptance speech is simply the rare, high-visibility platform capable of addressing it – the award itself is not the exigence. **Audience:** primarily the room of industry peers, many of whom plausibly have the financial means to donate; secondarily, the broadcast audience, whose awareness adds social pressure. **Constraint:** the extremely short time allotted (“thirty seconds... orchestra starts playing me off”), which the speaker names explicitly and uses to justify skipping genre convention (thanking collaborators) entirely.

Bài tập luyện tập

The true exigence of the acceptance speech above is best identified as

- (A) winning the award itself
(B) the four-year-old funding loss for the youth arts program, which the speech's platform is being used to address
(C) the orchestra's decision to play the speaker off
(D) the speaker's relationship with their agent

Lời giải chi tiết

The award and the orchestra's timing are incidental occasion details; the funding loss is the actual urgent, discourse-addressable problem the speech exists to solve, using the ceremony merely as an unusually visible platform. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The speaker's decision to name the exact time constraint ("I have thirty seconds... twenty-five of them") primarily serves to

- (A) apologize for being unprepared of extended thanks
(B) signal a deliberate, urgent departure from genre convention, justifying why the speech will not follow the expected script
(C) provide the audience with technical information about the broadcast schedule
(D) criticize the orchestra for poor timing

Lời giải chi tiết

By naming the constraint explicitly, the speaker frames the unconventional choice (skipping standard thanks) as a deliberate, urgent use of limited time rather than an oversight or a criticism of the broadcast itself. **(B)**.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Cùng là "exigence," nhưng bản chất rất khác nhau tùy thể loại: điệu văn phản hồi một **sự mất mát**, bài xã luận phản hồi một **quyết định sắp xảy ra**, bài phát biểu nhận giải thưởng dùng **sự chú ý hiếm có** để vận động cho một vấn đề khác hẳn giải thưởng. Khi đọc một văn bản mới, hãy dùng **thể loại** như một gợi ý nhanh để đoán loại exigence có khả năng xuất hiện, rồi kiểm tra lại bằng chính văn bản.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best distinguishes the exigence of a typical eulogy from the exigence of a typical op-ed?

- (A) A eulogy has no exigence, while an op-ed always does. exigence typically centers on an upcoming, still-changeable decision.
(B) A eulogy's exigence centers on communal loss and legacy with no vote or policy decision to influence, while an op-ed's
(C) Eulogies are always longer than op-eds.
(D) Op-eds never have a specific audience capable of acting.

Lời giải chi tiết

A eulogy responds to an already-final event (a death) and aims at communal meaning-making rather than a future decision; an op-ed's exigence is typically tied to a decision that has not yet

been finalized and that the intended audience can still influence – the key structural difference between the two genres' exigence. (B).

1.12 Visual and multimodal rhetoric

Rhetorical situations are not limited to prose. Advertisements, political cartoons, and infographics build arguments through the interaction of image, layout, and a small amount of text, and the same SOAPStone/rhetorical-triangle toolkit applies – with visual choices standing in for some of the work diction and syntax do in prose.

Reading a visual argument

- **Composition and focal point** – what does the eye land on first, and what does that placement emphasize or de-emphasize?
- **Scale and proportion** – are any elements drawn disproportionately large or small relative to their real-world size, and what claim does that distortion make?
- **Juxtaposition** – what two elements are placed side by side, and what contrast or comparison does that placement invite?
- **Caption/text-image relationship** – does the accompanying text state the argument directly, or does it rely on the image to supply meaning the words alone do not?

Annotated Passage – A Described Political Cartoon

Description: a political cartoon shows a single city planner standing before an enormous stack of paper labeled “Permit Applications,” the stack towering several times his own height. In the far background, drawn much smaller and only partially visible, a single house under construction is barely sketched in. The caption reads: “By the time it’s approved, at least the paperwork will have a great view.”

Composition: the planner is dwarfed by the paperwork stack, a scale distortion that visually argues the bureaucratic process has become disproportionate to its actual purpose. **Juxtaposition:** the towering, detailed stack of paper against the tiny, barely-sketched house makes a visual claim about priorities – process has visually overwhelmed product. **Caption:** the dry, ironic caption (“at least the paperwork will have a great view”) supplies the cartoon’s argumentative edge through verbal irony, converting a visual observation into an explicit, if understated, critique of permitting delay – the same target the traffic op-ed in Chapter 3 and the storefront-vacancy passage in Chapter 5 independently raise, suggesting this is a recurring civic concern across genres.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Lập luận trực quan (visual/multimodal rhetoric) dùng **hình ảnh, bố cục, tỷ lệ** để lập luận, thay cho (hoặc cùng với) từ ngữ. Khi phân tích một hình ảnh/biểu họa, hãy áp dụng **cùng bộ công cụ** đã học: ai là “speaker,” đối tượng là ai, mục đích gì – nhưng thêm câu hỏi riêng cho hình ảnh: **mắt người xem bị dẫn tới đâu trước tiên**, và **tỷ lệ/kích thước** của các yếu tố nói lên điều gì.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the cartoon description above, the dramatic size difference between the planner and the paper stack primarily functions as

- (A) a literally accurate depiction of a real building's height
- (B) a visual exaggeration (functioning similarly to hyperbole in prose) that argues the permitting process has become disproportionate to its purpose
- (C) an unrelated stylistic choice with no argumentative function
- (D) a reference to a specific historical event

Lời giải chi tiết

No real stack of paper is that large; the scale distortion functions as a visual equivalent of hyperbole, making an argumentative claim (the process is disproportionate) rather than a literal, accurate depiction or an unrelated stylistic flourish. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The caption's function is best described as

- (A) stating the cartoon's argument so literally that the image itself becomes unnecessary
- (B) supplying verbal irony that sharpens and makes explicit the critique the image visually implies
- (C) contradicting the visual argument made by the image
- (D) providing technical information about permit processing times

Lời giải chi tiết

The caption does not restate the image so literally that the drawing becomes redundant, nor contradict it or supply technical data; its dry, ironic tone ("great view") adds a verbal layer of critique that works together with, and sharpens, the visual argument already present in the disproportionate scale. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following would most weaken the cartoon's rhetorical effectiveness if changed?

- (A) Making the house in the background larger and more detailed than the paperwork stack, reversing the visual emphasis the cartoon currently relies on
- (B) Keeping the caption exactly as written
- (C) Keeping the planner's size relative to a normal adult human
- (D) Using black-and-white line art instead of color

Lời giải chi tiết

The cartoon's entire visual argument depends on the paperwork dwarfing the barely visible house; reversing that emphasis would undercut the specific claim about bureaucracy overwhelming its own purpose, while the other changes (caption, human-scale planner, color choice) do not disrupt that core visual argument. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An advertisement shows a small, worn family photograph placed directly beside a large, glossy image of a new insurance company's logo, with no text connecting them. This juxtaposition

most likely invites the viewer to infer

- (A) that the two images are completely unrelated
(B) an implied connection between protecting a family's precious, irreplaceable memories and the security the insurance company offers, without stating the claim directly
(C) a criticism of the insurance industry
(D) a chronological sequence of events

Lời giải chi tiết

Juxtaposition invites the viewer to supply a connection the ad never states outright; placing an intimate family photo beside a company logo implies the company protects what the photo represents (irreplaceable memories), without the ad needing to assert this claim in words. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best summarizes why the SOAPSTone framework applies to visual and multimodal texts, not only prose?

- (A) It does not apply; SOAPSTone is exclusively a tool for written prose.
(B) Any communicative act – visual or verbal – still has a speaker, an audience, a purpose, and a context, even when those elements are conveyed through image and composition rather than words alone.
(C) Visual texts never have an identifiable audience.
(D) SOAPSTone only applies to texts longer than 500 words.

Lời giải chi tiết

SOAPSTone's six elements describe the underlying rhetorical situation of any communicative act, and a cartoon, advertisement, or infographic still has a speaker (or sponsoring entity), an audience, a purpose, and a context – simply conveyed partly or wholly through visual rather than verbal means. (B).

1.13 Constraints of digital and short-form genres

Digital genres – a tweet, a text alert, a push notification – impose some of the tightest constraints a writer will ever work under, often just a sentence or two, with no room for extended appeals. Recognizing how a writer compresses a rhetorical situation into a short-form genre is a useful, modern extension of the genre-conventions work earlier in this chapter.

Annotated Passage – A Short-Form Public Safety Alert

"Boil-water notice: Main St. & 5th Ave residents only. Tap water unsafe to drink until further notice. Bottled water available at Community Center, 9am-6pm. Updates: cityalerts.gov/water"

Genre constraint: an emergency text alert has almost no room for the kind of ethos-building or extended reasoning available in a speech or op-ed; every word must carry direct, actionable information. **Structure:** the message front-loads the single most safety-critical fact (unsafe tap water) before any other detail, reflecting the genre's core constraint that a reader may only see the first few words before deciding whether to keep reading. **Audience specification:** "Main St. & 5th Ave residents only" immediately narrows the audience to those who need to act, avoiding the credibility cost of over-alerting residents unaffected by the issue. **Omitted ethos:**

unlike a speech, the alert never explains *why* the water is unsafe or cites any testing data – the genre’s implicit authority (a municipal alert system) substitutes for the explicit ethos-building a longer text would need.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Các thể loại kỹ thuật số ngắn (tweet, tin nhắn cảnh báo) có **giới hạn cực chặt** về độ dài, buộc người viết phải **ưu tiên thông tin quan trọng nhất lên đầu** và bỏ qua hầu hết việc xây dựng ethos bằng lời – uy tín đến từ **hệ thống gửi tin** (ví dụ: cảnh báo của thành phố) chứ không phải từ câu chữ. Khi phân tích văn bản ngắn dạng này, hãy chú ý xem **thông tin nào được đặt đầu tiên** và **thông tin nào bị bỏ qua hoàn toàn**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The decision to place “Tap water unsafe to drink until further notice” immediately after the audience specification, rather than at the very end of the alert, primarily reflects

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) a random ordering with no rhetorical significance | appear as early as possible |
| (B) the genre constraint that readers of a short alert may not read to the end, so the single most safety-critical fact must | (C) a legal requirement specific to boil-water notices |
| | (D) an attempt to bury the most important information |

Lời giải chi tiết

Short-form alerts cannot assume a reader will finish reading, so front-loading the most safety-critical fact maximizes the chance it is actually received – the opposite of burying information, and a constraint of the genre rather than an arbitrary or specifically legal ordering. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Compared to a hypothetical full op-ed on the same water-safety issue, the alert’s complete omission of any explanation for *why* the water is unsafe is best explained by

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) the city’s desire to hide information from residents | system itself rather than built through argument |
| (B) the genre’s severe space and attention constraints, which favor immediate actionable instruction over explanation, with authority borrowed from the alert | (C) a legal prohibition on explaining causes of contamination |
| | (D) an error the city should correct immediately |

Lời giải chi tiết

A short alert’s constraint favors immediate, actionable instruction over explanation; its ethos comes from the recognized authority of the municipal alert system itself, not from argumentative ethos-building, which a longer genre like an op-ed would need to supply explicitly. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A company posts the identical product announcement on its formal investor-relations page and on its casual social media account. The investor version reads: “The Board has approved a strategic realignment of product offerings effective Q3.” The social media version reads: “Big changes coming this summer – we can’t wait to show you what’s next!” This difference is best explained by

- (A) one version being factually accurate and the other being false
- (B) genre and audience adaptation: investors expect precise, formal disclosure language, while social media followers expect a shorter, more enthusiastic, relationship-building tone
- (C) a legal requirement that social media posts must be shorter than investor documents
- (D) random variation with no rhetorical significance

Lời giải chi tiết

Both versions can be accurate; the difference reflects genre and audience adaptation exactly as modeled throughout this chapter – investors expect precise, formal disclosure, while a social media audience expects brevity and enthusiasm suited to that platform’s relationship with followers. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best captures why identifying a text’s constraints improves rhetorical analysis, rather than simply identifying its appeals?

- (A) Constraints are irrelevant to how a text is actually constructed.
- (B) Constraints explain why a writer made specific choices (what to include, omit, or emphasize), giving analysis of ethos, logos, and pathos a concrete, situational explanation rather than a list of appeals with no context.
- (C) Constraints only matter for legal documents.
- (D) Every text has identical constraints regardless of genre or audience.

Lời giải chi tiết

Constraints explain the why behind a writer’s specific choices – why an alert omits explanation, why a eulogy opens with anecdote, why an ad uses fragments – turning appeal-identification into grounded, situational analysis rather than a decontextualized list of ethos/logos/pathos labels. (B).

1.14 A final full walkthrough: layering every tool in this chapter**Annotated Passage – A Retiring Teacher’s Farewell Letter to the School Newspaper**

“To the students of Lincoln High: I am not going to pretend that thirty-one years fits neatly into one letter, so I will not try. Three years ago, the district cut funding for the debate team I had coached since 1994. I found a way to keep it running anyway, mostly by asking former students – some of whom are now judges, journalists, and, in one memorable case, a competitive debate coach at a university – to volunteer their Saturdays. I am not writing this to ask you to save a program. I am

writing it to ask you to notice, when you are thirty years into something you love and the funding disappears, that the thing itself does not have to disappear with it. It just needs people willing to show up on a Saturday.”

Speaker: a retiring teacher, adopting a reflective, personal persona rather than a formal administrative one. **Occasion:** retirement, announced through a school newspaper letter; the immediate occasion is the farewell itself, the larger occasion is thirty-one years of institutional change the letter compresses into a single anecdote. **Exigence:** not simply retirement, but the specific three-year-old funding cut and the teacher’s wish to pass on the lesson learned from surviving it. **Audience:** primarily current students, who are positioned (unlike the teacher) to carry a similar lesson forward into their own future setbacks; secondarily, alumni and staff who will read the same newspaper. **Purpose:** not merely to say goodbye, but to reframe a funding loss as a solvable problem, encouraging resourcefulness rather than resignation. **Genre convention:** like the eulogy examined earlier in this chapter, the letter moves from a specific, personal anecdote (the debate team) toward a general, transferable claim (“the thing itself does not have to disappear”), the same anecdote-to-legacy structure. **Constraint:** the newspaper’s format likely limits length, which may explain the letter’s explicit refusal to attempt full comprehensiveness (“I am not going to pretend that thirty-one years fits neatly into one letter”).

Bài tập luyện tập

The letter’s opening admission (“I am not going to pretend that thirty-one years fits neatly into one letter”) primarily functions to

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) apologize for poor writing skills | proach instead |
| (B) preempt an impossible expectation (full comprehensiveness) the genre’s length constraint cannot satisfy, and justify the letter’s narrower, anecdote-based ap- | (C) criticize the newspaper’s editorial policies |
| | (D) introduce a counterargument the letter will refute |

Lời giải chi tiết

By naming the constraint directly (a single letter cannot cover thirty-one years), the teacher justifies choosing one specific, developed anecdote over an impossible attempt at completeness – not an apology for skill, a criticism of the paper, or a counterargument setup. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The detail that former debate students are “now judges, journalists, and... a competitive debate coach” primarily serves to

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) provide irrelevant biographical trivia | (C) criticize students who did not pursue debate-related careers |
| (B) offer concrete, specific evidence of the program’s lasting value, strengthening the credibility of the teacher’s claim that the program was worth saving | (D) shift the letter’s genre from personal reflection to a formal resume |

Lời giải chi tiết

Specific, named outcomes (not vague claims like “many students benefited”) function as concrete evidence supporting the value of the program the teacher fought to preserve, strengthening ethos and logos together rather than serving as trivia, criticism, or a genre shift. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best describes the letter’s overall organizational movement, consistent with the eulogy pattern discussed earlier in this chapter?

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) A list of unrelated complaints about school funding, in no particular order | audience |
| (B) A specific personal anecdote (the debate team) that widens into a general, transferable claim addressed directly to the | (C) A purely chronological account of the teacher’s entire thirty-one-year career |
| | (D) A comparison between two different schools’ funding models |

Lời giải chi tiết

The letter follows the anecdote-to-legacy movement examined in this chapter’s eulogy example: one specific, developed story (the debate team) that widens into a general, transferable lesson explicitly addressed to the audience – not an unordered list, a full chronological account, or an inter-school comparison. **(B)**.

Claims, Evidence & Commentary

Mục tiêu Unit: Ba loại luận điểm (claim of fact / value / policy) và cách xây dựng luận đề (thesis) khả biện (defensible); các loại bằng chứng (thống kê, giải thoại, ý kiến chuyên gia, văn bản, lịch sử) và bốn tiêu chí đánh giá chất lượng bằng chứng; mô hình Toulmin (claim–data–warrant–backing–qualifier–rebuttal); kỹ thuật nhượng bộ–phản biện (concession & rebuttal); và hệ thống đầy đủ các ngụy biện logic (logical fallacies) thường gặp trong đề AP Lang.

2.1 Types of claims

An argument is built from **claims** — statements the writer wants the audience to accept. Claims fall into three broad types, and identifying the type helps you predict what kind of evidence will be needed to support it and what a defensible thesis responding to it should look like.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Claim of fact** — asserts that something is true or false, measurable in principle (“Rates of teen social-media use have doubled since 2012”).
- **Claim of value** — asserts that something is good/bad, right/wrong, more or less desirable (“Social media has made public discourse less civil”).
- **Claim of policy** — asserts that something *should* be done (“Schools should restrict phone use during class”).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Ba loại luận điểm: **Claim of fact** (khẳng định một sự thật có thể kiểm chứng), **claim of value** (đánh giá tốt/xấu, đúng/sai), **claim of policy** (đề xuất hành động — thường có từ “nên/should”). Nhận diện đúng loại luận điểm giúp em đoán được loại bằng chứng phù hợp: claim of policy cần bằng chứng về *hiệu quả* của hành động đề xuất, không chỉ về vấn đề hiện tại.

Same subject, three different claim types

Fact: “Average commute times in this city have increased by eleven minutes since 2015.”

Value: “The city’s failure to address commute times reflects a broader neglect of working-class neighborhoods.”

Policy: “The city council should reallocate 15% of the road-expansion budget toward dedicated bus lanes.”

Notice how each claim requires a different kind of proof: the fact claim needs verifiable data; the value claim needs a framework for judging what counts as “neglect”; the policy claim needs evidence that the proposed action would actually work.

2.2 Building a defensible thesis

A **thesis** is the claim (or set of related claims) that organizes an entire essay. On every AP Lang free-response task, the thesis must be **defensible** — an arguable position that a reasonable person could disagree with — not a simple restatement of the prompt, a list of unconnected observations, or an unarguable statement of fact.

What makes a thesis defensible

- It takes a clear, arguable **position**, not merely a topic.
- It is specific enough to be tested against evidence, not so broad that any evidence would “fit.”
- It is appropriately **qualified** — strong theses often acknowledge a limit or condition (“While X is true in most cases, Y suggests...”), which also lays the foundation for a later sophistication point.
- It previews, even loosely, the **line of reasoning** the essay will follow.

Weak thesis pattern	Why it fails
“This essay will discuss failure.”	Announces a topic, takes no position.
“Some people think failure is good, and some people think it is bad.”	Reports both sides without choosing one; nothing to defend.
“Failure is bad and nobody likes it.”	Unarguable, vague, no line of reasoning implied.
“Failure has many causes, including risk-taking, poor planning, and bad luck.”	A classification, not an argument.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Một luận đề (thesis) **khả biện** (defensible) phải là một lập trường có thể tranh luận được — không phải một sự thật hiển nhiên, không phải một danh sách, và không phải một câu chỉ nêu chủ đề. Mẹo kiểm tra nhanh: nếu một người thông minh, hiểu biết vẫn có thể phản đối lập trường đó, thì đó là một thesis tốt. Nếu không ai có thể phản đối (vì nó là sự thật hiển nhiên hoặc quá mơ hồ), đó chưa phải là thesis.

2.3 Types and quality of evidence

Evidence is the material a writer uses to make a claim credible. AP Lang prompts and passages draw on several recurring categories:

Evidence type	Description	Tiếng Việt
Statistical	numerical or data-based evidence (studies, surveys, counts)	Bằng chứng số liệu
Anecdotal	a specific narrative example or personal account	Bằng chứng giai thoại / kể chuyện
Expert testimony	a quotation or finding from a credentialed authority	Ý kiến chuyên gia
Textual / documentary	evidence drawn directly from a text, law, or record	Bằng chứng văn bản / tài liệu
Historical precedent	a past event used to support a claim about the present	Bằng chứng lịch sử / tiền lệ
Analogical	a comparison to a structurally similar, better-understood case	Bằng chứng loại suy
Observational	the writer's own direct, first-hand observation	Bằng chứng quan sát trực tiếp

2.3.1 Four tests for evidence quality

Strong evidence passes four tests: it is **relevant** (directly supports the specific claim, not just the general topic), **sufficient** (enough of it, not a single isolated case standing in for a trend), **credible and current** (from a trustworthy, up-to-date, appropriately qualified source), and **representative** (not a cherry-picked outlier). The strongest paragraphs also **vary** evidence type — a statistic paired with an anecdote is usually more persuasive than five statistics alone, because the statistic supplies scale and the anecdote supplies a human stake.

Testing evidence against the four criteria

Claim: “Remote work has improved employee well-being.”

Weak evidence: “My cousin works from home and loves it.” — relevant, but not sufficient (a single case) and not representative (no way to know if this is typical).

Stronger evidence: “A 2023 Gallup survey of 15,000 remote-capable employees across industries found that 62% reported lower stress compared with their pre-pandemic office schedule, with the largest gains among employees with long commutes or caregiving responsibilities.” — large sample (sufficient), specific and dated (credible/current), and its subgroup breakdown (commute length, caregiving) shows the writer is not cherry-picking a uniform result.

2.3.2 Evaluating source credibility: bias, agenda, and funding

Evidence quality also depends on *who produced it and why*. A source is not automatically untrustworthy because it has an interest in the outcome, but a careful reader always asks what that interest might distort.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Who funded or produced this evidence?** A study funded by a company about its own product deserves closer scrutiny of its methods, not automatic dismissal.
- **What is being measured, and by whom?** A school district reporting its own test scores has an incentive to present the most favorable available metric.
- **Is the source an original study or a secondhand summary?** A summary can distort emphasis even while accurately reporting individual facts.
- **Does the source disclose its limitations?** Sources that acknowledge sample size, scope, or methodology limits are generally more trustworthy than sources that present findings as absolute and unqualified.

Reading for bias without dismissing evidence outright

“A trade association representing the plastic bag industry released a study concluding that reusable cotton totes have a larger overall environmental footprint than single-use plastic bags, factoring in water use during manufacturing.”

The funding source (a plastic bag trade association) does not automatically make the underlying manufacturing data false — cotton production genuinely uses significant water. But a careful writer would note the funding source explicitly, check whether the study accounts for the fact that totes are reused hundreds of times (changing the relevant comparison), and seek an independent source before treating the conclusion as settled. Naming the funding source in your own essay (“a study funded by the plastic industry found...”) is itself a legitimate rhetorical and analytical move, not an attack.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Đánh giá độ tin cậy của nguồn không có nghĩa là loại bỏ mọi nguồn có “lợi ích liên quan” — mà là **đọc có ý thức** về ai tạo ra bằng chứng, vì mục đích gì, và bằng chứng đó có tự thừa nhận giới hạn của mình hay không. Một nghiên cứu do một bên có lợi ích tài trợ vẫn có thể chứa dữ liệu chính xác; vấn đề là cách dữ liệu đó được **chọn lọc và trình bày**.

2.3.3 Reading visual and quantitative evidence

Many AP Lang sources — especially in the synthesis essay — present evidence as a chart, graph, or table rather than prose. Reading these accurately means checking the axes and units before drawing any conclusion about the trend they show.

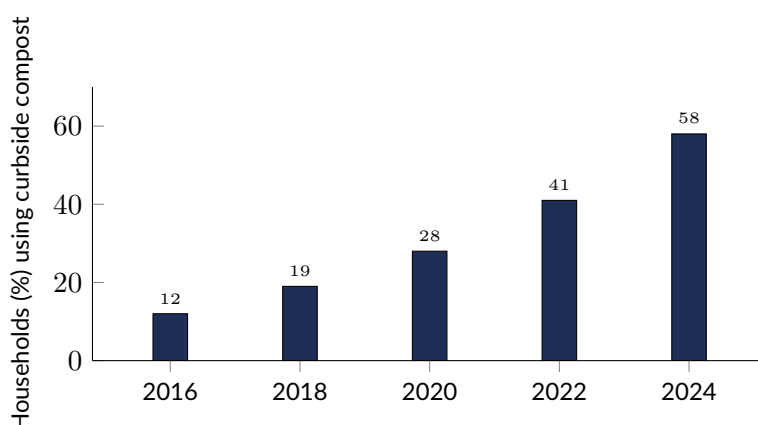


Figure 2.1: Sample synthesis-style source: curbside composting participation in a mid-sized city, 2016–2024.

Turning a chart into evidence with commentary

Weak use: “The chart shows composting went up.” (Restates the visual; no commentary.)

Strong use: “Participation nearly quintupled between 2016 and 2024 (Source B), and the steepest single jump — thirteen percentage points — occurred between 2020 and 2022, exactly the window in which the city switched from an opt-in to an opt-out enrollment model. This timing suggests that the default enrollment rule, not growing environmental awareness alone, drove much of the increase.”

The strong version cites a specific number, isolates a specific interval, and connects the pattern to a plausible cause rather than simply describing that the line goes up.

2.4 The Toulmin model of argument

While claim–evidence–commentary is the basic paragraph unit, the **Toulmin model** (developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin) offers a more precise map of how any single argument actually holds together. It is especially useful for diagnosing *why* an argument is weak, not just labeling it weak.

The Toulmin model

- **Claim** — the position being argued.
- **Data / grounds** — the evidence offered in support.
- **Warrant** — the (often unstated) logical assumption that connects the data to the claim; asks “why does this evidence prove this claim?”

- **Backing** — further support for the warrant itself, if the warrant is not self-evident.
- **Qualifier** — words that limit the claim’s scope or certainty (“usually,” “in most cases,” “under current conditions”).
- **Rebuttal** — an acknowledged exception or counterargument, and the conditions under which the claim might not hold.

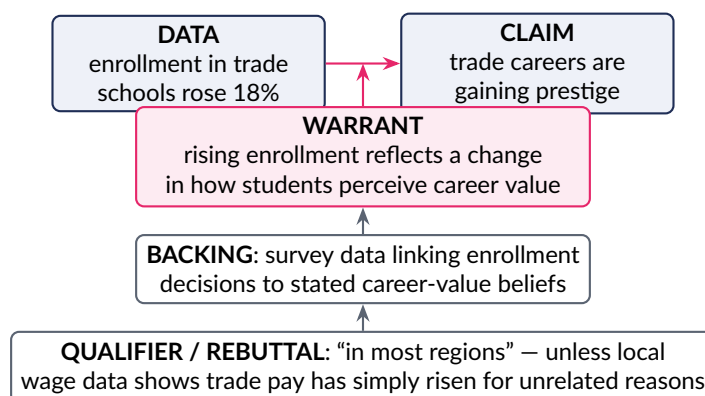


Figure 2.2: The Toulmin model applied to a single claim: the warrant is the hidden logical bridge between data and claim, and a strong argument can defend that bridge if challenged.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Mô hình Toulmin giúp em “mổ xẻ” một lập luận thành các phần: **Claim** (luận điểm), **Data** (bằng chứng), và quan trọng nhất là **Warrant** — **giả định logic ẩn** kết nối bằng chứng với luận điểm (thường không được nói ra). Khi một lập luận “nghe có vẻ đúng” nhưng thực chất yếu, thường là vì warrant của nó có vấn đề. **Qualifier** (từ giới hạn như “trong hầu hết trường hợp”) và **Rebuttal** (ngoại lệ được thừa nhận) là dấu hiệu của một lập luận trưởng thành, không tuyệt đối hóa.

Finding the hidden warrant

Data: “This neighborhood’s property values rose 20% after the new park opened.” **Claim:** “The city should build more parks to raise property values elsewhere.”

Hidden warrant: that this neighborhood’s result will generalize to other neighborhoods — an assumption that ignores other possible causes (a simultaneous transit expansion, a broader regional housing boom) and other neighborhoods’ different starting conditions. A reader who asks “why does this data prove this claim?” exposes the warrant as the argument’s weakest point, even though the data itself is accurate.

2.5 Counterargument: concession, rebuttal, and refutation

Sophisticated arguments engage seriously with opposition rather than ignoring it. Three related but distinct moves matter here.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Concession** — explicitly granting that an opposing point has genuine merit.
- **Rebuttal** — explaining why, despite that merit, the writer’s overall claim still stands (often by limiting the scope of the opposing point).

- **Refutation** — directly showing that an opposing claim is factually or logically incorrect, not merely limited in scope.

A concession followed by a rebuttal (rather than a refutation) is usually the more sophisticated move, because it shows the writer can hold two true things in tension — an opposing point can be *partly* right and the writer's claim can *still* hold.

Concession-and-rebuttal in action

"Critics are right that a four-day school week saves districts real money on transportation and utilities [concession]. But those savings are captured entirely at the district level, while the cost of a fifth unsupervised day falls on individual families who cannot easily absorb it — particularly families without a stay-at-home parent [rebuttal]. The policy does not eliminate a cost; it relocates one."

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A concession without a rebuttal reads as conceding the whole argument. Never end a paragraph on the opposing point — always pivot back with a word like "but," "yet," or "however," and explain specifically why the concession does not defeat your claim.

2.6 Logical fallacies

A **fallacy** is a flaw in reasoning that makes an argument invalid even when it feels persuasive. Recognizing fallacies is tested directly on the multiple-choice section and matters when you evaluate sources for your own essays.

Fallacy	Definition	Tiếng Việt
Hasty generalization	a broad claim based on too few examples	Khái quát hóa vội vàng
Straw man	misrepresenting an opponent's position to make it easier to attack	Ngụy biện người rơm
False dilemma	presenting only two options when more actually exist	Ngụy biện lưỡng nan giả
Slippery slope	claiming one small step will inevitably cause an extreme outcome	Ngụy biện dốc trượt
Ad hominem	attacking the person instead of addressing the argument	Công kích cá nhân
Circular reasoning	using the conclusion itself as a premise (re-stating, not proving)	Lập luận vòng quanh
Appeal to authority	citing an authority irrelevant to the specific claim, or treating authority as automatically decisive	Ngụy biện dựa vào uy quyền
Appeal to popularity	claiming a view is true because many people believe it	Ngụy biện đám đông
Post hoc (false cause)	assuming that because B followed A, A caused B	Ngụy biện nhân quả sai
Red herring	introducing an irrelevant point to distract from the actual issue	Đánh lạc hướng
Begging the question	assuming the truth of the very claim being argued	Ngụy biện tiền đề vòng
Equivocation	shifting the meaning of a key term partway through an argument	Ngụy biện đánh tráo khái niệm
False equivalence	treating two things as morally or logically equal when they differ in a decisive way	Ngụy biện đánh đồng sai
Bandwagon	urging acceptance because "everyone is doing it"	Ngụy biện a dua

Fallacies identified in context

Post hoc: “The new mayor took office in January, and unemployment fell in March. Her policies are clearly working.” (Ignores every other possible cause of the change in two months.)

False equivalence: “One board member wants to fix a pothole, another wants to sell the town park; both are just ‘spending priorities,’ so their views are equally reasonable.” (Treats a minor maintenance decision and a major, largely irreversible decision as equivalent in scale.)

Equivocation: “The law only bans ‘assault.’ Since a heated argument is technically a verbal assault on someone’s feelings, the law should apply here too.” (Silently switches “assault” from its legal, physical meaning to a loose figurative one.)

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: On the multiple-choice section, fallacy questions often include one choice that names a *real* fallacy that simply does not match the specific passage. Do not choose an answer just because it names a familiar-sounding fallacy – check that the passage’s actual structure matches that fallacy’s definition.

2.7 Claim, evidence, commentary: the paragraph unit**Claim – Evidence – Commentary**

[CLAIM] *Unpaid internships disadvantage low-income students.* [EVIDENCE] *A 2022 National Association of Colleges and Employers survey found that only 43% of unpaid interns received a job offer afterward, compared with 63% of paid interns, largely because unpaid interns must work second jobs and cannot dedicate full attention to the internship.* [COMMENTARY] *This gap shows that “unpaid” is not neutral: it silently filters out students who cannot afford to work for free, converting a career opportunity into a privilege reserved for those with financial support.*

The bracketed structure above – claim, then specific evidence, then commentary explaining why the evidence matters – is the basic unit of every strong AP Lang paragraph.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: An “evidence dump” – stringing together facts, quotations, or examples with no commentary connecting them to the claim – is the single most common reason a paragraph earns a low Evidence-and-Commentary score. Evidence without explanation proves nothing to a reader; you must say *how* the evidence supports your point.

Bài tập luyện tập

“Because standardized test scores predict college success no more reliably than high-school GPA, our district should eliminate the SAT requirement for local scholarships.” This statement is best classified as a claim of

(A) fact

(C) policy

(B) value

(D) definition

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence proposes an action (“should eliminate”), which is the hallmark of a **claim of policy**; the reasoning about predictive reliability is the support, not the claim itself. **(C).**

Bài tập luyện tập

“Senator Alvarez wants to raise fuel-efficiency standards for new cars. Next, she will be telling us we cannot drive cars at all.” Which fallacy does this statement commit?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| (A) hasty generalization | (C) ad hominem |
| (B) slippery slope | (D) circular reasoning |

Lời giải chi tiết

The statement assumes, without evidence, that a modest regulatory step will inevitably escalate to an extreme, unrelated outcome (banning cars). This chain of unsupported “next... then...” escalation is the definition of a **slippery slope**. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Given the claim “Urban community gardens reduce neighborhood crime,” which piece of evidence would be the *strongest* support?

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) one resident’s testimonial that she feels safer | borhoods with and without gardens |
| (B) a peer-reviewed study comparing five-year crime statistics in matched neighborhoods | (C) a photograph of a well-tended garden |
| (D) the garden organizer’s personal opinion column | |

Lời giải chi tiết

Strong evidence is credible, sufficient, and directly relevant. A controlled, peer-reviewed comparison across matched neighborhoods over time isolates the variable (gardens) far more convincingly than a single testimonial, an image, or an interested party’s opinion. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Underlined claim: “Community colleges award technical certificates in about half the time of a four-year degree.” Which sentence, inserted immediately after, would most effectively strengthen the argument with *commentary* rather than mere restatement?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) “This is simply a fact about community colleges.” | start repaying any debt — years earlier than their four-year peers.” |
| (B) “Because employers in fields like nursing and computer networking increasingly hire based on verified skills rather than degree titles, this shorter timeline lets students enter well-paid work — and | (C) “Four-year degrees also exist and are common.” |
| (D) “Community colleges are located in every U.S. state.” | |

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) either restate the claim or add an unrelated fact; none explains *significance*. Only (B) supplies commentary: it links the timeline fact to a real-world consequence (faster entry into paid, skills-based work), which is exactly the “so what” that earns Evidence-and-Commentary credit. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student argues: “This scholarship policy is unfair. Unfair policies should not exist. Therefore, this policy should not exist.” This argument’s chief weakness is best described as

- (A) a hasty generalization from insufficient examples
(B) circular reasoning, since the conclusion is essentially assumed within the first
(C) an ad hominem attack
(D) a false dilemma

Lời giải chi tiết

The argument never establishes *why* the policy is unfair; it simply asserts unfairness and then treats that unproven assertion as sufficient grounds for its conclusion, which loops back on itself rather than offering independent support. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Nine out of ten local business owners we spoke to at the downtown farmers market opposed the new parking fee.” As support for the claim “Downtown business owners overwhelmingly oppose the new parking fee,” this evidence is most vulnerable to which criticism?

- (A) it is not representative, since business owners were sampled only at one event that may not reflect the full population of downtown businesses
(B) it is irrelevant to the claim
(C) it commits a slippery slope fallacy
(D) it is an example of circular reasoning

Lời giải chi tiết

A farmers-market sample likely skews toward a specific type of business owner (small vendors present at that particular event) and excludes many downtown businesses entirely, so the evidence may not be **representative** of “downtown business owners” as a whole, even though it is relevant and not circular. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

Identify the **warrant** (the unstated logical assumption) in the following argument: “This company’s CEO grew up in poverty, so her proposed budget cuts to social programs must be well-informed and fair.”

- (A) that budget cuts always reduce a deficit
(B) that personal experience with poverty guarantees sound, unbiased judgment about social policy
(C) that CEOs are legally required to disclose their childhood background
(D) that social programs have never helped anyone

Lời giải chi tiết

The argument leaps from a biographical fact (grew up in poverty) to a policy judgment (fair, well-informed cuts) only if we assume that lived experience with poverty automatically produces sound and unbiased policy judgment — a substantial, unstated, and debatable assumption, which is exactly what a warrant is. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A city council member says: “Either we approve this developer’s full proposal exactly as written, or downtown will remain empty and abandoned forever.” This statement is an example of

- (A) a false dilemma, ignoring other possible outcomes between the two extremes presented (B) a hasty generalization
(C) an appeal to authority
(D) a valid deductive argument

Lời giải chi tiết

The statement presents only two outcomes (approve exactly as written, or permanent abandonment) while ignoring realistic middle options such as a revised proposal, a different developer, or phased development — the definition of a **false dilemma**. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision most effectively adds a *qualifier* to the following overly absolute claim? “Social media use causes depression in teenagers.”

- (A) “Social media use is fun for teenagers.” contact.”
(B) “Heavy, passive social media use is associated with increased depressive symptoms in many teenagers, particularly when it displaces sleep and in-person (C) “Teenagers should never use social media.”
(D) “Depression is a serious mental health condition.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) either change the subject or remain absolute; only (B) narrows the claim’s scope (“heavy, passive use,” “many,” specific mechanisms like displaced sleep) rather than asserting a universal, unqualified causal claim — exactly the qualifying move the Toulmin model recommends for a defensible claim. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student paragraph reads: “Public art funding should be increased. Studies show public art increases foot traffic. Foot traffic is good for local business. Local businesses fund the local tax base. The tax base funds schools. Schools help children succeed. Therefore, public art funding helps children succeed.” This chain of reasoning is most vulnerable to which criticism?

- (A) it is an ad hominem attack on public art funding to matter by the time it reaches the final claim
(B) each link may be individually plausible, but the argument never establishes that the effect is large enough at each step (C) it is a straw man of the opposing position
(D) it commits a false dilemma

Lời giải chi tiết

This is a classic weak causal chain: even if each individual link is plausible, the argument never shows that the effect *survives* multiple steps of dilution (a small rise in foot traffic may translate to a negligible change in tax revenue, and an even smaller effect on school outcomes) — a common weakness distinct from *ad hominem*, straw man, or false dilemma. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“My opponent wants to ‘gut’ our police department’s budget.” In fact, the opponent proposed redirecting 8% of the budget to a mental-health crisis response team while keeping the rest of the department’s funding unchanged. The word “gut” here is best described as

- (A) an accurate, neutral description of the proposal
(B) a straw man that misrepresents a modest, partial reallocation as wholesale destruction
(C) a claim of fact that can be easily verified
(D) an example of a false dilemma

Lời giải chi tiết

“Gut” exaggerates a targeted 8% reallocation into total destruction of the department’s funding, misrepresenting the actual, more moderate proposal in order to make it easier to attack — the defining move of a **straw man**. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Write a claim–evidence–commentary paragraph (5–6 sentences) supporting the claim: “Public libraries should offer free tax-preparation assistance.” Invent one plausible, specific piece of evidence (a statistic, a named program, or a study) and explain its significance.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *Public libraries are uniquely positioned to close the tax-preparation gap for low-income residents. In cities where library systems have piloted free IRS-certified tax help, such as a 2019 program in a mid-sized Midwestern library system, participants claimed an average of \$1,100 more in eligible tax credits than in the prior year, largely because volunteers caught credits residents did not know existed. This matters because tax-preparation software and paid preparers charge fees that can consume a meaningful share of a low-income refund, meaning the people who most need their full refund are often the ones losing the largest percentage of it to preparation costs. A library-based program removes that cost barrier entirely while using a space many residents already trust and visit regularly, making it a more accessible intervention than an app or a one-time community event.* Note the paragraph’s shape: a claim, one specific and plausible piece of evidence, and commentary that explains why the evidence matters rather than simply restating it.

Free-Response Practice

Identify the hidden warrant in this argument, then write one sentence of rebuttal that limits its scope without fully rejecting it: “This new hire graduated from a top-ranked university, so she will clearly be an excellent employee.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Warrant: that attending a top-ranked university reliably predicts strong on-the-job performance, regardless of the specific skills the job requires. **Rebuttal:** “A strong academic record is a reasonable positive signal, but it says little about skills that only show up on the job, such as collaborating under deadline pressure — qualities better assessed through a work sample or a structured interview than through a university’s name alone.” This response grants a real (if partial) connection between the evidence and the claim while showing why the warrant alone cannot fully support the confident conclusion.

Bài tập luyện tập

A debater states: “Vaccines cannot be entirely risk-free, and my opponent has not proven they are, so we cannot trust any vaccine safety claims at all.” This reasoning is most clearly an example of

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| (A) a false dilemma between ‘entirely risk-free’ and ‘cannot be trusted at all,’ ignoring the realistic middle ground of well-established but non-zero risk | (B) a valid statistical inference |
| | (C) an appeal to popularity |
| | (D) begging the question |

Lời giải chi tiết

The statement collapses a wide spectrum of possible positions (risk can be extremely low, well-characterized, and still worth trusting) into only two extremes — “entirely risk-free” or “cannot be trusted at all” — ignoring the realistic, evidence-based middle ground, which is the structure of a **false dilemma**. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best demonstrates *sophisticated* engagement with a counterargument, rather than a simple concession or a dismissal?

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) “Some people disagree with me, but they are wrong.” | employees would preserve the program’s environmental benefit while directly addressing that specific, legitimate cost.” |
| (B) “Opponents of the recycling mandate are correct that compliance costs fall hardest on small businesses in the short term; a phased-in schedule with a two-year grace period for businesses under twenty | (C) “I will not address the counterargument because my position is obviously correct.” |
| | (D) “Both sides have some good points and some bad points.” |

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (C) dismiss opposition without engagement; (D) is vague and non-committal. Only (B) names the specific legitimate concern, concedes it honestly, and proposes a concrete modification that preserves the writer’s overall position — the kind of nuanced, complexity-aware move that earns sophistication credit. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Everyone in my graduating class is going into finance, so it must be the smartest career choice.” This statement most clearly commits which fallacy?

- (A) appeal to popularity (bandwagon) (C) false equivalence
(B) slippery slope (D) post hoc

Lời giải chi tiết

The argument treats the popularity of a choice among a specific peer group as proof of its objective merit, with no independent evidence about outcomes — the definition of an **appeal to popularity / bandwagon** fallacy. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

A nutrition brand claims: “No studies have proven our supplement is unsafe, so it must be safe.” This reasoning is flawed primarily because it

- (A) correctly places the burden of proof on critics rather than the manufacturer (C) uses circular reasoning by repeating the word ‘safe’ twice
(B) treats an absence of evidence (no studies proving harm) as equivalent to positive evidence of safety (D) commits a straw man against nutrition critics

Lời giải chi tiết

Absence of disproof is not proof; a lack of studies could simply mean the supplement has not been adequately studied, not that it has been tested and found safe — this evidence gap is exactly what the claim wrongly treats as reassuring. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Referring to the composting chart above, which statement demonstrates the strongest use of the visual as evidence?

- (A) “The chart is about composting rates.” — the same window in which the city switched to an opt-out enrollment model, suggesting the policy change, not awareness alone, drove much of the increase.”
(B) “Composting went up a lot, which is good news for the environment.”
(C) “Participation nearly quintupled between 2016 and 2024, with the steepest single jump occurring between 2020 and 2022” (D) “The y-axis of the chart is labeled ‘Households (%) using curbside compost.’”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (D) merely describe the chart’s features; (B) restates the trend with vague, unearned commentary (“which is good news”). Only (C) cites specific figures, isolates the steepest interval, and proposes a specific, plausible cause tied to a real detail in the data. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

A tobacco company funds a study concluding that a proposed cigarette tax will not reduce smoking rates among teenagers. The most responsible way to use this study as a source in an argumentative essay is to

- (A) ignore the study entirely because of its funding source
(B) cite its findings without any mention of who funded it
(C) cite the specific data while explicitly naming the funding source, and note that its conclusion should be checked against independently funded research
(D) treat the study as automatically false because a tobacco company funded it

Lời giải chi tiết

Funding source does not automatically invalidate data, but responsible use requires transparency (naming who funded the study) and appropriate caution (seeking independent confirmation) rather than blind acceptance, blind rejection, or silent omission of the funding source. (C).

Free-Response Practice

A prompt asks you to argue whether school uniforms should be mandatory. Write ONE sentence that states a defensible, appropriately qualified thesis, and ONE sentence naming the strongest counterargument you would need to address for a sophistication point.

Lời giải chi tiết

Model thesis: “Although mandatory uniforms cannot by themselves resolve deeper inequities among students, requiring them removes one visible, daily marker of family income from the school environment and is therefore a reasonable — if partial — step toward reducing appearance-based social pressure.” **Strongest counterargument to address:** that uniforms restrict individual expression and that the money spent enforcing a uniform policy could instead fund more direct interventions (such as need-based clothing assistance) that address the same inequity without restricting choice. A strong essay would concede that this counterargument identifies a real trade-off, then explain why the visible daily marker uniforms remove is worth the cost even so.

2.8 Combining multiple pieces of evidence: convergence and conflict

A single claim is rarely supported by only one type of evidence in a strong argument. Two patterns recur often enough to name directly: **convergence** (independent pieces of evidence pointing the same direction, which strengthens a claim considerably) and **conflict** (pieces of evidence that appear to disagree, which a careful writer must address rather than silently drop).

Convergence versus conflict

- **Convergence** — when a statistic, an expert’s finding, and an anecdote independently point toward the same conclusion, the claim is considerably stronger than any one piece would establish alone, because the pieces are unlikely to agree purely by coincidence.
- **Conflict** — when two credible-seeming pieces of evidence appear to disagree, the first move is not to simply pick the one that supports your argument. Check whether the sources are actually measuring the *same thing* (different time periods, different populations, or differ-

ent definitions of a key term often explain apparent conflicts without either source being wrong).

Resolving an apparent conflict between two sources

Source 1: a national survey reports that 68% of remote workers say they are “very satisfied” with their work arrangement. **Source 2:** a separate study finds that self-reported loneliness has risen among remote workers over the same period.

These findings only look contradictory if “satisfaction with work arrangement” and “loneliness” are treated as opposites. In fact, they are measuring different things: a worker can be genuinely satisfied with schedule flexibility and commute elimination (Source 1’s actual question) while separately reporting more loneliness (Source 2’s actual question) – the two studies are compatible once their precise scope is identified. A writer who notices this can use *both* sources together for a more sophisticated claim: “Remote work appears to solve the problems employees complain about most loudly (commuting, rigid schedules) while quietly introducing a cost – social isolation – that satisfaction surveys focused on flexibility do not capture.”

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Khi hai nguồn có vẻ **mâu thuẫn**, đừng vội chọn nguồn nào ủng hộ lập luận của em rồi bỏ qua nguồn còn lại. Hãy kiểm tra xem hai nguồn có đang đo **cùng một thứ** không – rất nhiều “mâu thuẫn” chỉ là do khác **định nghĩa, thời điểm, hoặc phạm vi đo lường**. Biết cách giải quyết mâu thuẫn này (thay vì lờ đi) là một trong những cách rõ ràng nhất để đạt điểm Sophistication.

2.9 A closer look at causal claims

Causal claims (“X causes Y”) are among the most frequently tested and most frequently overreached claims on the exam. Distinguishing correlation from causation, and recognizing the specific conditions under which a causal claim becomes defensible, is a skill worth isolating from the general fallacies list.

Three tests for a defensible causal claim

- **Covariation** – does the proposed cause and the proposed effect actually change together consistently, not just in one cherry-picked instance?
- **Temporal order** – does the proposed cause actually precede the proposed effect in time? (A cause cannot follow its effect.)
- **Elimination of alternative explanations** – has the writer ruled out, or at least acknowledged, other plausible causes of the same effect (a confounding variable)?

A claim that satisfies covariation and temporal order but ignores plausible alternative explanations is vulnerable to the **post hoc** fallacy covered earlier in this chapter, even if the timing genuinely lines up.

Testing a causal claim against all three criteria

Claim: “The city’s new bike-lane network caused a 12% drop in downtown traffic congestion.”

Covariation: check whether congestion actually tracks bike-lane mileage across multiple neighborhoods, not just downtown. **Temporal order:** confirm the lanes were built *before* the congestion drop, not after (a drop that preceded lane construction would rule out this cause entirely). **Alternative explanations:** rule out or account for a simultaneous rise in remote work,

a new toll on a parallel highway, or a temporary road closure elsewhere that could independently explain reduced downtown traffic. Only after checking all three does “the bike lanes caused the drop” become a defensible claim rather than a plausible-sounding guess.

Bài tập luyện tập

A city’s ice cream sales and its rate of drowning incidents both rise every June through August and fall every December through February. Which explanation for this pattern best avoids a post hoc fallacy?

- (A) Ice cream sales cause drowning incidents.
- (B) Drowning incidents cause ice cream sales.
- (C) A confounding variable — warmer weather — independently increases both ice cream sales and swimming activity, which in turn affects drowning rates.
- (D) The correlation is entirely coincidental and has no explanation.

Lời giải chi tiết

Neither variable causes the other; both are driven by a third, confounding variable (warm weather, which increases both ice cream consumption and swimming). This is a classic textbook case for teaching the difference between correlation and causation, and (C) correctly identifies the confound rather than asserting a direct (and absurd) causal link or dismissing the pattern as unexplainable. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

A study finds that students who eat breakfast score higher on morning exams than students who skip breakfast. Before accepting “eating breakfast causes higher exam scores,” which alternative explanation would be most important to rule out?

- (A) that breakfast foods contain sugar
- (B) that students from higher-income households may be more likely both to regularly eat breakfast and to have other advantages (tutoring, sleep, lower stress) that independently raise exam scores
- (C) that exams are scored out of 100 points
- (D) that mornings occur before afternoons

Lời giải chi tiết

Household income is a highly plausible confounding variable here: it could independently drive both breakfast habits and access to other academic advantages, which would make the breakfast–score relationship correlational rather than directly causal unless this alternative is addressed. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following claims about the bike-lane example above would most clearly violate the *temporal order* test for causation?

- (A) "Congestion began dropping six months before the bike lanes were completed." (C) "Congestion dropped gradually over the two years after the bike lanes opened."
(B) "Congestion dropped in the same month the bike lanes opened." (D) "Congestion has not been measured since the bike lanes opened."

Lời giải chi tiết

If congestion started dropping *before* the bike lanes were even completed, the lanes cannot be the cause of that earlier drop — a direct violation of temporal order, since a cause cannot precede itself, let alone follow its own effect. (A).

Free-Response Practice

A classmate argues: "Reading fiction makes people more empathetic, because a survey found that frequent fiction readers score higher on empathy tests than non-readers." Identify one plausible confounding variable this argument fails to rule out, and explain in one sentence why it matters.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Confounding variable:** people who are already more empathetic or more introspective by disposition may simply be more drawn to reading fiction in the first place, rather than fiction reading causing the empathy. **Why it matters:** if disposition drives both the reading habit and the empathy score, then encouraging a naturally less-empathetic reader to read more fiction might not raise their empathy at all, which is precisely the practical claim the original argument implies.

2.10 Evaluating statistical evidence critically

Numbers carry an appearance of objectivity that can mask real weaknesses in how they were gathered or reported. A few recurring statistical issues are worth checking every time a passage or source leans heavily on a number.

Four questions to ask of any statistic

- **Sample size and selection** — how many observations, and were they selected in a way that could skew the result (only surveying people already inclined to respond, for instance)?
- **Survivorship bias** — does the data only include cases that "survived" to be counted, silently excluding the failures or dropouts that would tell a different story?
- **Correlation strength versus causal language** — does the source's own language ("associated with," "linked to") match a correlational finding, or does the writer's paraphrase inflate a correlation into causation?
- **Base rate** — is a percentage change reported without the underlying raw numbers, potentially making a small absolute change look dramatic (or a large one look small)?

Survivorship bias in action

Claim: "A study of small businesses still operating after ten years found that 80% of their founders said they never took out a business loan, suggesting loans are unnecessary for long-term success."

This study only examines businesses that *survived* ten years – it says nothing about businesses that failed, some of which may have failed *because* they could not access a loan, and some of which may have failed *despite* taking one. The surviving 80% figure tells us about survivors' financing choices, not about whether avoiding loans generally improves a business's odds of survival; the study's sample silently excludes exactly the cases (failures) that would let a reader test that broader claim.

Base rate and percentage framing

Framing A: “Cases of the rare disease doubled this year.” **Framing B:** “Cases of the rare disease rose from 4 to 8 in a population of 2 million.”

Both sentences describe the same underlying data, but Framing A's “doubled” sounds alarming in isolation, while Framing B's raw numbers make clear that the absolute risk remains extremely small. Neither framing is technically false – but a careful reader (and a careful writer) should always ask for the base rate behind a percentage change before drawing a conclusion about real-world significance.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Số liệu **trông có vẻ khách quan** nhưng có thể ẩn chứa vấn đề: **survivorship bias** (chỉ tính các trường hợp “sống sót,” bỏ qua các trường hợp thất bại); **base rate** (báo cáo % thay đổi mà không cho biết số liệu gốc, khiến thay đổi nhỏ trông có vẻ lớn hoặc ngược lại); và việc **lẫn lộn tương quan với nhân quả** (từ “liên quan đến/associated with” bị diễn giải nhầm thành “gây ra/causes”). Luôn hỏi: **cỡ mẫu bao nhiêu, chọn mẫu thế nào, và số liệu gốc là gì** trước khi tin vào một con số.

Bài tập luyện tập

A headline reads: “New study: coffee drinkers are 50% more likely to develop condition X!” Before accepting this as alarming, which piece of missing information would most change how seriously a reader should take the claim?

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) the brand of coffee studied | still represent a tiny absolute risk |
| (B) the baseline (absolute) rate of condition X in non-coffee-drinkers, since a 50% increase from a very small base rate may | (C) the exact time of day participants drank coffee |
| | (D) the study's publication date |

Lời giải chi tiết

A relative increase (“50% more likely”) is uninterpretable without the baseline absolute rate; if condition X normally affects 1 in 100,000 people, a 50% relative increase is still extremely rare in absolute terms, while the same relative increase from a 1-in-10 baseline would be a much larger practical concern. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A source states that “companies that survived the 2008 recession commonly report that cutting advertising budgets was not necessary for their survival.” This finding is most vulnerable to which statistical criticism?

- (A) the sample size is too large
- (B) survivorship bias, since the study only examines companies that survived and cannot account for how many non-surviving companies also avoided cutting advertising
- (C) the study used no numbers at all
- (D) the finding is a logical fallacy of equivocation

Lời giải chi tiết

By only studying survivors, the finding cannot show whether avoiding advertising cuts is actually associated with survival, because it has no data on companies that failed — exactly the survivorship-bias blind spot this section describes, not a sample-size, equivocation, or numerical-absence issue. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A news article states: “Researchers found that eating breakfast is associated with better academic performance in children.” A student’s essay then writes: “This study proves that eating breakfast causes children to perform better in school.” The student’s restatement is problematic because it

- (A) accurately reflects the original finding
- (B) inflates a correlational finding (“associated with”) into an unsupported causal claim (“proves... causes”)
- (C) understates the strength of the original finding
- (D) uses more cautious language than the original study

Lời giải chi tiết

The original source explicitly uses correlational language (“associated with”); the student’s restatement silently upgrades this to a strong causal and even certainty claim (“proves... causes”), which the original evidence does not support and which is a common, testable overreach. **(B).**

2.11 A full Toulmin case study

A complete Toulmin breakdown of a real-world argument

Argument as stated: “This neighborhood should get a new stoplight at Fifth and Main. Three accidents happened at that intersection last year, and stoplights reduce accidents at busy intersections.”

Claim: the city should install a stoplight at Fifth and Main. **Data:** three accidents occurred there last year. **Warrant (unstated):** a stoplight would have prevented those specific accidents, or will prevent similar future ones, because this intersection's problem is fundamentally the kind that traffic-signal control solves. **Backing:** general traffic-engineering evidence that signals reduce certain accident types (specifically T-bone collisions caused by unclear right-of-way) at similarly busy intersections. **Qualifier:** "at busy intersections with unclear right-of-way" – the claim likely does not hold for all three-accident intersections regardless of cause. **Rebuttal/exception:** if the three accidents were caused by something a stoplight would not fix (icy roads, a specific driver's impairment, a broken stop sign already in place), the warrant fails and the recommended solution would not actually address the real problem.

Why this matters: the argument's stated claim and data sound reasonable, but its actual strength depends entirely on the unstated warrant – specifically, whether the three accidents share a cause that a stoplight would fix. A rigorous reader (or a rigorous writer testing their own argument) checks the warrant before accepting the conclusion, which is exactly why the accident *types*, not just the accident *count*, would be the first thing to verify before this argument could be considered strong.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài tập “mổ xẻ” hoàn chỉnh này cho thấy: một lập luận nghe **hợp lý** (ba vụ tai nạn → cần đèn giao thông) vẫn có thể **yếu** nếu warrant (giả định ẩn) không được kiểm tra. Trước khi chấp nhận hoặc bác bỏ một lập luận, hãy luôn tìm **warrant** của nó, rồi hỏi: giả định đó có thực sự đúng trong trường hợp cụ thể này không?

Bài tập luyện tập

In the stoplight argument above, which additional piece of information would most directly test whether the warrant actually holds?

- (A) the total population of the neighborhood (C) the cost of a new stoplight
(B) the specific cause of each of the three accidents (e.g., unclear right-of-way versus icy roads versus driver impairment) (D) the number of residents who support the proposal

Lời giải chi tiết

The warrant assumes the accidents share a cause a stoplight would fix; only information about each accident's actual cause can confirm or refute that assumption, while population, cost, and public support are relevant to other parts of the decision but do not test the warrant itself. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A city council member responds to the stoplight argument: “I looked into it, and all three accidents happened on icy mornings when the stop sign already in place was simply not being obeyed due to poor visibility of the sign itself, not unclear right-of-way.” This response most directly

- (A) introduces an ad hominem attack on the original proposer solution addresses
(B) attacks the argument's warrant directly, by showing the accidents' actual cause does not match the cause the proposed (C) confirms the original argument's data as accurate and sufficient
(D) is an example of a hasty generalization

Lời giải chi tiết

The response does not attack the proposer personally or generalize hastily; it directly investigates and challenges the **warrant** – showing the actual cause of the accidents (a poorly visible existing sign, not unclear right-of-way) does not match the mechanism a stoplight would fix, which is exactly the kind of warrant-level challenge this section models. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Using the Toulmin model, identify the claim, data, and warrant in the following argument, then write one sentence identifying a plausible rebuttal: “Students who take AP courses in high school report higher college GPAs. Therefore, high schools should require all students to take at least one AP course.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Claim: high schools should require all students to take at least one AP course. **Data:** AP-taking students report higher college GPAs. **Warrant:** the AP course itself causes the higher GPA, rather than the kind of student who already chooses to take AP courses (more academically motivated, better prepared) simply also earning higher college GPAs regardless of the AP course. **Plausible rebuttal:** *If motivated, well-prepared students are simply more likely both to choose AP courses and to succeed in college independent of that choice, then requiring all students – including those not currently self-selecting into AP – to take one may not reproduce the same GPA benefit, since the warrant conflates a voluntary choice’s correlate with a mandatory policy’s likely effect.*

Bài tập luyện tập

A company claims: “Our new app has a 4.9-star rating, based on reviews from customers who downloaded it.” Which criticism most directly targets a potential weakness in this evidence?

- (A) The rating is a whole number, which is impossible. users, not representative of all downloaders.
- (B) Customers who bothered to leave a review may be a self-selected group of unusually satisfied (or unusually dissatisfied) (C) Star ratings are never used in marketing.
- (D) The claim contains a logical fallacy of equivocation.

Lời giải chi tiết

Review-based ratings are vulnerable to self-selection bias: people with strong opinions (very satisfied or very frustrated) are more likely to leave a review than the typical, moderately satisfied user, which can skew the average away from what a truly representative sample would show. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“This bridge has stood for 200 years, so it will obviously stand for 200 more.” This argument’s chief logical weakness is best described as

- (A) a hasty generalization projecting past durability indefinitely into the future without accounting for accumulated wear, changed load conditions, or material fatigue (B) an ad hominem attack on the bridge’s original engineers
- (C) a true and fully sound argument with no weakness (D) an example of begging the question

Lời giải chi tiết

Past performance is real evidence but not proof of indefinite continuation, especially for physical structures subject to cumulative wear; treating 200 years of past durability as a guarantee of the next 200 ignores exactly the kind of changing conditions a rigorous argument should address. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

A debate coach advises: "Never say your opponent is wrong. Show, with a specific piece of evidence, why their conclusion does not follow from their own premises." This advice most directly encourages

- (A) ad hominem argumentation vague, unsupported claim of error
- (B) attacking an argument's structure or war- (C) avoiding evidence entirely
rant specifically, rather than making a
- (D) conceding every point automatically

Lời giải chi tiết

The advice specifically targets the logical connection between an opponent's premises and conclusion (their warrant or reasoning), rather than a personal attack, evidence-avoidance, or blanket concession – exactly the precise, structural critique this chapter's Toulmin discussion models. **(B)**.

2.12 Building an evidence bank: a worked case study

Bringing together claim types, evidence quality, and the Toulmin model, the case study below shows how a writer might plan a paragraph from a bare claim to a fully supported argument.

From bare claim to supported paragraph

Bare claim: “The city should fund a free after-school tutoring program.”

Step 1 – classify the claim: this is a claim of policy (proposes an action), which means its strongest support will be evidence about *effectiveness*, not just evidence that a problem exists.

Step 2 – identify the warrant the claim needs: the unstated assumption is that free tutoring specifically (not some other intervention) would measurably improve outcomes enough to justify the cost. **Step 3 – select evidence that directly supports the warrant, not just the general topic:** a statistic showing “many students struggle academically” supports the existence of a problem but not the warrant that *this specific solution* works; a study of a comparable city’s free tutoring program showing a specific improvement (e.g., a measured rise in course pass rates) directly supports the warrant. **Step 4 – add a qualifier and anticipate a rebuttal:** “for students who attend regularly” qualifies the claim honestly, and acknowledging that irregular attendance limits the program’s effect pre-empts an obvious objection.

Resulting paragraph: *The city should fund a free after-school tutoring program, provided it is designed around the specific mechanism that makes such programs work: consistent, sustained attendance. A neighboring district's three-year-old free tutoring program reported a 14-percentage-point rise in course pass rates among students who attended at least twice weekly, but almost no measurable change among students who attended fewer than five total sessions. This distinction matters because it means the program's value is not automatic – simply funding it is not enough; the city would also need a plan for encouraging consistent attendance, such as transportation support or scheduling tutoring immediately after the school day rather than requiring a separate trip.*

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài case study này minh họa toàn bộ quy trình của chương: **phân loại luận điểm** (đây là claim of policy, cần bằng chứng về **hiệu quả**), **xác định warrant** (giả định ẩn cần được chứng minh), **chọn bằng chứng đúng warrant** (không chỉ chứng minh vấn đề tồn tại, mà chứng minh **giải pháp cụ thể này** hiệu quả), và **thêm qualifier + rebuttal** để lập luận trở nên trưởng thành hơn.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the case study above, a statistic showing that “40% of students in this district score below grade level in reading” would primarily support

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) the warrant that free tutoring specifically improves outcomes | (free tutoring) is the effective remedy |
| (B) the existence of a problem, but not by itself the warrant that this specific solution | (C) the qualifier about attendance |
| | (D) a rebuttal to the strongest counterargument |

Lời giải chi tiết

This statistic establishes that a problem exists (low reading scores) but says nothing about whether free tutoring specifically would fix it – exactly the gap between “a problem exists” evidence and “this solution works” evidence that Step 3 of the case study distinguishes. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

An op-ed claims: “Every economist agrees that this tax policy will boost growth.” Which criticism most directly targets this specific claim?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) The claim uses an unqualified appeal to authority (“every economist”), an absolute unlikely to be literally true given how rarely economists reach unanimous agreement on policy effects | (B) The claim contains a dangling modifier |
| | (C) The claim commits a slippery slope fallacy |
| | (D) The claim is a valid deductive syllogism |

Lời giải chi tiết

Claims of total, unanimous professional agreement (“every economist”) are almost always overstated, since economists rarely agree unanimously on contested policy questions; this is an unqualified, likely false appeal to authority, not a grammar issue, a slippery slope, or a syllogism. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of “Every economist agrees that this tax policy will boost growth” would make the claim more defensible?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) “Every single economist in the entire world agrees completely.” | years, though several noted significant uncertainty about the size of the effect.” |
| (B) “A majority of economists surveyed by a recent panel expect this policy to modestly boost growth over the next two | (C) “Economists agree.” |
| | (D) No revision is needed. |

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) intensifies the same unqualified absolute; (C) remains vague; (D) leaves the flawed claim unchanged. Only (B) replaces the false unanimity claim with an appropriately qualified one (a majority, a specific timeframe, an acknowledged uncertainty) – exactly the qualifying move the Toulmin model recommends. **(B)**.

2.13 A combined fallacy-and-evidence case study**A flawed argument, diagnosed line by line**

"Since our new manager started, sales are up 15%, so clearly she is a great leader. Besides, she went to the same business school as three of the last five CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, and everyone at the company respects her. Anyone who disagrees with her decisions simply doesn't understand modern management. If we don't give her a raise, other companies will poach her – and then where will we be?"

Sentence 1: correlation presented as causation (Chapter 2's causal-claim tests) – the sales increase might share a cause with the manager's hiring (a broader market recovery, a new product line) rather than being produced by her leadership alone; temporal order and covariation are suggested, but alternative explanations are never ruled out. **Sentence 2:** an appeal to authority that conflates credential (business school) with actual performance, plus an appeal to popularity ("everyone... respects her") that provides no independent evidence of leadership quality. **Sentence 3:** an ad hominem-adjacent move that dismisses disagreement by impugning critics' understanding rather than engaging their actual objections. **Sentence 4:** a slippery slope, escalating a plausible retention concern into a dramatic, unsupported "where will we be?" without establishing that poaching is actually likely or that a raise is the only preventive option.

Notice that a paragraph can *feel* persuasive – it moves quickly, sounds confident, and never pauses – while containing four distinct reasoning problems in five sentences. Slowing down to isolate each claim is the only reliable defense against this kind of rapid-fire, cumulative persuasion.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Đoạn văn ở trên là ví dụ về cách nhiều **ngụy biện** có thể xuất hiện **liên tiếp** trong một đoạn ngắn, khiến lập luận nghe rất tự tin và trôi chảy dù mỗi câu đều có vấn đề riêng: **tương quan/nhân quả sai, dựa vào uy quyền không liên quan, công kích gián tiếp người phản đối, và dốc trượt**. Kỹ năng quan trọng nhất khi đọc một đoạn văn thuyết phục là **tách từng câu ra** để kiểm tra riêng, thay vì đánh giá cảm giác chung của cả đoạn.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence in the passage above best exemplifies the post-hoc reasoning pattern discussed earlier in this chapter?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) Sentence 1, since it treats the timing of the sales increase and the manager's arrival as sufficient proof of causation, without ruling out other explanations | (B) Sentence 2, since it discusses business school credentials |
| | (C) Sentence 3, since it dismisses critics |
| | (D) Sentence 4, since it discusses poaching |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 1 assumes that because the sales increase followed the manager's arrival, she caused it – the defining structure of post hoc reasoning, distinct from the appeal-to-authority issue in sentence 2, the ad hominem-adjacent dismissal in sentence 3, or the slippery slope in sentence 4. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which single piece of additional information would most directly help a reader evaluate whether sentence 1's causal claim is actually justified?

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) The manager's personal favorite color | this manager specifically |
| (B) Sales data from comparable companies in the same industry over the same period, to check whether the 15% increase reflects a broader market trend rather than | (C) The name of the business school mentioned in sentence 2 |
| | (D) The exact wording used in sentence 3 |

Lời giải chi tiết

Comparable industry-wide data would directly test the alternative-explanations criterion from this chapter's causal-claim tests – if competitors saw similar gains over the same period, the manager's specific contribution becomes far less certain, which is exactly the missing information needed to evaluate the claim rigorously. **(B)**.

Reasoning, Line of Reasoning & Organization

Mục tiêu Unit: Lập luận diễn dịch (deductive) và quy nạp (inductive), tam đoạn luận (syllogism) và enthymeme; line of reasoning (mạch lập luận) — bộ khung của một bài luận; các phương pháp phát triển ý (methods of development) và các kiểu tổ chức bài viết; cấu trúc đoạn văn và câu chủ đề; từ nối (transitions) như tín hiệu logic; và các kỹ thuật tạo sự mạch lạc (coherence) và thống nhất (unity).

3.1 Deductive and inductive reasoning

Logos — the logical appeal introduced in Chapter 1 — is built from two complementary reasoning structures that recur throughout nonfiction argument.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Deductive reasoning** moves from general premises to a specific, logically certain conclusion. If the premises are true and the structure valid, the conclusion *must* be true.
- **Inductive reasoning** moves from specific observations to a general, probable conclusion. Even with strong evidence, an inductive conclusion remains a matter of likelihood, not certainty — it can always be overturned by new evidence.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Lập luận diễn dịch (deductive) đi từ cái chung đến cái riêng: nếu các tiền đề đúng và cấu trúc hợp lệ, kết luận **chắc chắn đúng**. **Lập luận quy nạp (inductive)** đi từ các quan sát cụ thể đến một kết luận chung mang tính **xác suất**, có thể bị bác bỏ nếu xuất hiện bằng chứng mới. Phần lớn lập luận trong các bài luận AP Lang là quy nạp (dựa trên ví dụ, dữ liệu cụ thể để đi đến một luận điểm tổng quát).

3.1.1 The classical syllogism

A **syllogism** is the classic deductive structure: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion that necessarily follows.

A valid syllogism

Major premise: All policies that reduce a school's overall graduation rate should be reconsidered.

Minor premise: This new attendance policy has reduced the school's overall graduation rate.

Conclusion: Therefore, this new attendance policy should be reconsidered.

The structure is **valid** (the conclusion follows logically from the premises); whether the argument is also **sound** depends on whether the premises are actually true. A reader who accepts the structure but doubts the minor premise (is the graduation-rate claim actually accurate?) is attacking the argument's soundness, not its validity.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A syllogism can be perfectly **valid** (logically well-formed) while being completely **unsound** (built on a false premise). “All senators who miss votes are lazy; Senator X missed a vote; therefore Senator X is lazy” is valid in form but relies on an indefensible major premise. When you critique an argument, be precise about whether you are challenging its logical structure or the truth of one of its premises.

3.1.2 The enthymeme: the syllogism of everyday argument

Most real-world persuasive writing does not spell out a full syllogism; it uses an **enthymeme** — a syllogism with one premise left unstated because the writer assumes the audience already accepts it. Recognizing the missing premise is often the fastest way to locate an argument’s real weak point.

Finding the missing premise in an enthymeme

“Of course we should extend the library’s hours — it’s a public service.”

Stated: this is a public service (minor premise) → we should extend its hours (conclusion).

Missing major premise: all public services should have their hours extended (or, more precisely, some unstated standard for *when* a public service’s hours should be extended). Spelling out the missing premise reveals the real question a critical reader should ask: is “it’s a public service” alone sufficient reason for this particular extension, or does the argument need additional support (evidence of demand, cost feasibility) to be convincing?

3.2 Line of reasoning: the skeleton of an argument

A **line of reasoning** is the logical path connecting a thesis to its supporting claims, in an order that builds meaning rather than simply listing points. Each body paragraph should advance the argument through a **Claim** → **Evidence** → **Commentary** unit, and paragraphs should build on one another — the second reason should feel like it follows from, complicates, or deepens the first, not merely sit beside it.

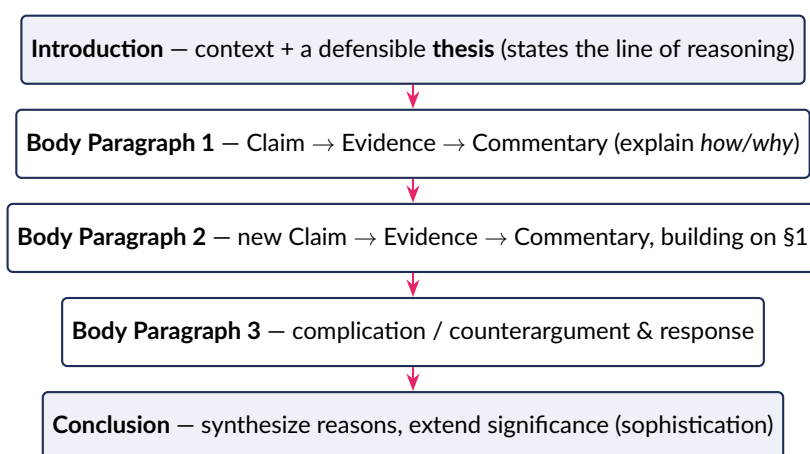


Figure 3.1: A generic AP Lang essay skeleton — the same shape fits the Synthesis, Rhetorical Analysis, and Argument essays.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

“Line of reasoning” là **mạch lập luận** nối liền luận đề (thesis) với các luận điểm phụ theo một trật tự **có lý do**, chứ không phải liệt kê rời rạc. Giám khảo AP phân biệt rất rõ giữa một bài có mạch lập luận thật sự (các đoạn “nối tiếp” và “đào sâu” nhau) với một bài chỉ là **danh sách ví dụ**

(list structure) — dạng sau bị giới hạn điểm Sophistication.

3.3 Methods of development

Within any organizational pattern, writers develop individual points using recurring rhetorical methods. Recognizing which method a paragraph uses helps you predict what kind of evidence and structure to expect.

Method	What it does	Tiếng Việt
Definition	clarifies what a term or concept means, often to reframe a debate	Định nghĩa
Classification/division	sorts a subject into categories or breaks a whole into parts	Phân loại / chia nhỏ
Comparison–contrast	examines two subjects side by side to reveal similarity or difference	So sánh – đối chiếu
Cause–effect	shows one condition producing another	Nhân – quả
Process analysis	explains the steps by which something happens or is done	Phân tích quy trình
Narration	tells a structured story to illustrate a point	Kể chuyện / tự sự
Description	uses sensory, concrete detail to make an abstract idea vivid	Miêu tả
Exemplification	develops a general claim through one or more specific examples	Nêu ví dụ minh họa

Definition used to reframe an argument

“Before we debate whether this policy is ‘fair,’ we should agree on what fairness means here. Fairness cannot simply mean ‘identical treatment,’ because identical fifteen-minute testing accommodations mean something very different for a student with a documented reading disability than for a student without one. Fairness, properly defined, means equal access to the opportunity being tested – not an identical stopwatch.”

By redefining “fairness” before making a claim about it, the writer changes what evidence will count as relevant — a classic use of **definition** as a method of development, common in policy arguments.

3.4 Organizational patterns

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Chronological / narrative** — events or ideas ordered in time.
- **Spatial** — ideas ordered by physical or conceptual location (near to far, local to global).
- **Compare–contrast** — two subjects examined side by side to reveal similarity or difference; organized either *subject-by-subject* (all of A, then all of B) or *point-by-point* (each point of comparison covers A and B together).
- **Cause–effect** — one condition shown to produce another, sometimes chained across multiple steps.
- **Problem–solution** — a difficulty is established, then a remedy is proposed and justified.
- **Order of importance** — points arranged from least to most significant (building momentum) or most to least (leading with the strongest point).

- **Concession-and-rebuttal** — the writer acknowledges a valid opposing point, then explains why their own position still holds.

3.4.1 Point-by-point versus subject-by-subject comparison

Two ways to organize the same comparison

Subject-by-subject: Paragraph 1 covers everything about Program A (cost, duration, outcomes); Paragraph 2 covers everything about Program B (cost, duration, outcomes); the reader must hold Paragraph 1's details in memory while reading Paragraph 2.

Point-by-point: Paragraph 1 compares the cost of A and B directly; Paragraph 2 compares the duration of A and B directly; Paragraph 3 compares outcomes directly.

Point-by-point organization is usually stronger for argumentative writing because it forces an explicit comparison on each dimension rather than asking the reader to do the comparing themselves after the fact.

3.4.2 Transitions as signposts of logic

Transitions do not just connect sentences; they announce the *logical relationship* between ideas. Choosing the wrong transition (e.g., “similarly” where the ideas actually contrast) actively damages the line of reasoning.

Relationship	Signal words
Addition	furthermore, moreover, in addition, also, similarly
Contrast	however, yet, on the other hand, conversely, nevertheless, in contrast
Causation	therefore, as a result, consequently, thus, accordingly
Concession	admittedly, granted, while it is true that, to be sure
Sequence	first, subsequently, next, finally, meanwhile
Emphasis	indeed, in fact, above all, more importantly
Illustration	for example, for instance, specifically, as illustrated by
Summary/conclusion	in short, ultimately, in the end, taken together

Ví dụ mẫu · Worked example

“Proponents of the four-day school week point to lower busing and utility costs, and they are right that the district saves money. Yet the savings are concentrated at the district level, while the costs — a fifth day of unsupervised time for children whose parents work full-time — fall on individual families who cannot easily absorb them.”

This paragraph uses a **concession-and-rebuttal** pattern: it grants the opposing claim (savings are real) before pivoting on “Yet” to show the claim is incomplete, redirecting attention to an uneven distribution of costs. The pattern deepens the argument rather than merely restating a counter-opinion.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Three body paragraphs that are simply three separate, unconnected examples form a **list**, not a line of reasoning. If you could rearrange your paragraphs in any order without changing the essay's meaning, you likely have a list. Strong essays make the *order itself* meaningful (e.g., moving from the most obvious reason to the most surprising one, or from individual to societal scale).

3.5 Paragraph-level structure and topic sentences

A strong **topic sentence** does more than announce a subject; it makes a specific claim that the rest of the paragraph will prove, and it signals how the paragraph connects to the essay's overall line of reasoning.

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Weak topic sentence:** announces a topic ("This paragraph will discuss the cost of the program.")
- **Strong topic sentence:** makes a specific, arguable claim tied to the thesis ("The program's short-term cost is offset within eighteen months by a documented drop in emergency-room visits among enrolled families.")

A well-built body paragraph typically moves: topic sentence (claim) → evidence → commentary (explaining significance) → a closing sentence that either transitions to the next paragraph or ties back to the thesis.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Câu chủ đề (topic sentence) mạnh không chỉ **giới thiệu chủ đề**, mà phải nêu ra một **luận điểm cụ thể** mà cả đoạn văn sẽ chứng minh, đồng thời cho thấy đoạn văn này **liên kết** thế nào với mạch lập luận chung của bài. Một câu chủ đề chỉ nói "đoạn này sẽ nói về X" là một dấu hiệu của đoạn văn yếu.

3.6 Unity, coherence, and cohesion

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Unity** — every sentence in a paragraph serves the paragraph's single controlling claim; an interesting but off-topic sentence breaks unity even if well written.
- **Coherence** — ideas are arranged so a reader can follow the logic from one sentence to the next without confusion.
- **Cohesion** — the smaller-scale "glue" that links sentences: repeated key terms, pronoun reference, parallel grammatical structure, and transitions.

Repetition of a key term (deliberately, not accidentally) and parallel grammatical structure across related sentences are two of the most reliable tools for building cohesion without sounding repetitive in a careless way.

Repetition and parallelism as structural glue

"The policy protects the river. The policy protects the wetland. The policy protects, most of all, the small farms that depend on both."

The deliberate repetition of "The policy protects" is not redundancy — it is a structural device (anaphora, covered fully in Chapter 4) that keeps the reader anchored to a single controlling idea across three examples, building toward the sentence's real point (the farms) through parallel escalation.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Unintentional repetition (reusing the same word because no better one came to mind) reads as a weakness; deliberate repetition (reusing a key term to reinforce a controlling idea, especially at structurally important moments like paragraph openings) is a

strength. The difference is whether the repetition is doing rhetorical work or simply filling space.

3.7 Introductions and conclusions

An effective introduction establishes enough context for the thesis to make sense, then states a defensible, appropriately qualified claim — it does not need a “hook” gimmick or a dictionary definition. An effective conclusion does more than restate the thesis: it explains the argument’s broader stakes, extends the claim to a new context, or resolves a tension the essay raised, which is often where a Sophistication point is earned.

Bài tập luyện tập

“All students who complete the internship program report higher confidence. Maria completed the internship program. Therefore, Maria reports higher confidence.” This argument is best described as

- (A) a sound and valid inductive argument (C) an example of circular reasoning
(B) a valid deductive syllogism, whose soundness depends on whether the major premise is actually true (D) an enthymeme with a missing minor premise

Lời giải chi tiết

The structure moves from a general premise (all students who complete the program report higher confidence) through a specific case (Maria completed it) to a necessary conclusion — a textbook **deductive syllogism**. Its validity is structural; its **soundness** depends entirely on whether “all students” truly report higher confidence, which is a much stronger and more easily challenged claim than “most” or “many.” (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Identify the unstated major premise in this enthymeme: “We should trust Dr. Kim’s diagnosis — she’s a board-certified specialist.”

- (A) “All diagnoses are correct.” trusted.”
(B) “Board-certified specialists’ diagnoses are generally reliable enough to be (C) “Dr. Kim has never made a mistake.”
(D) “Trust is not necessary in medicine.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The stated minor premise (Dr. Kim is board-certified) only supports the conclusion (we should trust her diagnosis) if we assume board certification generally signals reliable diagnostic judgment — a reasonable, if not absolute, unstated premise; (A) and (C) are far too strong to be the audience’s actual assumption, and (D) contradicts the argument entirely. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student paragraph opens: “Public transit ridership dropped 30% during work-from-home shifts. Consequently, transit agencies cut evening routes, which then made transit less vi-

able for night-shift workers who never had the option to work from home.” This paragraph’s organizational pattern is best described as

- (A) compare–contrast
- (B) a chain of cause and effect
- (C) chronological narrative with no logical connection
- (D) concession-and-rebuttal

Lời giải chi tiết

Each sentence identifies a cause producing an effect that then becomes the cause of the next effect (ridership drop → route cuts → reduced access for night-shift workers): a linked **cause–effect** chain. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which transition word, inserted at the start of the second sentence below, best signals a *concession* before a rebuttal? “Critics argue that remote juries risk lower attentiveness. _____, courts that have tracked outcomes report no measurable rise in mistrials.”

- (A) Similarly,
- (B) Admittedly,
- (C) Consequently,
- (D) For example,

Lời giải chi tiết

The second sentence pushes back against the first with contrary evidence, but the relationship being tested is whether the writer first grants a point before countering it. “Admittedly” explicitly signals concession, setting up the contrast that follows; “Similarly” and “For example” wrongly imply agreement/illustration, and “Consequently” wrongly implies the second sentence is a result of the first. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student’s essay has three body paragraphs: (1) an example about recycling programs, (2) an example about carbon taxes, (3) an example about public transit – each summarized independently with no reference to the others or to a shared claim. A reader could swap paragraphs 1 and 3 with no loss of meaning. This essay most needs revision to fix its

- (A) diction
- (B) line of reasoning (it currently reads as a list)
- (C) use of evidence types
- (D) grammar and punctuation

Lời giải chi tiết

The diagnostic detail – paragraphs can be reordered without changing meaning – is the textbook symptom of **list structure** rather than a line of reasoning; each example needs to build on, complicate, or be ranked against the others. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision best connects the following two ideas into a single sentence that makes the logical relationship explicit? Idea 1: “The library extended its hours.” Idea 2: “Evening foot

traffic doubled.”

- (A) “The library extended its hours, and evening foot traffic doubled.” (C) “The library extended its hours. Evening foot traffic doubled.”
- (B) “The library extended its hours; evening foot traffic doubled after the change, suggesting the two are directly related.” (D) “Evening foot traffic doubled, but the library extended its hours.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (C) merely juxtapose the ideas without naming a relationship; (D) misleadingly uses “but,” implying contrast where none exists. Only (B) makes the causal/correlational relationship explicit with “suggesting the two are directly related,” which is exactly the kind of commentary a line of reasoning requires. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A paragraph is organized point-by-point comparing two proposed after-school programs on cost, staffing, and measured outcomes. This organizational choice is generally more effective than a subject-by-subject structure primarily because it

- (A) is always shorter memory
- (B) forces an explicit, direct comparison on each dimension rather than requiring the reader to compare the two subjects from (C) avoids the need for any evidence
- (D) is required by AP Lang scoring guidelines

Lời giải chi tiết

Point-by-point structure puts each basis of comparison side by side within a single paragraph, doing the comparative work directly for the reader, rather than asking the reader to hold an entire subject’s details in memory while reading about the second subject. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence functions best as a strong topic sentence (a specific, arguable claim) rather than a weak, merely descriptive one?

- (A) “This paragraph is about the new recycling program.” \$40,000 annual cost is offset within two years by a documented 15% reduction in landfill fees.”
- (B) “The recycling program has both costs and benefits.” (D) “There are many recycling programs in different cities.”
- (C) “The recycling program’s modest

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) announces a topic; (B) is vague and takes no real position; (D) is off-topic generalization. Only (C) makes a specific, checkable claim (a cost offset by a specific benefit within a specific timeframe) that the rest of the paragraph can develop. **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A paragraph reads: “Coral reefs support twenty-five percent of marine species. My cousin went snorkeling last summer. Coral bleaching is a serious problem.” This paragraph most clearly violates

- (A) parallelism
- (B) unity, because the second sentence does not serve a single controlling claim
- (C) subject-verb agreement
- (D) the rules of deductive reasoning

Lời giải chi tiết

The second sentence (a personal anecdote about snorkeling) has no clear connection to the paragraph’s apparent claim about coral reef biodiversity and bleaching, breaking **unity** – every sentence in a paragraph should serve its single controlling idea. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“We rebuilt the bridge. We rebuilt the school. We rebuilt trust.” The repetition of “We rebuilt” primarily serves to

- (A) pad the sentence’s length for no rhetorical purpose
- (B) create cohesion and build toward an escalating final claim through deliberate,
- (C) demonstrate faulty grammar
- (D) introduce a counterargument

Lời giải chi tiết

The repeated, parallel structure anchors the reader to a single pattern across three examples, building rhetorical momentum toward the final, most abstract and significant claim (“trust”) – deliberate repetition functioning as cohesion, not padding. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An essay’s conclusion states only: “In conclusion, as I have shown, failure can be valuable.” This conclusion is weak primarily because it

- (A) uses incorrect grammar
- (B) merely restates the thesis without extending its significance or resolving any tension the essay raised
- (C) introduces new evidence not discussed in the body paragraphs
- (D) is too long

Lời giải chi tiết

A bare restatement of the thesis does the minimum a conclusion can do; it neither extends the claim’s significance nor engages with any complexity the essay raised, missing the opportunity most conclusions have to contribute toward a Sophistication point. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Convert the following unstated-premise (enthymeme) argument into a full syllogism, naming the missing major premise: “This candidate has run a small business for fifteen years, so she understands how regulations affect working families.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Major premise (unstated): People who have run a small business for many years generally understand how regulations affect working families. **Minor premise (stated):** This candidate has run a small business for fifteen years. **Conclusion (stated):** Therefore, she understands how regulations affect working families. Naming the major premise exposes the real point a critical reader should examine: does long business ownership reliably produce that specific understanding, or might it produce a narrower, employer-side perspective that does not fully capture how regulations affect *employees*?

Free-Response Practice

Rewrite the following three unconnected sentences as a single paragraph with a clear line of reasoning, using at least one transition that signals a logical (not merely additive) relationship: “The city added bike lanes downtown. Cyclist injuries dropped 18% in the first year. Some downtown business owners opposed the project before it began.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “*When the city added protected bike lanes downtown, many business owners opposed the project, warning that reduced parking would hurt foot traffic. The results one year later complicate that prediction: cyclist injuries dropped 18%, and several of the same business owners have since reported no measurable change in customer volume. The lanes’ safety benefit, in other words, appears to have arrived without the economic cost that opponents feared.*” Note how “in other words” and the reordering (opposition first, then result, then a commentary sentence connecting them) transforms three flat facts into a paragraph with an actual claim and a resolved tension.

Free-Response Practice

Identify which method of development (definition, classification, cause-effect, process analysis, or comparison-contrast) would best develop the following claim, and explain why in one sentence: “Not all ‘screen time’ is equally harmful to adolescent well-being.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Definition (or a closely related classification) is the strongest fit: the claim’s entire force depends on distinguishing categories lumped together under one vague term (“screen time”), so the paragraph’s real work is to define and separate those categories — for instance, passive scrolling versus interactive video calls with family — before any evidence about harm can be meaningfully evaluated.

Bài tập luyện tập

A writer arranges three reasons for a policy from the most widely accepted reason to the most controversial, least-expected reason. This is an example of organizing by

- (A) chronological order (C) spatial order
(B) order of importance, building momentum toward the most surprising point (D) process analysis

Lời giải chi tiết

Arranging reasons deliberately from most expected to most surprising is a form of **order of importance** (or emphasis), designed to build momentum and leave the reader with the most memorable, least obvious point last. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence best demonstrates *process analysis* as a method of development?

- (A) "Recycling is good for the environment." the local facility; next, they are shipped to a regional processor; finally, usable material is sold to manufacturers, while contaminated loads are diverted to a landfill."
(B) "Recycling and composting differ in what materials they accept."
(C) "First, sorted materials are compacted at (D) "Some cities recycle more than others."

Lời giải chi tiết

Only (C) walks through a sequence of steps (sorting, compacting, shipping, processing, and the two possible outcomes) – the defining structure of **process analysis**; the others are an evaluation, a comparison setup, and a vague generalization respectively. (C).

3.8 Line of reasoning across the three free-response tasks

The underlying skill – building a thesis and organizing paragraphs so each one advances, rather than merely accompanies, the last – is identical across AP Lang's three essay tasks. What changes is *where the reasons come from and how they are typically grouped*.

Task	Source of the reasons	Typical grouping
Synthesis essay	the writer's own claim, supported by at least three of the provided sources	by <i>reason</i> (each body paragraph argues one reason, pulling evidence from two or more sources as needed) – never by source
Rhetorical analysis essay	the strategies/choices the given writer actually makes in the passage	by <i>strategy</i> or by <i>movement through the passage</i> (beginning → middle → end), tracking a cumulative effect
Argument essay	the writer's own knowledge, reading, observation, and experience	by <i>reason</i> , usually ordered from most straightforward to most complex or surprising

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Dù là bài Synthesis, Rhetorical Analysis, hay Argument, kỹ năng cốt lõi vẫn giống nhau: xây một **thesis khả biện** rồi tổ chức các đoạn văn sao cho đoạn sau **tiếp nối** đoạn trước theo logic, không chỉ **đứng cạnh nhau**. Điểm khác biệt duy nhất là **nguồn gốc của luận điểm phụ**: từ tài liệu cho sẵn (Synthesis), từ chính văn bản đang phân tích (Rhetorical Analysis), hay từ kiến thức/trải nghiệm cá nhân (Argument). Chương 6–8 sẽ đi sâu vào từng dạng bài.

3.9 Diagnosing a weak line of reasoning

Four recurring weaknesses account for most of the organizational problems in student essays. Learning to recognize them in your own drafts — and in released sample essays — is one of the fastest ways to raise a Row B (Evidence and Commentary) or Row A (Thesis) score.

Four common structural weaknesses

- **The list** — paragraphs are interchangeable; reordering them changes nothing. Each paragraph proves the thesis independently instead of building on the previous one.
- **The summary** — the writer retells what a source or passage says without ever explaining why it matters to the writer's own claim. Common in synthesis and rhetorical-analysis essays under time pressure.
- **The evidence dump** — several pieces of evidence appear in a row with no commentary linking them to the claim; the reader is left to do the analytical work the writer should have done.
- **The kitchen sink** — the writer tries to touch every possible reason, source, or device in the time available, so nothing is developed beyond a sentence or two. Depth loses to breadth.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bốn lỗi tổ chức phổ biến nhất: **liệt kê** (list — các đoạn có thể đổi chỗ mà không ảnh hưởng gì), **tóm tắt** (summary — chỉ kể lại nội dung mà không giải thích ý nghĩa), **đổ bằng chứng** (evidence dump — nêu bằng chứng liên tục mà không có commentary), và **tham lam** (kitchen sink — cố nhét quá nhiều ý trong thời gian có hạn nên không ý nào được đào sâu). Giám khảo AP luôn ưu tiên **chiều sâu hơn chiều rộng**.

The same three ideas, organized two ways

Raw ideas: (1) a city's new bike-share program reduced short car trips; (2) the program initially drew complaints about sidewalk clutter; (3) ridership is highest among commuters earning below the median income.

As a list (weak): *The bike-share program reduced short car trips. It also drew complaints about sidewalk clutter. Ridership is highest among lower-income commuters. Overall, the program has had mixed effects on the city.* — three flat facts, no claim connects them, and the vague closing sentence ("mixed effects") is not really a thesis.

As a line of reasoning (strong): *The bike-share program's early complaints about sidewalk clutter obscured its more significant achievement: measurably shifting who has affordable access to fast urban transportation. Short car trips fell precisely in the corridors where the bikes were deployed, suggesting real substitution rather than coincidental timing. That substitution matters most because it is concentrated among commuters earning below the median income — exactly the group least likely to own a car and most likely to benefit from a cheaper alternative. The clutter complaints, real as they are, describe a fixable design problem; the ridership data describes the program's actual purpose working as intended.* — the same three facts now build toward a single claim (the complaints are a minor, solvable issue next to a genuine equity achievement), with each sentence doing analytical work rather than simply reporting.

3.10 From evidence bank to outline: a planning method

Before drafting, experienced writers convert a raw list of possible evidence into an ordered outline by asking three questions of every item: *does this support my thesis, does it repeat a point I already have, and where does it belong in a sequence that builds?*

A four-step planning method

1. **Dump** every possible piece of evidence or example you can think of, without judging quality yet.
2. **Cut** anything that does not clearly support a defensible thesis, and merge near-duplicates.
3. **Group** what remains into two or three reasons (not one reason per example — several examples can serve one reason).
4. **Order** the reasons so each one deepens, complicates, or answers an objection to the one before it — not simply “reason one, reason two, reason three” in the order they occurred to you.

(!) **Lỗi thường gặp:** Planning time is not wasted time. An essay drafted from an ordered outline almost always scores higher on Row B and Row C than an essay of equal length drafted by simply writing down ideas as they occur, because the writer has already solved the “does this belong, and where” problem before starting to write full sentences.

3.11 Full passage practice: organization and reasoning**Annotated passage — tracing the line of reasoning**

“A city council debating a proposed noise ordinance received two kinds of testimony last week. The first came from residents near the new entertainment district, who described sleepless nights and children waking at 2 a.m. The second came from venue owners, who cited a state economic report showing that entertainment districts built after similar ordinances in other cities saw revenue drop by double digits within eighteen months. Both groups are describing real costs. But only one of those costs is currently being paid by people who did not choose it: residents did not sign up for the noise when they bought homes years before the district existed, while venue owners entered the district knowing entertainment zoning already existed nearby. An ordinance that phases in modest, enforceable quiet hours between midnight and 6 a.m. — rather than banning live music outright — addresses the involuntary cost without eliminating the voluntary one.”

Organizational pattern: concession-and-rebuttal wrapped around a comparison. The passage grants that both sides face real costs (concession), then introduces a distinguishing criterion — *voluntary versus involuntary* exposure to the cost — that reorganizes the entire debate around a single, applicable standard, before proposing a policy that follows directly from that standard.

Line of reasoning: background (two testimonies) → shared concession (both costs are real) → the analytical move that breaks the tie (voluntary vs. involuntary) → a proposed solution that follows logically from that distinction, not from picking a side.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the passage above, the sentence beginning “But only one of those costs...” functions primarily to

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) introduce an entirely new, unrelated topic | distinguishing criterion |
| (B) pivot the paragraph from concession to the writer’s real analytical claim, using a | (C) restate the residents’ testimony without adding anything |
| | (D) undermine the writer’s own argument |

Lời giải chi tiết

The word “But” signals a pivot away from the shared concession (both sides have real costs) toward the writer’s actual organizing claim — that the costs differ in an important, decision-relevant way (voluntary vs. involuntary). This is not a new topic, a restatement, or self-undermining; it is the hinge of the entire line of reasoning. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The proposed solution (quiet hours rather than a ban) is best described as

- (A) unrelated to the reasoning that precedes it
- (B) a direct consequence of the voluntary/involuntary distinction established earlier in the passage, addressing only the involuntary cost
- (C) a compromise chosen at random between two extremes
- (D) an appeal to popularity

Lời giải chi tiết

The solution is not a random midpoint; it follows logically from the passage’s own analytical criterion — since only the residents’ cost is involuntary, only that cost needs a remedy, and a full ban would needlessly eliminate the venue owners’ voluntary (already-informed) business risk. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

If the passage had instead presented the two testimonies and ended with “Clearly, this is a difficult issue with no easy answers,” this revision would most seriously weaken the passage’s

- (A) grammar claim
- (B) line of reasoning, because the essay would end as an unresolved list of two sides rather than building to an analytical claim
- (C) use of the word “testimony”
- (D) organizational pattern of chronological order

Lời giải chi tiết

Ending on “no easy answers” abandons the very analytical move (the voluntary/involuntary distinction) that gives the original passage its line of reasoning, collapsing it back into an unresolved two-sided list — exactly the “list” weakness this section warns against. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student outlines an argument essay with three body paragraphs: Paragraph 1 defines the key term in the prompt; Paragraph 2 presents the strongest reason supporting the thesis, fully developed; Paragraph 3 presents and responds to the strongest counterargument. This outline demonstrates

- (A) a list structure with no real order
- (B) a deliberately sequenced line of reasoning that builds from definition, to strongest support, to engagement with opposition
- (C) an evidence dump
- (D) circular reasoning

Lời giải chi tiết

Each paragraph has a distinct, escalating function — establishing shared terms, then building the strongest case, then testing that case against its best objection — rather than three interchangeable examples; this is exactly what a deliberate line of reasoning looks like in outline form. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“Some students prefer online classes. Other students prefer in-person classes. Both formats have advantages.” As the opening of an argumentative essay, this passage is weakest because it

- (A) contains a grammar error (C) uses overly technical language
(B) presents both sides without taking a position, giving the essay no thesis to build a line of reasoning around (D) relies on a single, unrepresentative anecdote

Lời giải chi tiết

An essay cannot build a line of reasoning without first taking a defensible position; simply reporting that “both formats have advantages” describes a topic, not an argument, leaving nothing for the following paragraphs to build toward. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Using the four-step planning method above (dump, cut, group, order), plan an outline for the claim: “Universities should not require standardized test scores for admission.” List two ordered reasons (not more) and, for each, name one type of evidence you would use.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Reason 1 (foundational)**: standardized tests measure test-taking skill and access to preparation resources as much as they measure academic potential — *evidence*: statistical evidence correlating test-prep spending with score gains. **Reason 2 (building on Reason 1)**: because access to preparation is unevenly distributed, requiring the tests systematically disadvantages applicants from under-resourced schools even when their in-class performance is equally strong — *evidence*: comparative data on college GPA outcomes for test-optional admits versus test-submitting admits. Notice Reason 2 does not simply repeat Reason 1; it takes the mechanism established in Reason 1 (tests reflect preparation access) and traces its consequence (systematic disadvantage), which is what makes this a line of reasoning rather than two parallel, disconnected points.

Free-Response Practice

A draft body paragraph reads: “Community theater is valuable. Many towns have community theaters. Some famous actors started in community theater. Community theater brings people together.” Diagnose which of the four structural weaknesses (list, summary, evidence dump, kitchen sink) this paragraph shows, and rewrite it as a single sentence with a clear, specific claim that the paragraph could then develop.

Lời giải chi tiết

Diagnosis: this is a **kitchen sink** paragraph — it gestures at three different, undeveloped ideas (fame, ubiquity, community-building) in four short sentences without settling on one claim to prove. **Rewritten topic sentence:** “Community theater’s real value is not the occasional famous alumnus but its unusually low barrier to entry, which lets residents who could never afford professional arts training take a lead role in a full production.” This version commits to one specific, arguable claim (low barrier to entry, not fame or ubiquity) that a single paragraph can actually develop with evidence and commentary.

Bài tập luyện tập

A rhetorical analysis essay is organized into three body paragraphs, each covering one-third of the passage in chronological order (beginning, middle, end), with each paragraph explaining how the writer’s strategies build toward the passage’s overall purpose. This organizational choice is best described as

- (A) a list structure, since three paragraphs are used repeating a fixed set throughout
(B) organizing by movement through the text, appropriate when the passage’s strategies build cumulatively rather than (C) an evidence dump
(D) chronological narration of unrelated historical events

Lời giải chi tiết

Organizing a rhetorical analysis chronologically through the passage is a legitimate and common structure precisely when the writer’s strategies escalate or shift as the passage progresses; it becomes a mere list only if the three sections fail to connect to a cumulative claim about purpose, which is not the case here. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision best converts the following pair of sentences from a list into a line of reasoning?
“The park added new lighting. The park added new benches.”

- (A) “The park added new lighting, and the park added new benches.” them after dark.”
(B) “The park added new lighting; this small change made the earlier decision to add benches far more useful, since residents now feel safe enough to actually sit on (C) “The park added new lighting. The park added new benches. Both are improvements.”
(D) “The park did not add new lighting or new benches.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Only (B) makes the second fact depend logically on the first (the benches only become genuinely useful *because* of the lighting), turning two flat, swappable facts into a single developing claim about how the two changes interact — exactly what distinguishes a line of reasoning from a list. (B).

3.12 Validity, soundness, and the forms of the syllogism

Two syllogisms can share the exact same logical shape and yet differ completely in trustworthiness, because **validity** (the structure is well-formed) and **soundness** (the premises are actually true) are independent questions. Recognizing which one a critique is actually targeting sharpens both your reading and your own argumentative writing.

Four ways a syllogism can go wrong

- **Valid and sound** — the structure is correct and both premises are true; the conclusion is reliable.
- **Valid but unsound** — the structure is correct, but at least one premise is false or unproven; the conclusion does not actually follow in the real world, even though the logic “works.”
- **Invalid (regardless of premise truth)** — the structure itself contains a logical gap, so the conclusion does not follow even if every premise happens to be true.
- **Invalid with false premises** — both the structure and the content fail; the weakest possible argument, though sometimes the most rhetorically persuasive if delivered confidently.

Four syllogisms, four different failures

Valid and sound: All employees hired before 2020 receive the legacy benefits package. Maria was hired in 2018. Therefore, Maria receives the legacy benefits package. — both premises are verifiably true and the structure is valid.

Valid but unsound: All employees who work overtime are more dedicated to the company. Devon works overtime. Therefore, Devon is more dedicated to the company. — the structure is valid, but the major premise is a doubtful generalization (overtime can reflect understaffing, not dedication), so the conclusion, while logically “following,” is not reliable.

Invalid despite true-seeming premises: Some managers are effective communicators. Priya is a manager. Therefore, Priya is an effective communicator. — even if both premises are true, “some managers” does not logically guarantee any particular manager fits that subset; the structure itself is broken.

Invalid with false premises: All successful executives wake up before 5 a.m. Jordan wakes up before 5 a.m. Therefore, Jordan is a successful executive. — the major premise is false (many successful executives do not follow this schedule), and the structure also commits a separate error (affirming a shared trait does not prove membership in the category).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Tính hợp lệ (validity) chỉ nói về **cấu trúc** logic có đúng dạng không; **tính đúng đắn (soundness)** nói về **tiền đề** có thật hay không. Một lập luận có thể **hợp lệ nhưng không đúng đắn** (cấu trúc ổn nhưng tiền đề sai/chưa chứng minh), hoặc **không hợp lệ** ngay cả khi các câu riêng lẻ nghe có vẻ đúng. Khi phản biện một lập luận, hãy nói rõ em đang chỉ ra **lỗi cấu trúc** hay **lỗi tiền đề** – đây là sự khác biệt mà đề AP Lang thường kiểm tra.

Bài tập luyện tập

“All published novelists write every day. Elena writes every day. Therefore, Elena is a published novelist.” This syllogism’s chief flaw is best described as

- (A) a true premise leading to a valid conclusion published novelists happen to share that habit
- (B) an invalid structure: writing every day does not guarantee membership in the category of published novelists, even if all (C) an unsound but valid argument
- (D) a circular argument

Lời giải chi tiết

Even granting the major premise as true, sharing one trait common to a group (writing daily) does not logically establish membership in that group — this is an **invalid** structure (affirming a shared characteristic, not proving category membership), independent of whether any premise is actually true. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“All interns at this firm are unpaid. Priya is an intern at this firm. Therefore, Priya is unpaid.” If it later turns out this firm actually pays all of its interns, this argument should be described as

- (A) invalid, because the structure does not follow logically turns out to be false
- (B) valid but unsound, because the structure is correctly formed but the major premise (C) both invalid and unsound
- (D) sound but invalid

Lời giải chi tiết

The structure is a textbook valid syllogism (general premise, specific case, necessary conclusion); the problem is entirely with the truth of the major premise, which makes the argument **unsound** while remaining structurally **valid** – exactly the distinction this section defines. (B).

3.13 A second full passage: comparing two organizational strategies**Annotated Passage – Comparing Two Proposals**

“Two after-school programs have applied for the same city grant. Program A costs \$80,000 a year and serves 200 students with a 12:1 student-to-staff ratio; independent evaluators found a 22% improvement in on-time homework completion among participants. Program B costs \$50,000 a year and serves 340 students with a 22:1 ratio; the same evaluators found an 8% improvement on the same measure. Dollar for dollar, Program A produces roughly three times the measured benefit per student served; per student served, Program B reaches nearly twice as many children for less than two-thirds the cost. Neither number alone settles which program the city should fund — the real question is which scarcity the city is actually trying to solve: a shortage of intensive support for fewer children, or a shortage of any support at all for more of them.”

Organizational pattern: point-by-point comparison (cost, then ratio, then outcome, each covering both programs together) rather than subject-by-subject, which lets the reader hold both programs’ numbers together at each point of comparison. **Line of reasoning:** present comparable data for both programs → compute two different, non-obvious derived comparisons (benefit-per-dollar; reach-per-dollar) → reframe the decision around an unstated but decisive variable (what scarcity the funder is actually trying to solve) rather than declaring one program simply “better.”

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage's organizational strategy of comparing cost, then ratio, then outcome for both programs together (rather than describing all of Program A, then all of Program B) is an example of

- (A) subject-by-subject comparison
- (B) point-by-point comparison, which forces a direct comparison on each dimension
- (C) chronological narration
- (D) cause-and-effect organization

Lời giải chi tiết

Each paragraph-internal comparison (cost, then ratio, then outcome) covers both programs together on a single dimension before moving to the next, which is the defining structure of **point-by-point** comparison, as distinguished earlier in this chapter from subject-by-subject organization. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The final sentence's reframing ("the real question is which scarcity the city is actually trying to solve") functions primarily to

- (A) introduce a completely unrelated new topic
- (B) resolve the apparent tension between the two derived comparisons by identifying the actual, unstated criterion the decision depends on
- (C) contradict all of the data presented earlier
- (D) restate the passage's opening sentence word for word

Lời giải chi tiết

Rather than simply declaring a winner, the passage's final move identifies the deeper, previously unstated variable (what kind of scarcity is being addressed) that actually determines which set of numbers should matter most – resolving the tension between the two comparisons rather than introducing a new topic, contradicting the data, or merely repeating the opening. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

If the passage had instead ended immediately after presenting both derived comparisons (benefit-per-dollar and reach-per-dollar), without the final reframing sentence, the passage would most resemble

- (A) a fully resolved line of reasoning identical to the original
- (B) an unresolved comparison that leaves the reader without the analytical tool needed to actually decide between the two programs
- (C) a stronger, more sophisticated argument than the original
- (D) a syllogism

Lời giải chi tiết

Without the final reframing move, the passage would simply present two competing numbers with no way to adjudicate between them — exactly the kind of unresolved, list-like ending this chapter's earlier sections identify as a weak, undeveloped line of reasoning, not a stronger one. (B).

3.14 A revision workshop: turning a weak paragraph into a strong one

Recognizing organizational weaknesses in the abstract is one skill; fixing them in a real paragraph, sentence by sentence, is a separate and more exam-relevant skill. The workshop below walks through a full revision.

Before: a weak draft paragraph

"Community colleges are a good option. They cost less than four-year universities. Some students transfer to four-year schools later. A lot of people work while attending community college. There are many different programs offered."

Diagnosis: this paragraph shows two of the four structural weaknesses from earlier in this chapter at once. It is a **list** (each sentence could be reordered without changing the paragraph's meaning) and a **kitchen sink** (five different ideas – cost, transfer, work, programs – none developed past a single sentence). There is no topic sentence making a specific, arguable claim; the paragraph reads as a set of loosely related facts about community colleges in general.

After: a revised paragraph with a real line of reasoning

"Community college's lower cost does more than save money – it changes what students can afford to risk. A student paying \$3,000 a year can change majors after a disappointing first semester without the same financial consequences facing a student who has already committed \$28,000 to a four-year program. This flexibility helps explain why so many community college students work substantial hours while enrolled: the lower fixed cost makes it possible to treat the first two years as a genuine exploration period rather than a decision that must be gotten right immediately. Transfer programs exist precisely to protect this flexibility, letting a student who spent two years testing different fields still reach a four-year degree without having paid a four-year price for the uncertainty."

What changed: the paragraph now opens with a specific, arguable claim (lower cost changes what students can afford to risk, not just what they pay) and each subsequent sentence builds on that claim – the working-while-enrolled fact is now explained *through* the cost-and-flexibility idea rather than sitting beside it, and the transfer-program fact closes the paragraph by connecting back to the same central claim. Nothing in this paragraph could be reordered without breaking its logic – the definition of a genuine line of reasoning.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài tập "revision workshop" này cho thấy: sửa một đoạn văn yếu không phải là thêm từ ngữ hoa mỹ, mà là tìm ra **một luận điểm cụ thể** mà cả đoạn có thể xoay quanh, rồi sắp xếp lại các sự kiện đã có để mỗi câu **giải thích hoặc phát triển** câu trước, thay vì chỉ đứng cạnh nhau.

Free-Response Practice

Revise the following weak paragraph so that each sentence builds on the one before it, following the workshop model above: *"Public parks are important. Some parks have playgrounds. Parks require maintenance funding. Many families visit parks on weekends."*

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “A park’s playground is only as valuable as the maintenance budget behind it, since worn-out or broken equipment quietly converts a public amenity into a liability risk that families notice within a single visit. Weekend family traffic — the moment a city’s parks matter most to the largest number of residents at once — is also the moment when deferred maintenance becomes most visible, as attendance concentrates exactly when problems are most likely to be seen and remembered. A funding cut that looks minor when averaged over a full year can therefore do disproportionate reputational damage if it lands during the weekends families actually use the park most.” Each sentence now depends on the one before it (playgrounds depend on funding; weekend traffic makes funding visible; therefore funding cuts have a timing-sensitive cost), rather than four independent facts about parks in general.

3.15 Outlining templates for the three free-response tasks

The planning method from earlier in this chapter (dump, cut, group, order) produces a slightly different-shaped outline depending on which of the three essay tasks (Chapters 6–8) you are planning. Having a concrete template ready before the exam saves valuable planning minutes.

Task	Outline template
Synthesis	Thesis (position + why it matters) → Reason 1 (2–3 sources woven together) → Reason 2 (2–3 different or overlapping sources) → address the strongest complicating source → conclusion extending significance
Rhetorical Analysis	Thesis (2–3 named strategies + specific effect) → Strategy/- Movement 1 (quoted evidence + commentary) → Strategy/- Movement 2 (quoted evidence + commentary) → Strategy/- Movement 3, showing how it builds on the previous one → conclusion tying strategies to overall purpose
Argument	Thesis (qualified position, defined key terms if needed) → Reason 1 (one deep example) → Reason 2, building on Reason 1 → counterargument + rebuttal → conclusion extending significance

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A template is a starting scaffold, not a rigid formula to fill in mechanically. If a passage’s actual structure does not fit the “three strategies” template (say, it only sustains one dominant device throughout), adapt the template rather than forcing content that is not there – graders reward genuine analysis of the actual text, not adherence to a memorized shape.

3.16 Sentence-level coherence: pronoun reference and precise transitions

Line of reasoning operates at the level of paragraphs and essays, but coherence breaks down just as often at the level of a single sentence, most commonly through **ambiguous pronoun reference** and **imprecise transitions** that claim a logical relationship the sentences do not actually have.

Two sentence-level coherence checks

- **Pronoun reference** — every “it,” “this,” “they,” or “which” should point unambiguously to one clear antecedent; if a sentence contains two possible nouns a pronoun could refer to, a careful reader (and a careful writer) should not have to guess.
- **Transition precision** — a transition word makes a specific logical claim (addition, contrast, cause, concession); using the wrong one does not just sound slightly off, it actively mis-

states the relationship between two ideas, which can mislead a reader about your actual reasoning.

Ambiguous pronoun reference, and the fix

Ambiguous: “The committee rejected the proposal from the engineering firm because it was too expensive.” – does “it” refer to the proposal or the firm itself? Both readings are plausible, and the sentence does not resolve the ambiguity.

Fixed: “The committee rejected the engineering firm’s proposal because the proposed budget exceeded the project’s approved funding by 40%.” – replacing the ambiguous pronoun with a specific noun phrase removes any doubt about what was too expensive, and adds a concrete figure besides.

Imprecise transition, and the fix

Imprecise: “The new policy reduced processing times by half. Similarly, three staff members resigned during the transition.” – “Similarly” claims these two facts are alike in some way, but a resignation and a processing-time improvement are not obviously similar; the sentence asserts a relationship it never explains.

Fixed: “The new policy reduced processing times by half, though the transition was not without cost: three staff members resigned during the same period, citing the pace of the change.” – replacing the false “similarly” with a concession-style transition (“though... not without cost”) correctly signals that the second fact complicates, rather than parallels, the first.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Hai lỗi mạch lạc (coherence) ở cấp độ câu thường gặp: **đại từ mơ hồ** (“it,” “this,” “they” có thể chỉ nhiều hơn một danh từ, khiến người đọc phải đoán) và **từ nối sai quan hệ logic** (dùng “similarly” cho hai ý không thực sự tương đồng). Khi tự sửa bài, hãy đọc lại từng câu và tự hỏi: “đại từ này chỉ rõ ràng vào đâu?” và “từ nối này có đúng miêu tả quan hệ giữa hai ý không, hay chỉ là từ nối mặc định?”

Bài tập luyện tập

“The mayor met with the union president after he released the new budget proposal.” The pronoun “he” in this sentence is ambiguous because it could refer to

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) only the mayor, with no other possible reading | (C) only the union president, with no other possible reading |
| (B) either the mayor or the union president, since the sentence does not clarify which person released the proposal | (D) neither person, since the sentence describes an inanimate object |

Lời giải chi tiết

Both “the mayor” and “the union president” are grammatically available antecedents for “he,” and nothing in the sentence clarifies which one actually released the budget proposal – a textbook ambiguous pronoun reference. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“Enrollment in the coding bootcamp tripled this year. Consequently, three new instructors were hired.” Which revision would most improve this pair of sentences if the hiring actually happened *before* enrollment tripled, in anticipation of demand?

- (A) No revision needed, since “consequently” works regardless of the actual order of events. enrollment then tripled this year, partly as a result of the expanded capacity.”
- (B) “In anticipation of rising demand, the bootcamp hired three new instructors; (C) Delete both sentences entirely.
- (D) Replace “consequently” with “similarly.”

Lời giải chi tiết

“Consequently” asserts that the hiring was a *result* of the enrollment increase, which reverses the actual causal and temporal order described in the question; only (B) restates the sequence accurately, while (D)’s “similarly” would introduce a different but equally inaccurate relationship. (B).

Free-Response Practice

Identify the ambiguous pronoun reference in the following sentence and revise it for clarity: “The report criticized the school board and the superintendent, arguing that it had ignored community feedback for years.”

Lời giải chi tiết

Ambiguity: “it” could refer to either “the school board” or “the superintendent,” and the sentence gives no way to determine which. **Revision:** “The report criticized both the school board and the superintendent, arguing that the board specifically had ignored community feedback for years.” (or, if the superintendent was intended, substitute accordingly) – replacing the ambiguous pronoun with the specific noun removes the guesswork entirely.

Bài tập luyện tập

A three-paragraph essay plan lists: (1) an example about a company that failed, (2) an example about a company that succeeded, (3) a general statement that “business is unpredictable.” Which single change would most improve this plan’s line of reasoning?

- (A) Adding a fourth unrelated example restating that outcomes vary
- (B) Replacing the vague closing generalization with a specific claim about *why* the two contrasting examples differ, so paragraph 3 explains a mechanism rather than (C) Removing all examples entirely
- (D) Reordering the two examples with no other change

Lời giải chi tiết

The plan’s real weakness is that the conclusion never explains *why* one company failed and the other succeeded; a specific, mechanism-based closing claim (not a fourth example, a full removal, or a mere reorder) is what would convert two contrasting anecdotes into an actual line of reasoning. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence most effectively uses cause-and-effect organization to connect two ideas, rather than simply listing them side by side? Ideas: “The library added self-checkout kiosks.” / “Wait times at the front desk decreased.”

- (A) “The library added self-checkout kiosks, and wait times at the front desk decreased.”
- (B) “The library added self-checkout kiosks. Wait times at the front desk decreased.”
- (C) “By diverting routine transactions away from staffed desks, the new self-checkout kiosks directly reduced the volume of requests front-desk staff had to handle, which is reflected in shorter recorded wait times.”
- (D) “Wait times at the front desk decreased, and the library added self-checkout kiosks.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (B), and (D) merely juxtapose the two facts (and (D) even reverses their natural order); only (C) explains the actual mechanism connecting cause to effect (diverting transactions away from staffed desks), which is what distinguishes true cause-and-effect organization from simple juxtaposition. (C).

3.17 Parallel structure as a coherence tool

Beyond its rhetorical use as a device (Chapter 4’s anaphora and parallelism), parallel grammatical structure also serves a purely organizational function: listing related ideas in matching grammatical form makes a paragraph’s structure immediately legible to a reader, while broken parallelism forces the reader to slow down and re-parse the sentence.

Broken parallelism versus true parallelism

Broken: “The new policy is meant to reduce costs, improving efficiency, and for better morale among staff.” – three items in a list use three different grammatical forms (an infinitive phrase, a gerund phrase, a prepositional phrase), forcing the reader to work out the intended structure.

Parallel: “The new policy is meant to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and boost staff morale.” – all three items now share the identical grammatical form (verb + object), letting the reader process the list as a single, unified structure rather than three mismatched fragments.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Cấu trúc song hành (parallel structure) không chỉ là một **biện pháp tu từ** (như đã học ở Chương 4) mà còn là một **công cụ tổ chức** thuần túy: khi liệt kê nhiều ý cùng loại, hãy dùng **cùng một dạng ngữ pháp** cho tất cả (ví dụ: tất cả đều là động từ, hoặc tất cả đều là danh từ) để đoạn văn dễ đọc và mạch lạc hơn.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision corrects the broken parallelism in “The committee recommended hiring a consultant, that the budget be increased, and improved training programs”?

- (A) No revision needed.
- (B) “The committee recommended hiring a consultant, increasing the budget, and improving training programs.”
- (C) “The committee recommended a consultant, a budget, and training.”
- (D) “The committee recommended hiring a consultant. The budget should be increased. Training programs need improvement.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The original mixes a gerund phrase, a clause, and an adjective-plus-noun phrase; only (B) converts all three items into matching gerund phrases (hiring, increasing, improving), producing true parallel structure without losing any content. **(B).**

Bài tập luyện tập

A student essay’s three body paragraphs open with: “First, cost is a concern.” / “The second issue worth discussing involves staffing.” / “Finally, we need to talk about timing.” Which revision would most improve these topic sentences’ parallel structure and clarity?

- (A) No revision needed; variety in phrasing is always preferable to repetition.
- (B) “First, the program’s cost exceeds the available budget. Second, current staffing levels cannot support the proposed schedule. Third, the proposed timeline conflicts with the academic calendar.”
- (C) Combine all three sentences into one very long sentence with semicolons.
- (D) Delete all three topic sentences and let the paragraphs speak for themselves.

Lời giải chi tiết

The original three sentences use three different grammatical patterns and vague content (“is a concern,” “worth discussing,” “need to talk about”); only (B) gives all three a matching ordinal-plus-specific-claim structure, which is both more parallel and more informative than the original or the other options. **(B).**

3.18 A final full case study: diagnosing and rebuilding an outline**A flawed outline, rebuilt step by step**

Original outline (a rhetorical analysis of a mayor’s budget speech): Paragraph 1: the speech uses ethos. Paragraph 2: the speech uses pathos. Paragraph 3: the speech uses logos. Paragraph 4: the speech is effective.

Diagnosis using this book’s earlier tools: this outline is a **list** (Chapter 3) built entirely around the generic ethos/pathos/logos formula (Chapter 7’s central warning), with no line of reasoning connecting the three appeals to a specific claim about the speech’s actual purpose, and a final paragraph (“the speech is effective”) that asserts a conclusion no prior paragraph has actually built toward.

Rebuilt outline: Thesis: by opening with an unusually blunt admission of a past budgeting mistake before pivoting to a specific, numbered repair plan, the mayor converts a request that could read as routine (“approve this budget”) into an act of accountability the audience is primed to trust. Paragraph 1: the blunt admission (specific quotation) and its ethos func-

tion – establishing credibility through candor rather than polish. Paragraph 2: the transition from admission to the numbered repair plan, and how its specificity (not vague reassurance) reinforces the credibility Paragraph 1 established. Paragraph 3: the speech’s closing return to the admission (if present), showing how the strategies interact rather than sitting in separate boxes. Conclusion: what this candor-then-specificity structure achieves that a purely celebratory budget speech could not.

Notice the rebuilt outline eliminates the generic appeals list entirely in favor of a two-strategy structure that *interacts* (credibility building toward and reinforced by specificity) – exactly the kind of line of reasoning this chapter and Chapter 7 both model.

Bài tập luyện tập

The single biggest structural problem with the original outline (ethos paragraph, pathos paragraph, logos paragraph, effectiveness paragraph) is that it

- (A) uses too few paragraphs
- (B) organizes around a generic appeals formula rather than the speech’s actual, specific strategies and their interaction, producing a list rather than a line of reasoning
- (C) fails to mention the mayor at all
- (D) uses too much specific textual evidence

Lời giải chi tiết

The outline’s core flaw is structural, not a paragraph-count or evidence-quantity issue: organizing around the generic ethos/pathos/logos categories, rather than around this specific speech’s actual strategies and how they build on each other, produces exactly the list structure (and the generic-thesis problem from Chapter 7) this book repeatedly warns against. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

In the rebuilt outline, Paragraph 2’s connection to Paragraph 1 is best described as

- (A) unrelated, since they discuss different parts of the speech
- (B) building directly on Paragraph 1’s claim, showing how the specific repair plan reinforces the credibility the admission already established
- (C) a contradiction of Paragraph 1’s claim
- (D) a simple repetition of Paragraph 1

Lời giải chi tiết

Paragraph 2 is explicitly designed to show how the numbered repair plan’s specificity *reinforces* the credibility the admission (Paragraph 1) established – a building relationship, not an unrelated topic, a contradiction, or mere repetition, which is exactly the line-of-reasoning connection this chapter has modeled throughout. (B).

Style: Diction, Syntax, Tone & Rhetorical Devices

Mục tiêu Unit: Diction (denotation–connotation, mức độ trang trọng, cụ thể–trừu tượng); syntax (các kiểu câu, độ dài câu, câu periodic/loose, dấu câu như một lựa chọn tu từ); bảng thuật ngữ **đầy đủ** các biện pháp tu từ song ngữ Anh–Việt (schemes, tropes, sound devices); tone, mood, và sự chuyển giọng (shifts) — kỹ năng cốt lõi cho cả phần trắc nghiệm lẫn ba bài luận AP Lang.

4.1 Diction

Diction is word choice. Every word carries both a **denotation** (dictionary meaning) and a **connotation** (the emotional or cultural association it carries). Writers also choose a **level of formality** (formal, colloquial, jargon, archaic) and a degree of **concreteness** (abstract terms like “progress” versus concrete images like “a paved road where there was once a dirt path”) and **specificity** (general “vehicle” versus specific “a rusted 1988 pickup truck”).

Khái niệm cốt lõi

Compare: “*The mayor’s plan is ambitious*” versus “*The mayor’s plan is reckless*.” Both describe the same policy; only the connotation differs. Analyzing diction means naming the *specific word* and explaining the shade of meaning or judgment it smuggles in — not just labeling the passage “positive” or “negative.”

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Denotation là nghĩa từ điển, **connotation** là sắc thái/cảm xúc đi kèm. Khi phân tích diction, đừng chỉ nói “từ này mang nghĩa tiêu cực” — hãy chỉ rõ **từ nào**, so sánh với một từ đồng nghĩa trung tính, và giải thích thái độ của tác giả được bộc lộ ra sao qua lựa chọn đó.

Dimension	Example pair	Effect of the shift
Formality	“purchase” vs. “buy” vs. “grab”	signals register: distant/official → neutral → casual/intimate
Connotation	“frugal” vs. “cheap”	positive vs. negative judgment of the same behavior
Concreteness	“progress” vs. “a paved road”	abstract concept vs. vivid, verifiable image
Specificity	“vehicle” vs. “a rusted 1988 pickup”	generic category vs. particular, memorable detail

Diction shift within a single passage

"The company did not 'lay off' four hundred workers. It 'right-sized its workforce to align with market realities.' Four hundred people found out they were 'redundant' on a Tuesday afternoon, by email."

The writer juxtaposes corporate euphemism ("right-sized," "redundant," "align with market realities") against plain, concrete diction ("four hundred people," "on a Tuesday afternoon, by email") to expose the gap between sanitized institutional language and lived human consequence — the diction shift is the argument.

4.2 Syntax

Syntax is sentence structure: length, type, word order, and punctuation. Syntax shapes pace and emphasis independent of content — the same information can feel urgent, measured, or overwhelming depending purely on how it is arranged into sentences.

4.2.1 Sentence types

Type	Structure	Typical effect
Simple	one independent clause	clarity, emphasis, force
Compound	two+ independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction or semicolon	balance, equivalence between ideas
Complex	one independent clause + one or more dependent clauses	shows subordination — one idea framed as depending on, or conditioned by, another
Compound-complex	two+ independent clauses + at least one dependent clause	mirrors complicated, multi-part reasoning

4.2.2 Sentence length, periodic and loose sentences

Short sentences isolate an idea and create emphasis or urgency, especially after a run of longer sentences. **Long, cumulative sentences** pile on detail to build complexity, momentum, or overwhelm. A **periodic sentence** withholds its main clause until the end, building suspense ("After the vote, after the speeches, after the long silence in the chamber, the bill finally passed"). A **loose (cumulative) sentence** states its main clause first, then adds detail ("The bill finally passed, after the vote, after the speeches, after the long silence"). Punctuation — a dash for an abrupt aside, a colon to announce a list or consequence, a semicolon to balance two related independent clauses — is itself a rhetorical choice, not a mechanical rule.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Câu periodic (câu chu kỳ) giữ mệnh đề chính lại đến cuối câu, tạo cảm giác hồi hộp, chờ đợi. **Câu loose/cumulative** (câu rời/tích lũy) nêu mệnh đề chính trước rồi mới bổ sung chi tiết. Khi phân tích syntax, đừng chỉ nói "câu dài" hay "câu ngắn" — hãy giải thích **hiệu ứng cụ thể**: câu ngắn sau một chuỗi câu dài tạo sự nhấn mạnh đột ngột; câu periodic tạo sự chờ đợi rồi giải tỏa.

Sentence length and syntax working together

"For twenty years we built taller seawalls, bought bigger pumps, and told ourselves the water would stay where the maps said it should. It did not. The maps were wrong, not the water."

The first sentence is long and cumulative, listing three parallel actions ("built... bought... told...") that mimic the steady, confident effort being described — this is **parallelism** working with sen-

tence length to enact the feeling of routine, ongoing effort. The abrupt three-word sentence that follows (“It did not.”) breaks that rhythm sharply, using **short syntax** to deliver a tonal shift from confidence to failure. The final sentence’s **antithesis** (“The maps were wrong, not the water”) reverses the reader’s expectation of blame, redirecting responsibility from nature onto human planning — the real point of the passage.

4.2.3 Punctuation as rhetorical choice

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **Dash (—)** — signals an abrupt aside, interruption, or emphatic addition; feels spontaneous, conversational.
- **Colon (:)** — formally announces a list, an explanation, or a consequence; creates anticipation resolved immediately.
- **Semicolon (;)** — balances two closely related independent clauses as equals, without subordinating either.
- **Fragment** — a deliberately incomplete sentence used for emphasis or a clipped, urgent tone; effective only when clearly intentional.

4.3 The rhetorical devices glossary

The following table gathers the devices most frequently tested across AP Lang multiple-choice questions and most useful for essay analysis, grouped into three families: **schemes** (patterns of word order and structure), **tropes** (shifts in a word’s or phrase’s meaning), and **sound devices** (patterns of sound).

4.3.1 Schemes: patterns of structure

Device	Definition & typical effect	Tiếng Việt
Anaphora	repetition of a word/phrase at the start of successive clauses; builds rhythm and insistence	Điệp ngữ đầu câu
Epistrophe	repetition of a word/phrase at the <i>end</i> of successive clauses; drives a point home with hammering finality	Điệp ngữ cuối câu
Anadiplosis	the last word/phrase of one clause becomes the first word/phrase of the next; creates a chained, escalating logic	Điệp liên tiếp (nối vòng)
Antithesis	two contrasting ideas placed in balanced, parallel grammatical structure	Phép đối lập / tương phản
Parallelism	repeated grammatical structure across phrases/-clauses; creates rhythm, clarity, a sense of equivalence	Phép song hành / cấu trúc song song
Chiasmus	a mirrored, criss-cross grammatical structure ("ask not what... but what...")	Phép đối chéo
Juxtaposition	placing two unlike things side by side to highlight contrast	Phép đặt cạnh nhau (tương phản ngầm)
Asyndeton	omitting conjunctions between parallel words/-clauses; creates speed, urgency	Lược liên từ
Polysyndeton	deliberately repeating conjunctions; creates weight, an overwhelming accumulation	Lặp liên từ
Zeugma	one word (often a verb) governing two or more other words in different, often incongruous senses	Phép dùng một từ cho nhiều nghĩa
Anastrophe (inversion)	reversing normal word order for emphasis	Đảo ngữ
Ellipsis (syntactic)	the deliberate omission of words the reader can infer, for economy or effect	Phép tỉnh lược

4.3.2 Tropes: shifts of meaning

Device	Definition & typical effect	Tiếng Việt
Metaphor	an implicit comparison stating one thing <i>is</i> another, transferring qualities	Ẩn dụ
Simile	an explicit comparison using “like” or “as”	So sánh (dùng like/as)
Extended metaphor	a metaphor sustained and developed across multiple sentences or an entire passage	Ẩn dụ mở rộng
Personification	attributing human qualities to a non-human thing	Nhân hóa
Analogy	an extended comparison used to explain one thing in terms of a more familiar one	Phép loại suy
Metonymy	substituting a closely associated term for the thing itself (“the White House announced”)	Hoán dụ (liên tưởng gần)
Synecdoche	using a part to represent the whole, or the whole to represent a part (“all hands on deck”)	Hoán dụ (bộ phận – toàn thể)
Hyperbole	deliberate, obvious exaggeration for emphasis	Phép cường điệu / khoa trương
Understatement (litotes)	deliberately presenting something as less significant than it is, often ironically	Phép nói giảm nói tránh
Verbal irony	saying something other than, often the opposite of, what is literally meant	Phép mỉa mai / trớ trêu
Situational irony	an outcome that contradicts what was expected or intended	Trớ trêu tình huống
Dramatic irony	the audience/reader knows something a character or subject does not	Trớ trêu kịch tính
Oxymoron	two contradictory terms combined in a single, compact phrase (“deafening silence”)	Nghịch hợp
Paradox	a statement that seems self-contradictory but reveals a underlying truth	Nghịch lý
Allusion	a brief reference to a person, event, or work assumed familiar to the audience	Phép điển tích / ám chỉ
Symbolism	a concrete object or image used to represent an abstract idea	Biểu tượng
Apostrophe	directly addressing an absent, dead, or non-human entity as if it could respond	Phép hô ngữ
Rhetorical question	a question asked to make a point, not to receive a literal answer	Câu hỏi tu từ
Pun	a play on words exploiting multiple meanings or similar sounds	Chơi chữ

4.3.3 Sound devices

Device	Definition & typical effect	Tiếng Việt
Alliteration	repetition of initial consonant sounds in nearby words	Điệp phụ âm đầu
Assonance	repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words	Điệp nguyên âm
Consonance	repetition of consonant sounds anywhere within nearby words	Điệp phụ âm
Onomatopoeia	a word that phonetically imitates the sound it describes	Từ tượng thanh

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Naming a device (“the author uses juxtaposition”) earns almost no credit by itself. AP readers want the *effect*: what does the device do to the reader, and how does that effect serve the writer’s larger purpose? Always finish the sentence: “...which *does what*, so that the reader/audience *feels or concludes what*.”

Devices identified with full commentary, not just labels

Anadiplosis: “The budget shapes the school. The school shapes the child. The child shapes the town’s future.” — each clause’s final word becomes the next clause’s subject, creating a chained sense of inevitability that makes the final claim (the town’s future) feel like the direct, unavoidable consequence of the first (the budget), not a separate point.

Zeugma: “She closed her book, her laptop, and, finally, the conversation.” — “closed” governs three objects that shift from literal (book, laptop) to figurative (conversation), and the incongruity creates a small, pointed wit that marks the conversation’s ending as deliberate and final, on par with shutting a physical object.

Situational irony: “The fire station’s smoke detector had been beeping, unheeded, for three days before the electrical fire finally started.” — the outcome (a fire station catching fire, ignoring the very warning device it exists to respond to) directly contradicts audience expectation, sharpening a critique of institutional complacency.

4.4 Tone and mood

Tone is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject; **mood** is the emotional atmosphere the text creates in the reader. They often align but can diverge — a speaker can maintain a calm, measured tone while describing events that create a mood of dread in the reader. Tone is conveyed through the combined effect of diction and syntax, not stated outright.

Critical / negative	Approving / positive	Detached / neutral
scathing, indignant, scornful, cynical, derisive, condescending, bitter, resentful, mocking, contemptuous	reverent, admiring, celebratory, earnest, hopeful, nostalgic, tender, jubilant, wistful, affectionate	clinical, objective, matter-of-fact, dispassionate, resigned, ambivalent, detached, wry, ironic, restrained

A precise tone word (“indignant,” not just “angry”; “wistful,” not just “sad”) earns more credit than a vague one on both multiple-choice and free-response tasks.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Khi mô tả tone (giọng điệu), hãy chọn từ **càng cụ thể càng tốt** thay vì các từ chung chung như “tích cực”/“tiêu cực”. Ví dụ: thay vì nói “tác giả buồn”, hãy nói “tác giả hoài niệm” (wistful) hoặc “tác giả cam chịu” (resigned) — mỗi từ mang một sắc thái rất khác nhau dù đều thuộc nhóm “tiêu cực nhẹ.”

4.5 Point of view and voice

Khái niệm cốt lõi

- **First person** (“I,” “we”) — builds intimacy and personal ethos, but narrows the claim to the speaker’s own authority or experience.
- **Second person** (“you”) — directly implicates the reader, creating urgency or complicity.
- **Third person** (“he/she/they,” or an unnamed observer) — creates distance and an appearance of objectivity.
- **Active voice** (“The committee rejected the proposal”) — names the actor clearly, assigning responsibility.
- **Passive voice** (“The proposal was rejected”) — can obscure who performed the action,

sometimes deliberately, to soften or deflect responsibility.

Active vs. passive voice as a rhetorical choice

Active: “The company dumped 40,000 gallons of wastewater into the river.” — names the actor and the action directly; assigns clear responsibility.

Passive: “40,000 gallons of wastewater were released into the river.” — the actor disappears from the sentence entirely; responsibility is obscured, whether intentionally or not.

Neither voice is inherently “correct”; the choice is a rhetorical one. A company’s official statement using passive voice in this exact context is a common and testable move worth noticing.

4.6 Shifts

A **shift** — in tone, diction, syntax, point of view, or perspective — almost always marks a turning point in the writer’s argument and is one of the most frequently tested elements on the exam. Shifts are often signaled by a contrast word (“but,” “yet”), a paragraph break, a sudden change in sentence length, or a change in verb tense.

A tonal and syntactic shift in one passage

“The proposal promises efficiency, savings, and speed. But efficiency for whom? Savings taken from where? Speed toward what, exactly?”

The passage moves from declarative, promotional diction (“promises efficiency, savings, and speed”) to pointed **rhetorical questions** that interrogate those same terms, signaling a shift from an accepting to a skeptical tone. The syntax shifts too: one long, list-like sentence gives way to three short, parallel questions, each ending on the exact word being challenged — a shift that enacts the writer’s move from passive acceptance to active scrutiny.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: When a question asks you to locate a “shift,” look first at paragraph breaks, contrast transitions (“but,” “however,” “yet”), and sudden changes in sentence length — these are the most common places exam passages place a deliberate turn. Do not simply pick the middle of the passage by default.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the sentence “The company did not lie; it simply declined to mention the truth,” the underlined structure is an example of

(A) hyperbole

(C) antithesis

(B) verbal irony

(D) chiasmus

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence balances two grammatically parallel but contrasting ideas (“did not lie” versus “declined to mention the truth”) to expose a moral distinction the speaker considers false — this balanced opposition is **antithesis**. It is not exaggeration (hyperbole) nor a criss-cross mirrored structure (chiasmus). **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“We will rebuild. We will replant. We will remember.” This structure is best identified as

- (A) anaphora and parallelism working together (C) polysyndeton
(B) a rhetorical question (D) understatement

Lời giải chi tiết

Each clause repeats “We will” at its start (anaphora) using the identical grammatical pattern subject-verb-verb (parallelism); together they build a rhythmic, escalating sense of resolve. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which word choice carries the most negative connotation while keeping roughly the same denotation as “the senator changed her position on the bill”?

- (A) “adjusted” (C) “flip-flopped”
(B) “clarified” (D) “refined”

Lời giải chi tiết

All four words denote a change of position, but “flip-flopped” carries a strongly negative connotation of inconsistency or opportunism, while the others (adjusted, clarified, refined) suggest thoughtful, even positive, revision. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Having weighed the costs, having listened to every objection, having waited a full year for more data, the board finally approved the merger.” This sentence is best described as

- (A) a loose sentence, because it states its main point first the main clause until the end
(C) an example of asyndeton
(B) a periodic sentence, because it withholds (D) an example of a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence delays its main clause (“the board finally approved the merger”) behind three parallel introductory phrases, building suspense and emphasizing the deliberateness of the decision before revealing the outcome — the definition of a **periodic sentence**. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A passage shifts from “The proposal promises efficiency, savings, and speed” to “But efficiency for whom? Savings taken from where?” The second sentence’s tonal shift is achieved primarily through

- (A) a shift to rhetorical questions and a change from confident to skeptical diction (B) the introduction of statistical evidence
(C) a shift into a formal, technical register
(D) an extended analogy

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage moves from declarative, promotional diction to pointed rhetorical questions that interrogate those same terms, signaling a shift from an accepting to a skeptical tone — no new evidence or analogy is introduced. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

“The senator’s office released a statement noting that ‘mistakes were made’ during the audit.” The use of passive voice here most likely serves to

- (A) clarify exactly who is responsible for the mistakes (C) emphasize the senator’s personal accountability
(B) obscure or deflect direct responsibility by omitting the actor (D) create a sense of urgency and immediacy

Lời giải chi tiết

“Mistakes were made” is a classic passive construction that removes any named actor, allowing responsibility to remain vague — a common and testable rhetorical move in institutional apologies, the opposite of clarifying who is responsible. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“I have walked these halls for thirty years. I have watched three principals come and go. I have buried two colleagues and celebrated a hundred graduations. And I am not finished yet.” The dominant device across the first three sentences is

- (A) anaphora (repetition of “I have” at each clause’s start) (C) verbal irony
(B) a single extended metaphor (D) a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

Each of the first three sentences opens with the identical phrase “I have,” building anaphoric rhythm and cumulative authority before the short, declarative final sentence breaks the pattern for emphasis. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

“The senator’s ‘minor accounting adjustment’ turned out to be a \$2 million shortfall.” The phrase “minor accounting adjustment” is best understood as

- (A) a sincere, accurate description later confirmed by facts more serious fact that follows
(B) verbal irony, since the quoted euphemism is undercut by the much larger, (C) an example of onomatopoeia
(D) a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

By placing the euphemistic phrase in quotation marks and immediately following it with a fact that contradicts its implied scale (a “minor” adjustment that is actually \$2 million), the writer signals that the phrase should not be taken at face value — a clear instance of **verbal irony**. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Time heals all wounds, they say — as if a wound were ever the kind of thing that healed itself.” This sentence primarily uses which device to challenge a common cliché?

- (A) a paradox that reveals a hidden truth in the original saying (C) onomatopoeia
(B) an allusion to a historical event (D) synecdoche

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence takes the familiar cliché and exposes an internal tension in its logic (wounds do not, in fact, heal “themselves” without care) — presenting a statement that initially seems to accept the cliché but reveals a deeper, complicating truth beneath it, functioning as a kind of **paradox** used to critique received wisdom. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

Read the following passage and identify its dominant tone: “Another year, another budget hearing, another round of the same six people saying the same six things into the same unplugged microphone.”

- (A) reverent and celebratory (C) urgently hopeful
(B) wearily cynical, conveyed through repetition and flat, list-like syntax (D) clinically objective with no discernible attitude

Lời giải chi tiết

The repeated structure “another... another... the same... the same...” and the deflating detail of the “unplugged microphone” build a tone of tired, cynical resignation about a repetitive, ineffective process — not celebration, hope, or true neutrality. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

“The whole town showed up” most likely uses which device if, in context, only about sixty of the town’s four thousand residents actually attended?

- (A) hyperbole, exaggerating turnout for emphasis (C) onomatopoeia
(B) litotes, understating turnout (D) metonymy

Lời giải chi tiết

Claiming “the whole town” attended when only a small fraction did is a deliberate, obvious exaggeration used for emphasis — the definition of **hyperbole**, the opposite of understatement (litotes). (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Wall Street reacted nervously to the announcement.” The use of “Wall Street” here is an example of

- (A) synecdoche, using a part (a physical street) to stand for the whole (the financial industry) (B) personification of a street
(C) a simile
(D) alliteration

Lời giải chi tiết

“Wall Street” is a literal place standing in for the much larger financial industry and its participants — a part representing a whole, which is **synecdoche** (closely related to metonymy, but specifically part-for-whole substitution). (A).

Free-Response Practice

Write two versions of the same sentence describing a factory closing — one using primarily formal, abstract, passive-voice diction, and one using concrete, active-voice, specific diction. Then explain in one sentence how the diction shift changes the reader’s sense of responsibility.

Lời giải chi tiết

Formal/abstract/passive: “Operations at the facility were discontinued as part of a broader strategic realignment.” **Concrete/active:** “The company shut down the plant and laid off 340 workers three weeks before the holidays.” The first version, through passive voice and abstract corporate diction (“operations,” “strategic realignment”), removes any named actor and any human consequence from view; the second, through active voice and concrete, specific diction (a number, a season), assigns clear responsibility to “the company” and makes the human cost impossible to ignore.

Free-Response Practice

Identify the shift in the following passage and explain what specifically signals it (diction, syntax, or both): “For the first ten years, the orchard produced more apples than the family could sell. Then came the drought. Then came the frost that killed what the drought had spared. Now the trees stand bare, and no one talks about the harvest anymore.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage shifts from an expansive, abundant opening (“more apples than the family could sell”) to a clipped, escalating sequence of loss (“Then came the drought. Then came the frost...”), signaled by **anaphora** (“Then came...” paired with a marked drop in sentence length. The tense shift to present (“Now the trees stand bare”) completes the shift, moving from a remembered, prosperous past into a stark, ongoing present — diction (“bare,” “no one talks”) and syntax (short, repeated, present-tense sentences) work together to enact the orchard’s decline.

Free-Response Practice

Choose one entry from the schemes table above (other than anaphora or antithesis) and one entry from the tropes table above, and write one original sentence using each, followed by a one-sentence explanation of its intended effect.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Anadiplosis**: “Practice builds skill. Skill builds confidence. Confidence builds a team that trusts itself under pressure.” — the chained repetition makes each stage feel like the necessary, inevitable cause of the next, reinforcing an argument about disciplined process over talent alone. **Extended metaphor**: “Her opening statement was a foundation poured before anyone else had chosen a blueprint; everything the opposing counsel argued afterward had to be built, awkwardly, around a structure she had already set.” — casting the courtroom argument as construction lets the writer describe strategic advantage in a single sustained, vivid image rather than an abstract claim about ‘going first.’

4.7 Commonly confused devices

Several pairs and trios of devices are frequently mislabeled because they share surface features. Distinguishing them precisely is worth more MC points than memorizing longer lists of rarer devices.

Easily confused pair	The precise distinction
Metaphor vs. simile	Metaphor asserts identity (“the classroom was a beehive”); simile makes the comparison explicit with “like”/“as” (“the classroom buzzed like a beehive”). Simile is more tentative; metaphor is more total.
Metaphor vs. analogy	A metaphor is typically a compact, single image; an analogy is an <i>extended</i> , point-by-point comparison used to explain an unfamiliar idea through a familiar structure (often several sentences long).
Metonymy vs. synecdoche	Both substitute one term for another via association, but synecdoche specifically uses a part for the whole (“all hands on deck”); metonymy uses any closely associated term, not necessarily a part (“the crown” for the monarchy, “the White House” for the executive branch).
Anaphora vs. epistrophe vs. anadiplosis	Anaphora repeats at the start of successive clauses; epistrophe repeats at the end ; anadiplosis repeats the last word of one clause as the first word of the next , chaining ideas rather than simply repeating them in place.
Irony vs. sarcasm	Verbal irony says the opposite of, or something other than, the literal meaning; sarcasm is a tone of irony specifically meant to mock or wound. All sarcasm is ironic; not all irony is sarcastic.
Hyperbole vs. litotes	Hyperbole obviously overstates (“I’ve told you a thousand times”); litotes understates, often through a negated opposite (“not the worst idea” meaning “a good idea”). They are opposite directions of the same move: deliberate inaccuracy for effect.
Paradox vs. oxymoron	An oxymoron compresses a contradiction into a short phrase (“deafening silence”); a paradox is a full statement or idea that seems self-contradictory but, on reflection, reveals a coherent truth (“the more you give away, the more you have”).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Đề AP Lang rất hay đánh vào các cặp biện pháp tu từ **để nhầm lẫn** ở trên. Mẹo: khi phân vân giữa **ẩn dụ (metaphor)** và **loại suy (analogy)**, hãy hỏi “so sánh này chỉ gói trong một hình ảnh ngắn, hay được **triển khai nhiều câu** để giải thích một ý phức tạp?” — càng triển khai dài, càng có khả năng là analogy. Khi phân vân giữa **hoán dụ (metonymy)** và **phép hoán dụ bộ phận-toàn thể (synecdoche)**, hãy hỏi: từ được dùng có phải là **một phần vật lý** của cái toàn thể không (ví dụ “hands” là một bộ phận của con người) — nếu có, đó là synecdoche.

4.8 Style analysis practice: a full annotated passage

Annotated Passage — Style Working Together

“The report calls it ‘temporary infrastructure adjustment.’ I call it what my neighbors call it: the bridge is closed, and it is not coming back. For six years the town crossed the river in four minutes. Now it takes forty, around the long way, past the shuttered gas station, past the school whose enrollment has dropped every single year since the detour began. Officials will tell you the numbers are ‘within normal variance.’ Ask the students who now leave for school before sunrise whether forty minutes feels normal.”

Diction: the passage juxtaposes institutional euphemism (“temporary infrastructure adjustment,” “within normal variance”) against plain, concrete language (“the bridge is closed,” “forty minutes”), exposing a gap between official language and lived consequence — the same move examined earlier in this chapter, here doubled by direct quotation of the report’s own words.

Syntax: short, blunt declaratives (“It is not coming back”) alternate with one longer, cumulative sentence listing consequences (“past the shuttered gas station, past the school...”), whose repeated “past” (anaphora) enacts the literal, repetitive experience of the long detour. **Tone:** skeptical and quietly indignant, sharpened by the closing rhetorical question, which refuses to let the abstract phrase “normal variance” stand unchallenged. **Point of view:** first person (“I call it”) builds ethos as a member of the affected community, not a neutral outside reporter.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage’s repetition of “past the shuttered gas station, past the school” primarily serves to

- (A) list unrelated local landmarks with no rhetorical function
- (B) enact, through anaphora, the repetitive lived experience of the longer detour route while accumulating specific evidence of decline
- (C) provide precise driving directions for the reader
- (D) shift the passage’s tone from serious to comedic

Lời giải chi tiết

The repeated “past” does double work: structurally, it mimics the actual repetitive experience of driving the long way; substantively, each repetition adds a concrete piece of evidence (a shuttered business, a shrinking school) that builds the passage’s implicit argument about decline. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The quotation marks around “temporary infrastructure adjustment” and “within normal variance” primarily function to

- (A) indicate that the speaker agrees completely with the official’s word choice
- (B) signal verbal irony, distancing the speaker from euphemistic institutional language
- (C) cite a specific line of poetry
- (D) demonstrate correct use of a semicolon

Lời giải chi tiết

By quoting the official phrases directly and then immediately undercutting them with plain, concrete counter-description, the speaker signals ironic distance — using the institution’s own words against it rather than genuinely endorsing them. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage’s final sentence, a rhetorical question, is best understood as functioning to

- (A) request genuine information the speaker does not already know
- (B) challenge the official claim of “normal variance” by inviting the reader to judge it against a concrete, human standard
- (C) shift the argument to an entirely new, unrelated subject
- (D) apologize for the tone of the preceding sentences

Lời giải chi tiết

The question is not a genuine request for information — the speaker clearly believes the answer is “no, it does not feel normal.” Its rhetorical function is to force the reader to test the official’s abstract, bureaucratic language against a specific, human consequence (students leaving before sunrise). **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Compared to a hypothetical third-person, passive-voice version (“It has been reported that traffic patterns have been affected”), the passage’s actual first-person, active-voice style most significantly changes

- (A) the underlying facts being reported quences described
(B) the reader’s sense of who is speaking and (C) the length of the passage
 who bears responsibility for the conse- (D) the topic of the passage

Lời giải chi tiết

The facts and topic remain the same; what changes is voice and point of view, which shape how directly responsibility and lived experience are attributed — first-person active voice names a speaker and keeps human consequence in view, while passive, third-person phrasing (as examined earlier in this chapter) tends to obscure both. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

In two to three sentences, explain how diction and syntax work *together* (not separately) in the sentence: “For six years the town crossed the river in four minutes. Now it takes forty, around the long way, past the shuttered gas station, past the school whose enrollment has dropped every single year since the detour began.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *The short, plain first sentence (“crossed the river in four minutes”) sets a baseline of ease that the long, cumulative second sentence then disrupts, piling on consequence after consequence (“forty,” “the long way,” “the shuttered gas station,” “dropped every single year”) the way the actual detour piles on inconvenience. The diction of decline (“shuttered,” “dropped”) would carry less force without the syntax that makes the reader physically experience the length of the second sentence after the brevity of the first — length itself becomes part of the meaning. Note that this response treats diction and syntax as working jointly toward one effect rather than listing them as two separate observations.*

Bài tập luyện tập

“The negotiations did not fail; they simply concluded without an agreement.” This sentence most clearly relies on which device to soften what is, in effect, a failure?

- (A) hyperbole phemistic terms
(B) litotes/understatement, reframing a (C) onomatopoeia
 failure in deliberately minimized, eu- (D) apostrophe

Lời giải chi tiết

Recasting a clear failure ("did not fail") as a neutral, minimized outcome ("simply concluded without an agreement") is a textbook use of **understatement/litotes**, softening an unwelcome fact through deliberately restrained language. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A speaker says of a rival's plan: "It's a lovely plan — assuming, of course, that money grows on trees." The underlined clause functions as

- (A) a sincere compliment
(B) verbal irony combined with a common idiom, mocking the plan's unrealistic assumptions about cost
(C) a literal claim about trees
(D) an example of onomatopoeia

Lời giải chi tiết

“Lovely” is undercut immediately by the sarcastic conditional that follows; the familiar idiom (“money grows on trees”) signals that the speaker considers the plan financially unrealistic, using irony to mock rather than praise. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which pair correctly matches a device to its distinguishing feature?

- (A) Anadiplosis: repetition strictly at the beginning of successive clauses
- (B) Synecdoche: a part of something standing in for the whole
- (C) Litotes: obvious, exaggerated overstatement
- (D) Chiasmus: repetition of the exact same words in the exact same order twice

Lời giải chi tiết

Synecdoche is specifically part-for-whole (or whole-for-part) substitution. Anadiplosis links clauses by repeating the *last* word of one as the *first* of the next (not simply beginning repetition, which is anaphora); litotes is understatement, not overstatement; chiasmus mirrors structure in *reversed*, not identical, order. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A memoir describes a grandfather's hands as "two maps of a life spent outdoors, every crease a road he had walked." This is best classified as

- (A) a sustained metaphor comparing the hands to maps, extended through the image of creases as roads
- (B) a simple simile using “like” or “as”
- (C) alliteration
- (D) a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage asserts identity (hands *are* maps) rather than using “like”/“as,” and develops the comparison across the full sentence (creases become roads), which is the structure of an **extended metaphor**, not a simile or a sound device. (A).

Free-Response Practice

Write one original sentence that uses **polysyndeton** (deliberately repeated conjunctions) to convey an overwhelming accumulation, and one sentence explaining the effect you intended.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “We packed the car with blankets and water and flashlights and the dog’s leash and the photo albums and everything else we could not bear to lose.” — the repeated “and,” rather than a comma-separated list, slows the sentence down and makes the accumulation feel exhausting and endless, mirroring the family’s frantic, overwhelmed state as they pack in a hurry rather than presenting a tidy, efficient inventory.

4.9 Register and jargon: matching diction to audience

Register is the level of formality a text adopts, and it is one of the fastest signals of intended audience and genre. Shifting register — deliberately or carelessly — changes how an audience receives even a factually identical message.

Register	Example	Typical use / effect
Formal / official	“The committee has determined that further review is warranted.”	institutional distance, caution, authority
Professional / technical	“Preliminary results indicate a statistically significant effect ($p < 0.05$).”	precision for an expert audience; can alienate a general reader
Conversational / colloquial	“We’re just not sure yet, so we’re taking another look.”	warmth, accessibility, informality
Jargon-heavy	“We need to leverage synergies to optimize our go-to-market bandwidth.”	signals in-group expertise, but can obscure meaning or evade a direct answer

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Jargon is not inherently bad — a technical audience often needs precise, field-specific terms. But jargon deployed for a general audience, especially in place of a direct answer, is a common and testable rhetorical strategy for sounding authoritative while actually saying very little. Watch for jargon that could be deleted without losing any actual information; that is usually a sign it is functioning as evasion, not precision.

Jargon as evasion versus jargon as precision

Jargon as evasion: “We are actively exploring synergistic opportunities to right-size our operational footprint going forward.” — translated, this most likely means “we may lay off workers,” but the jargon lets the speaker avoid saying so directly.

Jargon as precision: “The patient’s biopsy showed a 4mm adenocarcinoma with clear margins.” — here, technical vocabulary conveys specific, necessary medical information efficiently to an audience (other clinicians) equipped to use it; it is not evasive, because a plain-language version would actually lose important precision.

The test is not whether a passage uses specialized words, but whether removing them would cost the reader real information (precision) or reveal that very little was actually being said (evasion).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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Register (mức độ trang trọng) là dấu hiệu nhanh cho biết đối tượng và thể loại của văn bản. **Jargon** (thuật ngữ chuyên ngành) không xấu nếu dùng đúng đối tượng chuyên môn – nhưng khi dùng cho **đại chúng** để **né tránh nói thẳng** một điều khó nghe (ví dụ “right-size operational footprint” thay vì “sa thải nhân viên”), đó là một chiến lược tu từ đáng ngờ mà đề thi hay kiểm tra. Mẹo nhận diện: thử **bỏ từ chuyên ngành đó** – nếu câu vẫn còn đủ thông tin, đó là jargon thật (precision); nếu câu trở nên trống rỗng, đó là né tránh (evasion).

Bài tập luyện tập

A company memo states: “We are pursuing a strategic reallocation of human capital resources to better align with forward-looking business objectives.” This sentence most likely functions as

- (A) a precise, necessary use of technical vocabulary for a specialist audience (C) a clear, direct statement of company policy
- (B) jargon that obscures a likely layoff announcement behind vague, abstract corporate language (D) an example of onomatopoeia

Lời giải chi tiết

Stripped of jargon, the sentence likely means “we are laying off some employees to focus on different priorities,” but the abstract phrasing (“strategic reallocation of human capital resources”) avoids saying so plainly – a clear case of jargon functioning as evasion rather than precision. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of “The patient’s biopsy showed a 4mm adenocarcinoma with clear margins” would be most appropriate for a general, non-medical audience, while a physician colleague would still need the original technical version?

- (A) “The patient is fine.” (C) “The patient underwent a routine procedure.”
- (B) “Tests found a small, early-stage cancerous growth that appears to have been fully removed, with no cancer cells found at the edges of the removed tissue.” (D) The original technical sentence should be used for every audience without exception.

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (C) lose necessary information entirely; (D) ignores that different audiences need different registers. Only (B) preserves the actual clinical meaning (small, early, fully excised with clear margins) in language a non-specialist can understand – exactly the kind of register adaptation covered in Chapter 1’s audience-adaptation discussion. **(B)**.

4.10 A glossary self-check: matching devices to definitions

Bài tập luyện tập

Match each definition to its device: (1) a mirrored, criss-cross grammatical structure; (2) omitting conjunctions for speed; (3) a brief reference to a familiar person, event, or work; (4) attributing human qualities to a non-human thing.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) (1) chiasmus, (2) asyndeton, (3) allusion, (4) personification | (C) (1) antithesis, (2) zeugma, (3) metonymy, (4) synecdoche |
| (B) (1) anaphora, (2) polysyndeton, (3) analogy, (4) apostrophe | (D) (1) anadiplosis, (2) ellipsis, (3) symbolism, (4) hyperbole |

Lời giải chi tiết

Chiasmus is specifically the mirrored, reversed-order structure; asyndeton omits conjunctions for speed; allusion is a brief reference to something assumed familiar; personification attributes human qualities to something non-human. Each of the other option sets mismatches at least one device with an incorrect definition. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

"The train wheezed, groaned, and finally shuddered to a stop." The verbs in this sentence most clearly demonstrate which device, in which human or animal-like qualities are attributed to a machine?

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (A) onomatopoeia only | (C) a rhetorical question |
| (B) personification | (D) litotes |

Lời giải chi tiết

"Wheezed" and "groaned" describe the train using verbs normally associated with living, breathing creatures in distress, attributing human/animal-like qualities to a machine – the definition of **personification** (the words also happen to sound evocative, but the device being tested is the attribution of life-like qualities, not sound imitation). (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

"History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme." This well-known observation is best classified as

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) a paradox, since the statement initially seems to deny a pattern before revealing a more precise, coherent one (rhyming rather than repeating) | (B) a simple simile using "like" or "as" |
| | (C) an example of asyndeton |
| | (D) verbal irony |

Lời giải chi tiết

The statement seems to contradict itself (denying repetition, then affirming a pattern) but resolves into a coherent, precise distinction (similarity of pattern without exact repetition) – the structure of a **paradox**, not a simile, asyndeton, or irony. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

“Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.” The reversed, mirrored structure of this sentence is a textbook example of

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| (A) anaphora | (C) onomatopoeia |
| (B) chiasmus | (D) hyperbole |

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence’s two halves mirror each other in reversed grammatical order (country/you, then you/country) rather than simply repeating the same opening words (which would be anaphora) — the defining criss-cross structure of **chiasmus**. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Write one sentence describing a crowded subway platform using formal, technical register, and one sentence describing the identical scene using conversational, colloquial register. Then explain in one sentence how the register shift changes the reader’s sense of the writer’s relationship to the scene.

Lời giải chi tiết

Formal/technical: “Platform density during peak transit hours frequently exceeds recommended capacity thresholds, resulting in delayed boarding times.” **Conversational/colloquial:** “By 8:15 the platform’s basically wall-to-wall people, and you’re lucky if you make the first train.” The formal version positions the writer as an outside analyst studying a system, distant from any personal stake in the crowd; the colloquial version positions the writer as someone who has actually stood on that platform, sharing the reader’s own frustration rather than reporting on it from a distance.

4.11 A full punctuation and syntax annotation**Annotated Passage — Punctuation as Rhetorical Choice**

“The report says three things: the bridge is structurally sound; the bridge requires \$4 million in preventive repairs within five years; the bridge will fail an inspection within ten years without them. Sound, for now. Not sound forever — nothing is. The question the report actually answers is not ‘is the bridge safe,’ but ‘how long do we have.’”

Colon: the opening colon announces a three-part list, creating anticipation that is immediately and precisely resolved — an efficient way to preview structure before delivering it. **Semicolons:** the three findings are joined by semicolons rather than periods, presenting them as equally weighted, closely related parts of a single finding rather than three separate, disconnected facts. **Fragments:** “Sound, for now.” and “Not sound forever — nothing is.” are deliberate sentence fragments, isolating the report’s most important qualification (soundness is temporary, not permanent) with a clipped, emphatic rhythm that a full grammatical sentence would soften. **Dash:** the dash before “nothing is” adds an abrupt, conversational aside that briefly steps outside the report’s formal register to make a blunt, almost editorial point. **Closing move:** the final sentence reframes the entire passage’s real argument (not *whether* but *how long*) using a quoted-question structure that crystallizes the shift in one sentence.

Bài tập luyện tập

The semicolons joining the three findings in the first sentence primarily serve to

- (A) indicate that the three findings are entirely unrelated
- (B) present the three findings as closely related, equally weighted parts of a single overall conclusion, rather than as separate, disconnected statements
- (C) signal the end of the paragraph
- (D) replace a comma with no change in meaning or effect

Lời giải chi tiết

Semicolons balance closely related independent clauses as equals without subordinating any of them, which is exactly the effect here: three findings presented as parts of one coherent assessment rather than isolated, unrelated statements (which periods would suggest more strongly). **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The two fragments (“Sound, for now.” and “Not sound forever — nothing is.”) most directly serve to

- (A) demonstrate a grammar error the writer failed to catch
- (B) isolate and emphasize the report’s central qualification through a clipped, deliberate rhythm that a full sentence would soften
- (C) shift the passage into a comedic tone
- (D) introduce a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

Deliberate fragments (as distinguished from grammar errors in Chapter 4’s punctuation table) create emphasis precisely because they break the expected rhythm of full sentences; here they isolate the passage’s most important qualifying idea rather than signaling a mistake or a tonal shift to comedy. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The dash in “Not sound forever — nothing is” functions most similarly to which other punctuation choice discussed in this chapter?

- (A) a colon announcing a formal list
- (B) an abrupt, conversational aside that briefly steps outside the passage’s more formal register
- (C) a semicolon balancing two closely related clauses
- (D) a comma splice

Lời giải chi tiết

The dash introduces a short, blunt, almost editorial interruption (“nothing is”) that briefly breaks from the passage’s more measured register — exactly the abrupt-aside function this chapter’s punctuation table assigns to the dash, distinct from a colon’s formal list-announcing function or a semicolon’s balancing function. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The final sentence's structure ("The question the report actually answers is not 'is the bridge safe,' but 'how long do we have.'") relies most heavily on which device?

- (A) alliteration
- (B) antithesis, contrasting two framings of the same underlying issue in parallel
- (C) onomatopoeia
- (D) a simile

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence balances two contrasting questions (“is it safe” vs. “how long do we have”) in parallel grammatical form, using that contrast to reframe the entire passage’s real concern — the structure and function of **antithesis**, not a sound device or a comparison using “like”/“as.” (B).

Free-Response Practice

Write a two-sentence passage about a school's aging computer lab that uses (1) a colon to announce a list and (2) a deliberate sentence fragment for emphasis, following the models in this section.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “*The lab has three working computers, one that overheats after twenty minutes, and one that has not turned on since October. Not obsolete yet. Almost.*” The colon-style list (via the comma-separated inventory) previews the lab’s condition precisely, and the two-word and one-word fragments isolate the passage’s central, understated judgment with a clipped emphasis a full sentence would dilute.

4.12 Tone consistency and deliberate tonal shifts

A passage's tone need not stay perfectly constant – deliberate shifts, as covered earlier in this chapter, are often the most heavily tested moments. But an **unintentional** tone break (a single sentence whose register or attitude does not fit its surroundings) reads as a control problem, not a rhetorical strategy. Distinguishing the two is a skill worth practicing directly.

Annotated Passage – Consistent Tone Maintained Through a Difficult Subject

"The hospital's new billing system was supposed to reduce errors. In its first month, it generated 340 duplicate charges, sent to patients who had, in several documented cases, already died. The hospital's statement called this 'a technical anomaly under active review.' A grieving family does not experience a duplicate charge for their mother's final week of care as an anomaly. They experience it as a bill."

The passage maintains a controlled, restrained tone throughout – even its most emotionally weighted moment (patients who “had... already died”) is delivered in flat, declarative syntax rather than melodrama. This restraint is deliberate: by refusing to editorialize with emotionally charged adjectives, the writer lets the facts themselves (340 duplicate charges, deceased patients billed, a euphemistic official statement) carry the argument’s emotional weight, which is a more persuasive and more defensible rhetorical choice than an overtly outraged tone would be. The final short sentence (“They experience it as a bill.”) maintains this same restraint while

still landing as the passage's sharpest point – proof that tonal consistency and rhetorical force are not in tension.

A tone break that reads as a control problem, not a strategy

"The hospital's new billing system was supposed to reduce errors. In its first month, it generated 340 duplicate charges, sent to patients who had, in several documented cases, already died. Honestly, that's just really messed up, you know? The hospital's statement called this 'a technical anomaly under active review.'"

The third sentence ("Honestly, that's just really messed up, you know?") breaks from the passage's otherwise controlled, formal register into sudden, unearned casualness with no signal (no paragraph break, no contrast transition, no shift in subject) that a deliberate shift is intended. Unlike the tonal shifts examined earlier in this chapter – which are prepared and purposeful – this shift reads as a lapse in control rather than a rhetorical choice, because nothing in the surrounding sentences motivates or benefits from the sudden change in register.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Không phải mọi thay đổi giọng điệu (shift) đều là **có chủ đích**. Một shift **có chủ đích** thường được **báo hiệu** (dấu ngắt đoạn, từ nối tương phản, thay đổi độ dài câu) và **phục vụ một hiệu ứng cụ thể**. Một shift **không có chủ đích** (như chèn một câu quá thân mật vào giữa đoạn văn trang trọng mà không có lý do) chỉ đơn giản là **lỗi kiểm soát giọng điệu** – đây là điều các câu hỏi sửa bài (Chapter 5) thường kiểm tra.

Bài tập luyện tập

The restrained, understated tone of the first passage above (hospital billing) is best explained as a deliberate strategy because

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) it avoids ever describing anything emotionally difficult | emotional weight without editorializing, which reads as more credible than open outrage |
| (B) it lets specific facts (340 charges, deceased patients, a euphemistic official statement) carry the argument's | (C) it uses no punctuation of any kind |
| | (D) it never mentions the hospital directly |

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage does describe emotionally difficult facts directly (deceased patients, duplicate billing) but refuses to add emotionally charged commentary on top of them, letting the facts' inherent weight do the persuasive work – a deliberate, credibility-building restraint, not avoidance. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

In the second (revised) passage, the sentence "Honestly, that's just really messed up, you know?" is best diagnosed as

- (A) a deliberate, well-signaled tonal shift that strengthens the passage's argument
- (B) an unintentional tone break, since nothing in the surrounding text signals or motivates the sudden shift into casual register
- (C) an example of chiasmus
- (D) a citation of an outside source

Lời giải chi tiết

Unlike the deliberate, signaled shifts examined earlier in this chapter, this sentence appears with no paragraph break, contrast transition, or other signal, and shifts into a register that does not serve any identifiable rhetorical purpose in context – the hallmark of an unintentional break in tonal control, not a strategic choice or a rhetorical device. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision would most effectively restore tonal consistency to the second passage while preserving its critical point?

- (A) Deleting the sentence entirely and moving directly to the hospital's official statement, maintaining the passage's restrained register throughout
- (B) Making every other sentence in the passage equally casual to match
- (C) Adding more casual sentences to reinforce the shift
- (D) Leaving the passage exactly as written

Lời giải chi tiết

Removing the single unmotivated casual sentence restores the passage's otherwise consistent, restrained register without losing any of its factual content or its critical force, which the surrounding restrained sentences already carry effectively on their own. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

"The negotiations collapsed like a poorly built bridge, all at once and without warning." This sentence combines which two devices?

- (A) a simile and hyperbole
- (B) a simile ("like a poorly built bridge") and a phrase emphasizing suddenness that reinforces the comparison's implied instability
- (C) onomatopoeia and alliteration
- (D) chiasmus and litotes

Lời giải chi tiết

"Like a poorly built bridge" is an explicit simile, and the following phrase ("all at once and without warning") reinforces the comparison's implication of hidden structural weakness giving way suddenly, rather than introducing hyperbole, sound devices, or chiasmus/litotes. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A writer wants to convey urgency without using any exclamation points. Which sentence best achieves this through syntax alone?

- (A) "The situation is somewhat concerning and may require attention at some point."
 (B) "Leave now. Not in ten minutes. Now."
 (C) "The situation, which has been develop-
 ing gradually over several weeks accord-
 ing to multiple observers, may eventually
 require some form of response."
 (D) "Things are happening and some people
 are worried about them."

Lời giải chi tiết

Short, repeated, imperative sentences ("Leave now... Now.") create urgency through syntax and rhythm alone, with no punctuation-based emphasis needed; the other options are vague, hedge-heavy, or needlessly long for an urgent message. (B).

4.13 Three levels of irony, distinguished precisely

Chapter 4 introduced verbal, situational, and dramatic irony separately; distinguishing them precisely under time pressure is worth one more dedicated pass, since exam passages frequently combine more than one type in a single short excerpt.

Type	Who "gets" the gap	Example
Verbal irony	the speaker knows the gap between what is said and what is meant; the audience is meant to notice it too	calling a disastrous plan "brilliant"
Situational irony	no one necessarily intends the gap; it is simply a mismatch between expectation and outcome	a fire station burning down because it ignored its own smoke detector
Dramatic irony	the audience/reader knows something a character or subject in the text does not	a reader knowing a company's product recall is coming while the ad in the passage still boasts about the product's safety

Two types of irony in one short passage

"The city's disaster-preparedness office, whose new headquarters flooded twice in its first year, released a statement calling the building 'a model of forward-thinking resilience.' Residents who remember watching sandbags pile up against the office's own front doors were not available for comment on how forward-thinking it looked from the sidewalk."

Situational irony: a disaster-preparedness office's own building flooding is a mismatch between the institution's stated purpose and its actual outcome, independent of anyone's intent. **Verbal irony:** the phrase "a model of forward-thinking resilience," applied to a building that flooded twice, is a deliberate, ironic overstatement the writer expects the reader to recognize as insincere. **Dry authorial irony (final sentence):** the writer's comment about residents being "not available for comment" is itself ironic understatement – residents are clearly available and have an obvious opinion, but the writer frames their unavailability sarcastically to make the same point without stating it directly.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the passage above, the office's building flooding twice is best classified as

- (A) verbal irony, since the office intended this outcome
(B) situational irony, since the mismatch between the office's disaster-preparedness purpose and its own building's vulnerability arose independent of anyone's stated intent
(C) dramatic irony, since readers know something the office does not
(D) a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

No one intended the building to flood, and the passage does not depend on the reader knowing something the office itself does not (the office presumably knows its own building flooded); the irony is simply a mismatch between the office's stated purpose and its actual, unintended outcome – situational irony. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The phrase “a model of forward-thinking resilience” is best classified as

- (A) a sincere, accurate description confirmed by the passage's other details
(B) verbal irony, since the phrase is undercut by the immediately preceding fact that the building flooded twice
(C) dramatic irony
(D) onomatopoeia

Lời giải chi tiết

The office's own self-praising phrase is directly contradicted by the fact just given (flooding twice), signaling that the phrase should not be taken at face value – the defining structure of verbal irony, not a sincere description, dramatic irony, or a sound device. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A reader who has just finished a news article reporting a company's bankruptcy filing then reads an older advertisement from that same company boasting about its “rock-solid, unshakeable financial future.” The reader's awareness of the bankruptcy, which the original ad's audience did not have, creates

- (A) verbal irony intended by the original advertisement's writers
(B) dramatic irony, since the current reader knows something the ad's original audience and, implicitly, the writers themselves did not know would come true
(C) situational irony intended by the company
(D) no irony, since the ad's claim was sincere at the time

Lời giải chi tiết

The ad's writers did not intend any irony – they believed the claim when they wrote it – but a later reader, equipped with knowledge the original audience lacked (the eventual bankruptcy), experiences the gap as irony; this retroactive, audience-side knowledge gap is the defining feature of **dramatic irony**. **(B)**.

4.14 A final full case study: style analysis, start to finish

Annotated Passage — A Retirement-Fund Warning Letter

"Your statement shows a balance of \$340,000. It also shows, in smaller print near the bottom, an annual fee of 1.8%. Compounded over twenty years, that fee is not a rounding error. It is roughly \$110,000 — money that never grows, never compounds, never becomes part of your retirement, because it left the account before it had the chance. Somewhere, a fund manager is calling this 'industry standard.' You are allowed to call it something else."

Diction: the passage sets "industry standard" (institutional, sanitizing language, placed in quotation marks to distance the writer from it) against plain, direct diction ("money that never grows"), a diction contrast this chapter has examined in several earlier passages. **Syntax:** short declaratives ("It is roughly \$110,000.") alternate with one longer, repetitive sentence ("never grows, never compounds, never becomes part of your retirement"), whose anaphoric "never" accumulates the fee's cost across three related but distinct losses rather than stating it once.

Punctuation: the em dash before "money that never grows" functions exactly as described earlier in this chapter — an abrupt, emphatic aside that pivots from the abstract number to its concrete meaning. **Tone:** controlled and pointed rather than panicked, built through precise, specific figures (\$340,000, 1.8%, \$110,000) rather than vague alarm. **Closing move:** the final two-sentence pivot ("Somewhere, a fund manager is calling this 'industry standard.' You are allowed to call it something else.") uses verbal irony and a direct address to the reader (second person) to hand the reader interpretive authority the industry euphemism had quietly withheld.

Bài tập luyện tập

The repeated word "never" in "never grows, never compounds, never becomes part of your retirement" is best classified as

- (A) epistrophe, since it repeats at the end of each clause related losses
(B) anaphora, since it repeats at the start of each clause, accumulating three distinct, (C) a rhetorical question
(D) onomatopoeia

Lời giải chi tiết

"Never" opens each of the three parallel clauses (anaphora, not epistrophe, which repeats at the end), building a cumulative sense of loss across three distinct but related consequences of the fee — not a question or a sound device. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The final sentence's shift to second person ("You are allowed to call it something else") primarily serves to

- (A) confuse the reader about who is speaking itself, personalizing the passage's closing argument
(B) directly hand the reader interpretive authority the industry euphemism ("industry standard") had implicitly claimed for (C) apologize for the letter's tone
(D) introduce a new, unrelated statistic

Lời giải chi tiết

The shift to direct address does not confuse or apologize; it explicitly returns interpretive power to the reader (“you are allowed to call it something else”), countering the euphemistic authority of “industry standard” with the reader’s own judgment – a personalizing, empowering closing move. **(B)**.

The Multiple-Choice Section

Mục tiêu Unit: Cấu trúc phần trắc nghiệm AP Lang (45 câu, 60 phút, hai dạng đoạn văn: đọc hiểu – reading passages và sửa bài viết – writing/revision passages); phân loại đầy đủ các dạng câu hỏi đọc hiểu (main idea, function, structure, rhetorical strategy, inference, tone, effect of style); phân loại đầy đủ các dạng câu hỏi sửa bài (thêm/xóa câu, chuyển tiếp, kết hợp câu, chèn bằng chứng, trích dẫn nguồn, súc tích hóa); chiến lược làm bài hiệu quả (loại trừ, quản lý thời gian) – áp dụng qua nhiều bộ đề đầy đủ có lời giải chi tiết.

5.1 Format and question families

The multiple-choice section presents four to five nonfiction passages, each followed by a set of questions, for a total of 45 questions in 60 minutes. Passages fall into two families that test different (though related) skills.

Two passage families

- **Reading passages** — polished nonfiction (essays, speeches, letters, memoirs, articles) that you read and analyze, answering questions about purpose, argument, structure, and style, exactly as in Chapters 1–4.
- **Writing/revision passages** — an early-draft student essay, presented with numbered sentences and sometimes numbered paragraphs, where questions ask you to act as an editor: which revision improves a sentence, where should a new sentence be inserted, which transition best signals the intended logical relationship, and so on.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Phần trắc nghiệm AP Lang có **hai loại đoạn văn** hoàn toàn khác nhau về kỹ năng: (1) **đoạn đọc hiểu** (reading passages) – văn bản đã hoàn chỉnh, em phân tích như các chương trước; (2) **đoạn sửa bài** (writing/revision passages) – một bài luận nháp của học sinh (chưa hoàn chỉnh), em đóng vai **biên tập viên** để chọn cách sửa tốt nhất. Nhiều học sinh giỏi đọc hiểu nhưng mất điểm ở dạng sửa bài vì chưa quen kiểu câu hỏi này – chương này luyện riêng cả hai dạng.

5.2 General strategy: process before you answer

For a reading passage: skim the first sentence of each paragraph and the last sentence of the passage before reading questions, building a rough SOAPSTone in under thirty seconds. For a writing/revision passage: read the whole draft once for overall meaning before touching any question, since several questions will ask about the draft's argument *as a whole* (its thesis, its intended audience) and cannot be answered from a single sentence in isolation.

Process of elimination (POE)

- Eliminate choices with **extreme, unsupported language** (“proves,” “completely,” “the only reason”) unless the passage itself is that extreme.
- Eliminate choices that are **true of the passage in general but do not answer the specific question asked** – the single most common trap type.
- Eliminate choices that are **half right, half wrong**: correctly describing one clause but mis-describing another, or naming a real device that does not actually appear in the cited lines.
- When two choices seem close, return to the **exact line reference** and check which choice is supported by the words actually on the page, not by a plausible-sounding paraphrase.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The most dangerous wrong answer on AP Lang MC is not the obviously wrong one – it is the choice that is **accurate about the passage but does not answer the question being asked**. A question about the effect of a specific metaphor in lines 12–14 is not answered by a true statement about the passage’s overall tone; always re-read the call of the question before selecting.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bẫy nguy hiểm nhất trong trắc nghiệm AP Lang không phải là đáp án “sai rõ ràng” mà là đáp án **đúng nhưng lạc đề** – đúng về đoạn văn nói chung nhưng không trả lời **đúng câu hỏi cụ thể** đang được hỏi. Luôn đọc lại chính xác câu hỏi (đặc biệt các từ khóa như “primarily,” “best,” “most nearly”) trước khi chọn đáp án.

5.3 Reading-question taxonomy

Reading-passage questions recur in a predictable set of types. Learning to recognize the type from the question stem tells you exactly what kind of evidence to look for before you even read the choices.

Question type	What it asks	Typical stem
Main idea / purpose	the passage's or a paragraph's overall claim or goal	"The passage as a whole is primarily concerned with..."
Function	why a specific detail, sentence, or paragraph appears where it does	"The primary function of the third paragraph is to..."
Structure / relationship	how one part of the passage relates to another	"The relationship between the first and second paragraphs is best described as..."
Rhetorical strategy	what device or appeal a specific line uses, and to what end	"The author's use of [X] in lines 10–12 primarily serves to..."
Inference	what the passage implies without stating outright	"It can reasonably be inferred that the author believes..."
Tone / attitude	the speaker's attitude, precisely named	"The tone of the underlined sentence is best described as..."
Effect of style	what a specific diction/syntax choice accomplishes	"The effect of the short sentence in line 8 is to..."
Audience / purpose	who the intended reader is, or what response the writer wants	"The passage is most likely directed toward an audience that..."

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Nhận diện đúng **loại câu hỏi** từ chính **cách hỏi (stem)** giúp em biết cần tìm bằng chứng gì trước khi đọc các đáp án. Ví dụ: câu hỏi có từ "function" (chức năng) đòi hỏi em giải thích **vai trò** của một chi tiết trong toàn bài, chứ không chỉ mô tả nội dung của nó.

5.3.1 Function questions

A function question, worked

Passage excerpt: "Proponents of the new zoning law point to three cities that saw downtown vacancy rates fall after passing similar measures. Portland's vacancy rate dropped from 19% to 11% within two years; Tulsa's fell from 22% to 14%; Richmond's from 17% to 9%. None of these cities, however, faced the specific combination of a shrinking population and an aging housing stock that this city faces."

Question: The primary function of the final sentence is to

- (A) summarize the statistics given in the previous sentences (B) introduce a limitation on the applicability of the cited precedents, qualifying the argument's strength
- (C) contradict the passage's overall argument (D) provide an additional statistic in support of the zoning law

Lời giải chi tiết

The final sentence does not summarize (it adds new information), contradict (it qualifies rather than reverses the argument), or provide a new statistic (it explicitly withholds one, noting an

absence of comparable data). It limits how far the three cited precedents can be trusted to apply here – a qualifying function. **(B)**.

5.3.2 Effect-of-style questions

An effect question, worked

Passage excerpt: “The recycling program cost the city \$40,000 to launch. It has, in three years, kept 1,200 tons of material from the landfill, extended the landfill’s projected lifespan by six years, and delayed a mandatory \$2 million landfill expansion. Forty thousand dollars.”

Question: The final two-word sentence primarily serves to

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) introduce a new statistic not previously mentioned | (C) correct an error made earlier in the passage |
| (B) repeat the initial cost in isolation, inviting the reader to weigh it against the substantial benefits just listed | (D) shift the passage’s tone from serious to humorous |

Lời giải chi tiết

“Forty thousand dollars” repeats a figure the reader already has, but isolating it as its own sentence – after a list of much larger benefits – forces a direct, silent comparison rather than stating a new fact, correcting an error, or shifting tone. **(B)**.

5.3.3 Inference questions

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A correct inference must be **strongly supported**, not merely **possible**. If a choice requires information the passage never provides, or requires you to assume something the author would likely dispute, it is not a valid inference – even if it sounds reasonable in isolation. AP Lang inference questions test controlled, textually grounded inference, not open speculation.

An inference question, worked

Passage excerpt: “The company’s annual report devotes four pages to its new recycling initiative and one paragraph, in a footnote, to the settlement it paid over the same year’s water-contamination lawsuit.”

Question: It can most reasonably be inferred that the author believes the company’s report

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) contains factually inaccurate statements about the recycling initiative | (C) was written primarily by the company’s legal department |
| (B) is disproportionate in the emphasis it gives to favorable versus unfavorable information | (D) fabricated the water-contamination lawsuit entirely |

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage never questions the report’s factual accuracy or authorship, and it treats the lawsuit as real, not fabricated – eliminating (A), (C), (D). The stark contrast in space allotted (four

pages vs. one footnote paragraph) directly and specifically supports an inference about disproportionate emphasis, without requiring any information beyond what is given. **(B)**.

5.4 Writing/revision-question taxonomy

Writing/revision passages present a numbered draft, often with bracketed sentence numbers like [1], [2], [3]. Questions ask you to improve the draft – a skill closer to editing than to literary analysis, but governed by the same rhetorical principles from Chapters 1–4: every revision choice should serve the writer’s purpose and audience.

Revision type	question	What it tests
Sentence addition/deletion	addi-	whether a proposed new sentence strengthens, weakens, or is irrelevant to the paragraph’s claim
Sentence placement		where in the paragraph or essay a given sentence belongs, based on the logical flow around it
Best transition		which connecting word accurately signals the logical relationship (addition, contrast, cause, concession) between two ideas
Sentence combination	combina-	which combined version most clearly and concisely expresses the relationship between two short, choppy sentences
Evidence insertion		which piece of evidence, inserted at a given point, most directly and specifically supports the paragraph’s claim
Conciseness / wordiness		which revision says the same thing with no loss of meaning in fewer, clearer words
Consistency of style/tone	of	which revision matches the register (formal/informal) and tone already established elsewhere in the draft
Thesis / topic sentence evaluation	sen-	which version states the clearest, most specific, most defensible claim
Citation / attribution		how to introduce or cite a source accurately and appropriately within the sentence
Conclusion effectiveness	effective-	which revision extends the essay’s significance rather than merely repeating the thesis

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Các câu hỏi **sửa bài** không kiểm tra ngữ pháp đơn thuần – chúng kiểm tra **lựa chọn từ đúng đắn**: từ nối nào thể hiện đúng quan hệ logic, câu nào súc tích mà không mất nghĩa, bằng chứng nào hỗ trợ luận điểm cụ thể nhất, câu kết nào mở rộng ý nghĩa thay vì chỉ lặp lại luận đề. Hãy luôn hỏi: “Lựa chọn nào phục vụ tốt nhất **mục đích** và **đối tượng** của đoạn văn này?”

5.4.1 Transitions and sentence combination

Choosing the correct logical transition

Draft sentences: “[3] The new schedule reduced average commute times by six minutes. [4] _____, survey respondents reported feeling more rushed in the mornings, not less.”

Question: Which word or phrase, inserted in the blank, most effectively signals the relationship between sentences 3 and 4?

(A) Similarly

(C) Surprisingly

(B) Consequently

(D) For instance

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 4 reports an outcome that contradicts what sentence 3 would predict (a shorter commute should feel less rushed, not more), so the transition must signal contrast/surprise, not similarity, consequence, or illustration. **(C)**.

Combining two choppy sentences

Draft sentences: “[7] The museum extended its hours. [8] Attendance on weekday evenings tripled.”

Question: Which revision best combines sentences 7 and 8 to make their relationship explicit?

- (A) “The museum extended its hours, and attendance on weekday evenings tripled.” (C) “The museum extended its hours. Attendance on weekday evenings tripled.”
- (B) “The museum extended its hours; weekday-evening attendance tripled in response, suggesting the schedule change directly drove the increase.” (D) “Attendance on weekday evenings tripled, but the museum extended its hours.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (C) merely juxtapose the facts with “and” or no connector at all; (D) misuses “but,” implying a contrast that is not present. Only (B) makes the causal relationship explicit (“in response,” “suggesting... directly drove”) while remaining appropriately careful (“suggesting,” not “proves”). **(B)**.

5.4.2 Evidence insertion and conciseness**Choosing the strongest evidence to insert**

Draft sentence: “[5] Community gardens do more than grow vegetables. [6] _____”

Question: Which sentence, inserted at [6], provides the most specific and relevant support for the claim in sentence 5?

- (A) “Gardening is a popular hobby around the world.” a matched group of non-gardening residents.”
- (B) “A three-year study of twelve community gardens found a 24% drop in reported neighborhood loneliness among regular participants, an effect not observed in (C) “Vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet.”
- (D) “Some cities have more community gardens than others.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The claim is specifically that gardens do more than grow food – so the strongest evidence must show a *non-food* benefit, measured and specific. Only (B) supplies a concrete, relevant, comparative finding (loneliness reduction, with a control group); the others are generic, off-point, or restate that gardens grow food. **(B)**.

Choosing the most concise revision

Draft sentence: “[2] Due to the fact that the bridge was closed for repairs, commuters were forced to find and utilize alternate routes in order to get to work.”

Question: Which revision most effectively improves the sentence’s conciseness without changing its meaning?

- (A) “Due to the fact that the bridge was closed, commuters found alternate routes to work.”
- (B) “Because the bridge was closed for repairs, commuters found alternate routes to work.”
- (C) “The bridge, which was closed for repairs at that particular point in time, forced commuters to seek out and make use of alternate routes.”
- (D) “Commuters were forced to find and utilize alternate routes to get to work because the bridge, unfortunately, was closed for repairs.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) still uses the wordy “due to the fact that”; (C) and (D) add or retain redundant phrasing (“at that particular point in time,” “seek out and make use of,” “unfortunately”). Only (B) replaces the wordy causal phrase with “Because” and removes the redundant verb pair (“find and utilize” → “found”), preserving the full meaning in fewer words. **(B)**.

5.4.3 Citation and attribution

AP Lang writing-question passages occasionally ask how to introduce or cite a source within a sentence. The tested skill is not formal citation formatting (no MLA works-cited page is required), but **clear, accurate, appropriately placed attribution**: naming who said or found something, distinguishing the source’s claim from the writer’s own claim, and avoiding a dangling or ambiguous reference.

Best in-text attribution

Draft sentence: “[9] Employees are more productive with flexible schedules, a 2021 study found, that surveyed 3,000 workers across six industries.”

Question: Which revision most clearly and grammatically attributes the claim to its source?

- (A) “Employees are more productive with flexible schedules, a 2021 study found, that surveyed 3,000 workers across six industries.”
- (B) “A 2021 study that surveyed 3,000 workers across six industries found that employees with flexible schedules were more productive.”
- (C) “Flexible schedules make employees more productive, according to workers, a 2021 study, and six industries.”
- (D) “It has been found that flexible schedules and productivity are related to a 2021 study of employees.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The original (A) misplaces the modifying clause (“that surveyed...”) so it appears to describe “found” rather than “a 2021 study.” (C) and (D) garble the relationship between the source, its method, and its finding. Only (B) attributes the claim cleanly: source, its method, then its

finding, in clear grammatical order. **(B)**.

5.5 Full passage set 1 --- reading passage

Reading Passage A

[1] The city's oldest park has one working water fountain for eleven acres of open lawn, a fact that becomes obvious only in July, when the line for that single fountain stretches the length of a basketball court. [2] The park department's proposed solution – three additional fountains at a combined cost of \$18,000 – has stalled in committee for two budget cycles, not because anyone opposes it, but because it appears on no one's list of urgent priorities. [3] Urgency, in a city budget, tends to belong to what breaks visibly and immediately: a collapsed bridge, a burst water main. [4] It rarely belongs to what merely inconveniences quietly, year after year, until the inconvenience becomes so routine that no one thinks to name it a problem anymore. [5] Eighteen thousand dollars is less than the cost of resurfacing one tennis court. [6] It is time the park stopped being the one place in this city where thirst is treated as a minor inconvenience rather than a solvable problem.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage as a whole is primarily concerned with

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) describing the history of the city's oldest park | (C) comparing the park's facilities to those of other cities |
| (B) arguing that a small, affordable infrastructure fix has been unfairly delayed by the way city budgets define urgency | (D) criticizing the park department for incompetence |

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage is not a history, a comparison to other cities, or a personal attack on the department (it explicitly says "not because anyone opposes it"); it argues that a specific, cheap fix has stalled because of how urgency gets defined in budgeting, and calls for that to change. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary function of sentences 3 and 4 is to

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) provide statistical evidence for the cost of the fountains | (C) introduce a counterargument the author will go on to refute |
| (B) generalize from the specific case to explain the underlying mechanism that causes such delays | (D) describe the physical layout of the park in more detail |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentences 3–4 step back from the specific fountain example to state a general principle about how budget urgency works (visible, sudden problems beat quiet, chronic ones) – explaining the *mechanism* behind the specific delay just described, not providing statistics, a counterargument, or physical description. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 5 (“Eighteen thousand dollars is less than the cost of resurfacing one tennis court”) primarily functions as an appeal to

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) pathos, through an emotional image of children playing | (C) ethos, by citing the author’s professional credentials |
| (B) logos, through a comparison that re-frames the cost as small relative to a familiar budget item | (D) kairos, by referencing a recent news event |

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence uses a comparative figure (an amount versus a familiar reference cost) to make a reasoning-based point about relative scale, with no emotional imagery, no credential-citing, and no reference to timing – a clear logos move. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The tone of the final sentence is best described as

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| (A) indifferent and detached | (C) celebratory and triumphant |
| (B) quietly indignant, sharpened by the re-framing of “thirst” as a “solvable problem” | (D) apologetic and hesitant |

Lời giải chi tiết

The final sentence is not neutral, celebratory, or apologetic; its pointed reframing (thirst as something “treated as” minor when it should be seen as solvable) carries a controlled, quiet indignation at the situation it describes. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which best describes the relationship between sentence 2 and sentence 1?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) Sentence 2 contradicts the claim made in sentence 1 | (C) Sentence 2 repeats sentence 1 without adding new information |
| (B) Sentence 2 introduces the specific, stalled solution to the problem sentence 1 establishes | (D) Sentence 2 shifts to an entirely unrelated topic |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 1 establishes a concrete problem (one fountain, long lines); sentence 2 immediately introduces the specific proposed fix and explains why it has stalled – a direct, building relationship, not a contradiction, repetition, or topic shift. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The word “quietly” in sentence 4 (“inconveniences quietly”) most directly reinforces which contrast established earlier in the passage?

- (A) the contrast between summer and winter weather (C) the contrast between the park department and the committee
- (B) the contrast between problems that “break visibly and immediately” and problems that persist unnoticed (D) the contrast between adults and children who use the park

Lời giải chi tiết

“Quietly” directly echoes and reinforces the visible/sudden versus quiet/chronic distinction the passage sets up in sentence 3 (“breaks visibly and immediately”), not any of the other contrasts, which the passage does not develop. (B).

5.6 Full passage set 2 --- reading passage**Reading Passage B**

[1] My grandfather kept a ledger, a real paper ledger, for every dollar he earned and spent for sixty-one years, and when he died we found forty-three of them stacked by decade in a closet, spines out, like a library no one had been assigned to read. [2] I expected boredom – columns of numbers rarely reward a reader. [3] Instead I found, in the margins beside the numbers, a second, unofficial ledger: “Bicycle for Marta, worth every cent.” “Roof repair – should have done it two years sooner, cost us.” “Wedding gift for the Alvarez boy – he’ll do the same for someone someday.” [4] He was not merely recording what he spent. [5] He was arguing with himself, in real time, about what mattered enough to spend it on. [6] I do not think he ever intended anyone to read these margins. [7] That is precisely why I trust them more than anything he ever said to my face.

Bài tập luyện tập

The comparison of the ledgers to “a library no one had been assigned to read” in sentence 1 primarily serves to

- (A) criticize the grandfather for hoarding paper worth deliberate, careful reading
- (B) suggest that the ledgers, despite their ordinary appearance, contain something (C) describe the physical size of the closet
- (D) provide a precise inventory of the ledgers’ contents

Lời giải chi tiết

The library comparison frames the stacked ledgers as a body of material that rewards close reading – setting up the passage’s actual discovery (the margin notes) – rather than criticizing hoarding, describing the closet, or providing an inventory. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The relationship between sentence 2 and sentences 3 through 5 is best described as

- (A) a stated expectation followed by evidence that complicates or overturns that expectation
- (B) two restatements of the same idea
- (C) an analogy followed by its explanation
- (D) a claim followed by a counterargument the author rejects

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 2 states an expectation (boredom); sentences 3–5 present specific evidence (the margin notes) that directly complicates and ultimately overturns that expectation, revealing something unexpectedly meaningful – not a restatement, an analogy, or a rejected counterargument. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

The three quoted margin notes in sentence 3 are most notable for their

- (A) use of complex, technical financial vocabulary
- (B) combination of brevity with an implied emotional or moral judgment behind each purchase
- (C) complete lack of any personal content
- (D) focus exclusively on large financial expenditures

Lời giải chi tiết

Each note is short but carries a clear implied judgment or emotion (satisfaction, regret, hope) behind an ordinary purchase – the opposite of technical, impersonal, or exclusively large-scale content. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The final sentence's claim that the author trusts the margin notes "more than anything he ever said" to his face is best supported by which idea introduced earlier in the passage?

- (A) that the grandfather kept the ledgers for sixty-one years
- (B) that the notes were never intended for an audience, making them less likely to be performed or filtered for effect
- (C) that the ledgers were stored by decade
- (D) that the grandfather gave a wedding gift to the Alvarez boy

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 6 ("I do not think he ever intended anyone to read these margins") directly sets up the final sentence's logic: unaudenced writing is trusted precisely because it was not shaped for anyone else's benefit, unlike speech directed at a listener. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The dominant tone of the passage is best described as

- (A) reflective and quietly admiring
- (B) outraged and confrontational
- (C) clinically objective and unemotional
- (D) mocking and dismissive

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage's careful, unhurried attention to the grandfather's private notes, and its closing claim of trust, build a tone of reflective admiration – not outrage, cold objectivity, or mockery. (A).

5.7 Full passage set 3 --- writing/revision passage**Writing/Revision Passage A**

[1] Many high schools do not require students to take a personal finance course before graduation. [2] This is a mistake. [3] Students learn calculus, which most of them will never use in adulthood, but many graduate without ever learning how compound interest works on a credit card balance. [4] A short personal finance requirement, added to an existing elective slot, would not cost districts much money. [5] _____ [6] Some students already learn this material at home. [7] Not every student has a parent able to teach it, however, and a school requirement would make sure no student's financial literacy depends entirely on their family's own knowledge.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence, inserted at [5], provides the most specific and relevant evidence for the claim in sentence 4?

- (A) "Financial literacy is important for everyone."
(B) "A pilot program in one district added a one-semester personal finance course using existing staff and reported an implementation cost of under \$50 per student."
(C) "Calculus is also an important subject for students to learn."
(D) "Some students enjoy math more than others."

Lời giải chi tiết

The claim in sentence 4 is specifically about cost, so the strongest evidence must be a concrete cost figure – only (B) supplies one (a specific pilot program with a specific per-student cost); the others are vague, off-topic, or irrelevant to cost. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of sentence 2 ("This is a mistake.") would most improve the draft by making the claim more specific and defensible?

- (A) "This is a mistake, and everyone knows it."
(B) "This gap leaves many students to learn high-stakes financial decisions through costly trial and error rather than instruction."
(C) "This is bad."
(D) "Many people have opinions about this topic."

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) is unarguable and vague ("everyone knows it"); (C) is even vaguer; (D) avoids taking a position at all. Only (B) replaces the flat claim with a specific, defensible one that explains why the

gap matters (costly trial-and-error learning). (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The writer is considering deleting sentence 6 ("Some students already learn this material at home."). This sentence should be

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) deleted, because it is completely irrelevant to the paragraph | tence 7 |
| (B) kept, because it sets up the concession-and-rebuttal structure completed by sentence 7 | (C) deleted, because it repeats sentence 3 |
| (D) kept, because it introduces the strongest evidence in the paragraph | |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 6 is not irrelevant, a repetition of sentence 3, or the paragraph's strongest evidence – it functions specifically as the concession half of a concession-and-rebuttal pair, which sentence 7 ("however") completes; removing it would leave sentence 7's "however" with nothing to respond to. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which transition, inserted at the start of sentence 7, most effectively signals its relationship to sentence 6?

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| (A) "Similarly," | (C) "For example," |
| (B) "Not every student has a parent able to teach it, however," | (D) "In conclusion," |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 7 pushes back against sentence 6's concession, so the relationship is one of contrast – exactly what "however" signals (already present in choice B), rather than similarity, illustration, or summary. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The writer wants to strengthen the essay's introduction. Which revision of sentence 1 best establishes a clear, arguable position rather than a neutral observation?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) "Many high schools do not require students to take a personal finance course before graduation." | rather than essential, many high schools leave students to face major financial decisions without ever having been taught the basic tools to make them." |
| (B) "Personal finance courses exist in some schools." | |
| (C) "By treating personal finance as optional | (D) "High schools offer many different types of courses." |

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence 1 is a neutral factual observation, not yet a claim; (B) and (D) are even more neutral or off-topic. Only (C) frames the same fact as part of an arguable position (treating

something “essential” as “optional” has a cost), setting up the paragraph’s real argument. **(C)**.

5.8 Full passage set 4 --- writing/revision passage

Writing/Revision Passage B

[1] The downtown library removed its late fees three years ago. [2] Circulation of children’s books increased by 31% in the first year alone. [3] Critics worried that removing fees would encourage patrons to keep books indefinitely. [4] The library’s own data, however, tell a different story: the average time a book stays checked out actually decreased slightly, from nineteen days to seventeen. [5] Librarians believe families who previously avoided the library out of fear of owing money are now returning books on a normal schedule, rather than avoiding the building entirely once a fee accumulated. [6] The fee removal cost the library an estimated \$22,000 a year in lost revenue. [7] Many libraries elsewhere have made similar changes.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of sentence 7 would most improve the paragraph by connecting it more precisely to the specific claim developed in sentences 1–6?

- (A) “Many libraries elsewhere have made similar changes.” 2023 reported comparable increases in circulation among previously underserved patrons, suggesting this library’s results are not an isolated case.”
- (B) “Libraries are important community institutions.”
- (C) “At least a dozen library systems that eliminated late fees between 2019 and (D) “Books are valuable resources for children.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence 7 is vague (“many,” “similar changes”) and does not connect to the paragraph’s specific claim about underserved patrons returning to the library. (B) and (D) are generic and off-topic. Only (C) supplies a specific, comparable statistic that directly reinforces the paragraph’s claim and generalizes it beyond a single library. **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The writer is deciding where sentence 6 (“The fee removal cost the library an estimated \$22,000 a year in lost revenue.”) should be placed for the clearest logical flow. It should be placed

- (A) exactly where it is, since it interrupts a chain of evidence supporting the policy’s success with an unaddressed cost (C) at the very end of the paragraph, addressed directly as a cost to be weighed against the benefits just described
- (B) immediately after sentence 1, before any evidence is presented (D) deleted entirely, since a policy’s cost is never relevant to evaluating it

Lời giải chi tiết

As placed, sentence 6 breaks the chain of evidence (sentences 2, 4, 5) supporting the policy without being connected to any response; moving it to the end lets the paragraph acknowledge the real cost *after* establishing the benefits, so the reader can weigh both deliberately rather than being interrupted mid-argument. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which word, if it replaced “worried” in sentence 3, would most weaken the paragraph’s fairness to the critics’ position?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| (A) “argued” | (C) “whined” |
| (B) “predicted” | (D) “suggested” |

Lời giải chi tiết

“Whined” carries a dismissive, mocking connotation that misrepresents the critics’ concern as petty rather than substantive, undermining the paragraph’s otherwise fair, evidence-based tone toward an opposing view; the other three options remain neutral or professional. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentences 4 and 5 together are best described as functioning to

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) introduce a brand-new, unrelated topic | (C) repeat the claim of sentence 2 without adding anything |
| (B) directly respond to the concern raised in sentence 3 with data, then offer a plausible explanation for that data | (D) undermine the paragraph’s overall argument |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 4 answers the specific worry in sentence 3 with a data point (checkout duration decreased slightly), and sentence 5 explains *why* that data makes sense (previously fee-avoidant families now returning normally) – evidence followed by commentary, not repetition, a new topic, or self-undermining. (B).

5.9 Timing and pacing

At roughly 1.3 minutes per question, pacing discipline matters more on MC than on any single essay. Answer every question – there is no penalty for a wrong answer, so an educated guess after eliminating two choices is always better than leaving a question blank. If a question stalls you for more than 60–75 seconds, mark your best guess, flag it, and move on; a stuck question costs you the two or three easier questions you could have answered in the same time.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Watch for the word **NOT** or **EXCEPT** in a question stem (“All of the following are true EXCEPT”). Under time pressure, it is easy to answer as though the question asked for what *is* true rather than what *is not*. Circle or mentally flag negative-form questions before reading the choices.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Quản lý thời gian: khoảng **1.3 phút/câu**. Không có điểm trừ cho câu sai, nên **luôn đoán** nếu không chắc (đừng bao giờ để trống). Nếu một câu làm mất hơn 60–75 giây, hãy chọn đáp án khả dĩ nhất, đánh dấu lại, và làm tiếp – đừng để một câu khó “giam” thời gian của nhiều câu dễ khác. Đặc biệt chú ý các câu có chữ **NOT** hoặc **EXCEPT** trong đề.

Bài tập luyện tập

“All of the following devices appear in the passage EXCEPT” is a question stem that requires the reader to

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) find the one device among the choices that IS present in the passage | the other three ARE present |
| (B) find the one device among the choices that is NOT present in the passage, while | (C) ignore the passage entirely and rely on outside knowledge |
| | (D) select two correct answers instead of one |

Lời giải chi tiết

EXCEPT questions invert the usual logic: three choices name devices that genuinely appear in the passage (and should be eliminated), while the correct answer is the one device that does not appear – exactly the reverse of a normal “which of the following is true” question. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student spends four minutes on a single difficult question in the first ten minutes of the section, then rushes the last five questions with under a minute remaining. This outcome illustrates the primary risk of

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) reading too quickly at the start of the section | tions |
| (B) failing to flag and move on from a stalled question, which then costs accuracy on multiple later, potentially easier ques- | (C) choosing answers at random from the beginning |
| | (D) spending too much time re-reading the passage |

Lời giải chi tiết

Sinking four minutes into one question is a direct pacing failure that then forces rushed, lower-accuracy guessing on several later questions – exactly the risk the flag-and-move-on strategy is designed to prevent. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Given no penalty for incorrect answers, a student unsure between two remaining choices with 10 seconds left on a question should

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) leave the question blank to avoid any risk | (C) skip ahead and never return to any flagged questions |
| (B) select one of the two remaining choices, since an educated guess has a 50% chance versus a 0% chance from a blank | (D) spend the remaining time re-reading the entire passage from the beginning |

Lời giải chi tiết

Since there is no wrong-answer penalty, a blank answer is strictly worse than a guess between two remaining choices, which has real positive expected value; the best move under time pressure is always to select an answer, not leave it blank. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student who has 4 minutes left and 3 unanswered questions in different passages should most reasonably

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) re-read all three passages in full before answering | fastest, most confident answers first |
| (B) quickly locate the specific line references in each question and answer based on targeted re-reading, prioritizing the | (C) leave all three blank to save time |
| | (D) answer only the question that seems the most interesting |

Lời giải chi tiết

With limited time, targeted re-reading of the specific lines a question references is far more efficient than re-reading entire passages, and answering the fastest/most confident questions first maximizes the number of points earned in the remaining time; leaving answers blank forfeits free expected value. **(B)**.

5.10 Full passage set 5 --- reading passage**Reading Passage C**

[1] The manufacturer's warranty card asks a single question: "How satisfied are you with your purchase, on a scale of 1 to 10?" [2] It does not ask what broke, when, or why; it does not ask whether the customer even understood how to use the product; it does not ask whether the customer's expectations were realistic in the first place. [3] A single number returns from ten thousand customers, gets averaged into a single decimal point, and becomes the sentence a marketing department repeats in every subsequent advertisement: "rated 8.7 out of 10 by real customers." [4] Nothing in that sentence is false. [5] Nothing in that sentence is especially informative either. [6] A number that erases every story behind it has not measured satisfaction so much as manufactured a number that resembles it.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary purpose of the passage is best described as

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) explaining how warranty cards are manufactured | sent |
| (B) questioning whether a single averaged satisfaction score meaningfully captures the actual experiences it claims to represent | (C) praising a specific company's marketing department |
| | (D) describing the physical design of a warranty card |

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage is not about manufacturing process, praise, or physical design; its entire argument builds toward the closing claim that an averaged number can technically be accurate while still failing to inform – a critique of what the score actually captures. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentences 4 and 5 ("Nothing in that sentence is false. Nothing in that sentence is especially informative either.") rely primarily on which structural device?

- (A) a rhetorical question
- (B) parallelism, using the repeated “Nothing in that sentence is” structure to draw a sharp distinction between accuracy and informativeness
- (C) a simile comparing the sentence to a warranty card
- (D) an extended metaphor

Lời giải chi tiết

The two sentences repeat an identical grammatical frame (“Nothing in that sentence is...”) while swapping only the final predicate (false / informative), a parallel structure that isolates and sharpens the distinction between two qualities that might otherwise be assumed to go together. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The list in sentence 2 ("It does not ask what broke... it does not ask whether... it does not ask whether...") primarily functions to

- (A) provide three unrelated criticisms of warranty cards in general
- (B) use anaphora to accumulate specific examples of the information the single question fails to capture, building the passage's central claim
- (C) prove that most products are defective
- (D) introduce a counterargument that the passage will go on to refute

Lời giải chi tiết

The repeated “It does not ask” (anaphora) builds a cumulative, specific case for exactly what kind of information a single satisfaction number omits, directly supporting rather than refuting the passage’s central claim, and without asserting anything about defect rates. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The final sentence's claim that the number "has not measured satisfaction so much as manufactured a number that resembles it" relies on which distinction?

- (A) the distinction between the warranty card and the product itself
- (B) the distinction between genuinely measuring a complex reality and merely producing a number that superficially looks like that measurement
- (C) the distinction between marketing departments and engineering departments
- (D) the distinction between the number 8 and the number 10

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence's core move is distinguishing authentic measurement (capturing the real, varied experiences behind the number) from a number that merely has the surface appearance of measurement without the substance – not a distinction about departments, products, or specific digits. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The tone of the passage is best described as

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) reverent and celebratory toward market research | rather than open hostility |
| (B) skeptical and analytical, building its critique through careful, specific reasoning | (C) panicked and alarmist |
| | (D) purely comedic, with no serious argument |

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage never becomes alarmist or purely comedic, nor is it celebratory; its measured, specific, step-by-step reasoning (what the question omits, what the number technically is versus what it seems to be) builds a controlled, analytical skepticism. **(B)**.

5.11 Full passage set 6 --- writing/revision passage**Writing/Revision Passage C**

[1] Many downtown storefronts have sat empty for over a year. [2] City officials point to high commercial rents as the main cause. [3] A recent survey of 40 vacant storefront owners found that 65% cited rent as a significant barrier to leasing, but 48% also cited a city permitting process that takes an average of 14 weeks to approve a new business. [4] _____ [5] A pilot program in a neighboring city reduced its permitting timeline to under four weeks by assigning a single case manager to each application instead of requiring sequential sign-offs from five separate departments. [6] Storefront vacancy in that city's downtown fell by 15% within eighteen months of the change. [7] Rent reform remains a valid long-term goal, but it requires state-level legislative changes that are unlikely to happen quickly. [8] Permitting reform, unlike rent reform, is entirely within this city's own control.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence, inserted at [4], most effectively transitions from sentence 3's survey data to the pilot-program example in sentence 5?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) "Storefronts are an important part of any downtown." | size." |
| (B) "This second, less-discussed barrier may be more solvable in the short term than the rent problem officials usually empha- | (C) "Surveys are a common research method." |
| | (D) "Rent is clearly the only real problem." |

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph pivots from a widely discussed cause (rent) to a less-discussed one (permitting delay) and then to a concrete solution; only (B) signals that specific pivot and sets up why the permitting example matters, while the other options are generic, irrelevant, or contradict the survey data just cited. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The writer wants to add the following sentence: “Some business owners also mentioned parking availability as a minor concern.” This sentence should

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) be added immediately after sentence 3, since it is highly relevant to the paragraph’s central claim | the paragraph’s focused comparison between rent and permitting delay |
| (B) not be added, since it introduces a minor, undeveloped point that would dilute | (C) be added as the new final sentence of the passage |
| | (D) replace sentence 6 entirely |

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph’s line of reasoning is tightly focused on comparing two specific barriers (rent and permitting) and their relative solvability; introducing a third, minor, undeveloped factor (parking) would dilute that focus without being developed enough to matter, which is exactly the kind of digression a tight paragraph should avoid. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of sentence 8 (“Permitting reform, unlike rent reform, is entirely within this city’s own control.”) best maintains the passage’s argumentative momentum toward a clear recommendation?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) “Permitting reform, unlike rent reform, is entirely within this city’s own control.” | (C) “Rent and permitting are both important issues facing the city.” |
| (B) “Both problems are difficult to solve.” | (D) “Nothing can be done about either problem right away.” |

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence 8 already performs this function well – it names a specific, actionable distinction (control over permitting vs. dependence on state legislation for rent) that drives toward a clear recommendation; the other three options are vaguer and would weaken, not maintain, that momentum. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The relationship between sentence 6 (“Storefront vacancy in that city’s downtown fell by 15%...”) and sentence 5 (describing the case-manager change) is best described as

- (A) contradiction change worked
(B) a proposed cause (the permitting change) followed by its measured effect (the vacancy drop), offering evidence that the
(C) an unrelated shift in topic
(D) a restatement of the same information

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 5 describes a specific policy change; sentence 6 reports a specific, measured outcome that followed it, establishing a cause-and-effect relationship that functions as evidence for the paragraph's implicit recommendation — not a contradiction, topic shift, or repetition. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of sentence 3 would most improve its clarity without changing its meaning? “A recent survey of 40 vacant storefront owners found that 65% cited rent as a significant barrier to leasing, but 48% also cited a city permitting process that takes an average of 14 weeks to approve a new business.”

- (A) No revision is needed; the sentence is already clear and appropriately specific. owners in various ways.”
(B) “A recent survey found that rent and permitting are both, in a general sense, somewhat difficult for many storefront
(C) Delete all the specific numbers to shorten the sentence.
(D) Combine the sentence with sentence 2 using “and,” with no other changes.

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence is already specific, clear, and appropriately detailed (a sample size, two precise percentages, and a specific timeline figure); (B) would replace this precision with vague filler, (C) would remove the sentence's most valuable content, and (D) would not resolve any actual clarity problem. (A).

Bài tập luyện tập

The overall organizational pattern of the full passage is best described as

- (A) chronological narrative with no argumentative purpose alternative solution
(B) problem-solution, presenting a widely assumed cause, complicating it with data, then proposing a specific, evidenced al-
(C) pure description with no claim
(D) compare-contrast between two unrelated cities with no connection to the city being discussed

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage moves from the commonly cited cause (rent) to a data-supported complication (permitting delay matters too) to a specific, evidenced solution (the case-manager model, with a measured outcome) – the classic shape of **problem-solution** organization introduced in Chapter 3. (B).

5.12 Full passage set 7 --- reading passage**Reading Passage D**

[1] The instructions on the ladder read, in order: do not stand on the top rung; do not exceed the weight limit printed on the side rail; do not use near power lines; do not use on uneven ground. [2] I have never once seen anyone read these instructions before climbing a ladder. [3] I have, however, seen every single warning proven correct by someone's actual, specific injury, usually delivered with the phrase "I know, I know" before the sentence describing exactly how they ignored it. [4] There is a particular kind of knowledge that only becomes real after it has already cost something, and safety instructions live almost entirely in that category: technically available in advance, actually absorbed only in hindsight. [5] This is not a flaw unique to ladders. [6] It is, more or less, how every warning label in a garage, kitchen, or medicine cabinet actually functions for most people who ever read one.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary function of sentence 1 (the list of ladder instructions) is to

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) provide a complete technical manual for ladder safety | uinely absorbed |
| (B) establish a concrete, specific set of warnings that the rest of the passage will argue are technically available but rarely gen- | (C) criticize the specific company that manufactured the ladder |
| | (D) prove that ladders are more dangerous than other tools |

Lời giải chi tiết

The list is not a complete manual, a criticism of a specific manufacturer, or a comparative danger claim; it supplies the concrete, specific example the passage's central claim (warnings are "technically available," rarely "genuinely absorbed") needs to be more than an abstract generalization. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The phrase "I know, I know" in sentence 3 is best understood as

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) a sincere expression of complete ignorance of the warning | sage's claim about warnings being technically known but not genuinely absorbed |
| (B) a recognizable social script that signals awareness of a rule immediately before or after breaking it, supporting the pas- | (C) a direct quotation from the ladder's printed instructions |
| | (D) an example of onomatopoeia |

Lời giải chi tiết

The phrase captures a familiar social pattern – acknowledging a rule's existence in the very moment of describing having broken it – which directly illustrates the passage's distinction between knowing a fact exists and having actually internalized it. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 4's distinction between knowledge "technically available in advance" and knowledge "actually absorbed only in hindsight" functions as which method of development, as discussed in Chapter 3?

- (A) narration anecdote
(B) a definitional distinction used to reframe how the reader understands the earlier (C) process analysis
(D) spatial organization

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence does not narrate, walk through steps, or organize spatially; it draws a precise conceptual distinction (available vs. absorbed) that reframes the significance of the ladder anecdote just given – a definitional move used to develop and generalize the passage's claim, as covered in Chapter 3's methods of development. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage's final two sentences (5–6) primarily function to

- (A) contradict everything argued in the previous sentences other everyday contexts
(B) extend the specific ladder example into a general claim about warning labels in (C) introduce a brand-new, unrelated topic about kitchens
(D) apologize for using the ladder example

Lời giải chi tiết

Rather than contradicting or abandoning the ladder example, the final sentences explicitly generalize its lesson ("not a flaw unique to ladders") to a broader category of everyday warnings, extending the passage's claim's scope rather than introducing something unrelated. **(B)**.

5.13 Full passage set 8 --- writing/revision passage**Writing/Revision Passage D**

[1] Youth sports leagues in this town have grown steadily for a decade. [2] Registration data show that participation nearly doubled between 2013 and 2023. [3] During the same period, the number of certified referees available to officiate games grew by only 20%. [4] _____ [5] Games are now more frequently rescheduled or shortened due to referee shortages, and several coaches report that undertrained volunteer referees have made more disputed calls than in previous years. [6] A modest increase in referee stipends, paired with a streamlined certification course offered twice a year instead of once, would likely close much of this gap within two seasons. [7] The league's current budget already includes an unspent facilities-maintenance surplus large enough to cover this specific change without raising registration fees.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence, inserted at [4], best connects the mismatched growth rates in sentences 2–3 to the consequences described in sentence 5?

- (A) "Sports are good for children's physical and social development."
(B) "This growing gap between rising demand and a nearly flat referee supply has begun to show up in ways beyond the raw numbers."
(C) "Many other towns have similar youth sports leagues."
(D) "Referees wear striped shirts to remain visible during games."

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph needs a bridge between two statistics (participation vs. referee growth) and their real-world consequence (rescheduled games, disputed calls); only (B) makes that specific transition, while the others are generic, off-topic, or irrelevant. **(B).**

Bài tập luyện tập

The writer wants to strengthen sentence 6 by adding a specific, quantified detail. Which addition would most effectively serve this goal?

- (A) "A modest increase in referee stipends, such as raising the average per-game rate from \$25 to \$35, paired with a streamlined certification course offered twice a year instead of once, would likely close much of this gap within two seasons."
(B) "A modest increase in referee stipends would probably help somewhat."
(C) "Referee stipends should be increased by some amount that seems fair."
(D) No addition is needed; vague language is preferable in policy recommendations.

Lời giải chi tiết

(B), (C), and (D) either add nothing specific or explicitly reject the goal of specificity. Only (A) supplies a concrete, quantified figure that makes the proposal checkable and concrete, exactly the kind of specific detail Chapter 2 identifies as strengthening a policy claim. **(A).**

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 7 (about the unspent facilities-maintenance surplus) functions primarily to

- (A) introduce an unrelated budget category with no connection to the proposal
(B) preempt the most likely practical objection to the proposal (cost) by identifying an existing funding source
(C) criticize the league's financial management in general
(D) contradict the proposal made in sentence 6

Lời giải chi tiết

By identifying a specific, already-available funding source, the sentence directly addresses the most predictable objection to any funding proposal — where the money would come from — strengthening rather than contradicting or merely decorating the recommendation in sentence 6. **(B).**

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of sentence 5 would most improve its precision without changing its meaning?
“Games are now more frequently rescheduled or shortened due to referee shortages, and several coaches report that undertrained volunteer referees have made more disputed calls than in previous years.”

- (A) No revision needed; the sentence already reports two specific, relevant consequences with appropriate attribution (“several coaches report”).
- (B) “Games are sometimes affected by various issues related to staffing.”
- (C) “Referees are clearly not doing a good job this year.”
- (D) Delete the phrase “several coaches report” and present the claim as an established fact.

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence already balances specific consequences with appropriately hedged attribution (“several coaches report,” rather than presenting a subjective judgment as settled fact); (B) is vaguer, (C) is an unsupported value judgment, and (D) would overstate the evidence’s certainty. **(A)**.

5.14 Mixed diagnostic quiz

The items below mix question types and passage types deliberately, without labeling which type each one is – exactly as they will appear, unlabeled, on the real exam. Use this set to practice recognizing a question’s type from its stem alone before answering.

Bài tập luyện tập

“The senator’s office described the funding cut as a ‘budget realignment.’” The word choice “realignment” most likely serves to

- (A) describe the cut in the most emotionally vivid terms possible
- (B) soften the perceived impact of the cut through neutral, technical-sounding language
- (C) provide a precise legal definition required by statute
- (D) introduce a rhetorical question

Lời giải chi tiết

“Realignment” is a classic example of institutional euphemism (covered in Chapter 4): neutral, abstract, technical-sounding language that downplays the concrete impact of a cut, rather than describing it vividly, providing a legal definition, or posing a question. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A draft sentence reads: “The museum’s new wing, it is expensive, opened last spring.” Which revision most effectively corrects this sentence’s structure while preserving its content?

- (A) “The museum’s new wing, which was expensive, opened last spring.”
- (B) “The museum’s new wing it is expensive opened last spring.”
- (C) No revision is needed.
- (D) “The museum’s new wing opened. It is expensive. Last spring.”

Lời giải chi tiết

The original sentence contains an ungrammatical, unintegrated fragment (“it is expensive”); only (A) correctly subordinates this information into a relative clause, producing a single grammatical sentence that preserves all the original content. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“Not until the final report was released did the full scope of the delay become clear.” This sentence’s inverted structure (beginning with “Not until”) is best identified as an example of

- (A) anastrophe, reversing normal word order for emphasis (C) onomatopoeia
(B) a rhetorical question (D) litotes

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence reverses the expected subject-first word order (delaying the subject “the full scope of the delay” and its verb) for emphasis, which is precisely the definition of **anastrophe/inversion** from Chapter 4’s schemes table. **(A)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary function of a passage’s second paragraph, which presents statistics contradicting a claim made in the first paragraph, is most likely to

- (A) restate the first paragraph in different words the passage’s line of reasoning
(C) introduce an entirely unrelated topic
(B) complicate or qualify the claim established in the first paragraph, advancing (D) provide biographical information about the author

Lời giải chi tiết

A paragraph that presents contradicting statistics is functioning to complicate or qualify the prior claim – advancing, not merely restating or abandoning, the passage’s argument – which is a structural (function/relationship) question type rather than one about topic shift or biography. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which transition, inserted between two sentences describing (1) a company’s declining sales and (2) its decision to increase its research budget, best signals a counterintuitive relationship the writer wants to highlight?

- (A) “Therefore,” (C) “Counterintuitively,”
(B) “Similarly,” (D) “For example,”

Lời giải chi tiết

Increasing a research budget *despite* declining sales is an unexpected move worth flagging as such; “Counterintuitively” explicitly signals that the relationship defies the reader’s default ex-

pectation, unlike the other options, which would imply an expected or illustrative relationship. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

A passage's final paragraph begins: "None of this suggests the policy was a mistake – only that its costs were not evenly shared." This sentence functions primarily to

- (A) completely reverse the argument made in the rest of the passage
- (B) qualify the passage's overall claim with appropriate nuance rather than either fully endorsing or fully rejecting the policy
- (C) introduce a brand-new topic unrelated to the rest of the passage
- (D) restate the passage's opening sentence verbatim

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence explicitly avoids both a full reversal and a full endorsement, instead narrowing the claim to a specific, qualified point (uneven cost distribution, not outright failure) – the kind of nuanced, appropriately limited claim associated with sophisticated argument, not a reversal, new topic, or repetition. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

"The candidate's plan is not perfect, but it is far more detailed than anything her opponent has proposed." The word "but" signals which relationship between the two clauses?

- (A) addition
- (B) concession followed by a comparative claim that still favors the candidate
- (C) pure contradiction with no favored side
- (D) causation

Lời giải chi tiết

The first clause concedes a limitation ("not perfect"), and "but" pivots to a comparative point that still favors the candidate overall (more detailed than the alternative) – a concession-and-rebuttal relationship, not simple addition, an evenly balanced contradiction, or causation. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A writing/revision passage's paragraph 2 currently begins with "Also," connecting it to a very different claim in paragraph 1 with no logical relationship established. Which type of revision question would most likely test this issue?

- (A) a question about citation format
- (B) a question asking which transition word most accurately signals the actual logical relationship between the two paragraphs
- (C) a question about sentence combination
- (D) a question about conciseness

Lời giải chi tiết

An inaccurate or vague transition ("Also" used where no real additive relationship exists) is exactly the kind of issue a best-transition revision question tests, as distinguished from citation,

sentence-combination, or conciseness questions covered earlier in this chapter. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A passage's opening paragraph describes a problem in vivid, personal terms; its second paragraph shifts to statistical, impersonal language; its third paragraph returns to a personal anecdote to close. This structure most closely resembles

- (A) a random, unplanned shift in style with no rhetorical purpose middle section of impersonal supporting data
- (B) a deliberate frame structure, using personal material to open and close around a (C) an error the writer should have caught
- (D) a structure exclusive to legal documents

Lời giải chi tiết

Opening and closing with personal material while placing supporting data in the middle is a common, deliberate "frame" structure that grounds abstract data in human stakes at both ends of a passage, not a random error or a genre-exclusive device. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

On a writing/revision passage, a question asks which sentence, if inserted, would create the most effective transition between a paragraph about a problem's causes and a paragraph about its proposed solution. The best answer will most likely

- (A) introduce a completely new, unrelated problem remedy
- (B) briefly acknowledge the causes just discussed while explicitly pivoting the reader's attention toward the idea of a (C) repeat the first paragraph's topic sentence verbatim
- (D) consist only of a single transition word with no additional content

Lời giải chi tiết

An effective bridge sentence between a causes paragraph and a solutions paragraph typically both acknowledges what came before and explicitly signals the shift toward remedy, doing more work than a bare transition word, a verbatim repetition, or an unrelated new topic. **(B)**.

5.15 Full passage set 9 --- reading passage

Reading Passage E

[1] Every airline seatback pocket contains a safety card that no frequent flyer has looked at in years, illustrated with a cartoon figure calmly sliding down an inflatable slide with the serene expression of someone waiting for a bus. [2] The real evacuation, should it ever come, will not look like the card. [3] It will be loud, crowded, and almost certainly missing several of the calm cartoon figure's most important advantages: full lighting, an empty aisle, and eleven seconds to compose oneself before stepping onto the slide. [4] Airlines know this. [5] The card is not really a set of instructions for the passenger; it is a liability document, drafted to satisfy a regulation, illustrated to avoid alarming anyone before a flight that will, overwhelmingly, land without incident.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage's primary claim is best summarized as

- (A) airline safety cards are technically inaccurate and should be banned
- (B) the safety card's true function – satisfying a regulatory requirement without alarming passengers – differs from its apparent function as genuine evacuation instruction
- (C) most airline evacuations end badly
- (D) cartoon illustrations are never used in official documents

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage's real claim, delivered in its final sentence, is about the card's actual purpose (regulatory, non-alarming) versus its apparent purpose (instructive) – not a claim about banning cards, evacuation outcomes in general, or illustration policy elsewhere. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The description of the cartoon figure's "serene expression of someone waiting for a bus" primarily functions to

- (A) accurately depict a real passenger's likely emotional state during an actual evacuation
- (B) highlight, through incongruous comparison, the gap between the card's calm depiction and the actual chaos of a real evacuation
- (C) provide a literal description required by aviation regulation
- (D) shift the passage into a purely comedic register with no argumentative purpose

Lời giải chi tiết

Comparing a life-threatening evacuation to the mundane calm of waiting for a bus is a deliberately incongruous comparison that sharpens the passage's central contrast between depicted calm and actual chaos – not a literal accuracy claim, a regulatory requirement, or comedy for its own sake (though the humor serves that larger argumentative point). **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 4 ("Airlines know this.") is a two-word sentence following three longer, more detailed sentences. Its brevity primarily serves to

- (A) save space due to a strict word-count limit
- (B) deliver a sharp, accusatory pivot with maximum emphasis after the more elaborated description that precedes it
- (C) signal the passage's conclusion
- (D) introduce a new, unrelated topic

Lời giải chi tiết

Following three longer, descriptive sentences with an abrupt two-word sentence creates emphasis through contrast (as covered in Chapter 4's sentence-length discussion), landing the passage's most pointed accusation – that this is a known, deliberate design choice – rather than serving space, conclusion-signaling, or topic-shifting functions. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The overall tone of the passage is best described as

- (A) reverent and admiring of airline safety design (C) panicked and alarmist about air travel safety
- (B) dryly skeptical, using understated, precise detail rather than open outrage to build its critique (D) purely comedic, with no underlying argumentative purpose

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage never becomes alarmist or purely comedic, nor is it admiring; its precise, understated detail (eleven seconds, full lighting, an empty aisle) builds a controlled, dry skepticism toward the card's real purpose – similar in approach to the warranty-card passage examined earlier in this chapter. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

On the multiple-choice section, a question asks for the passage's "primary rhetorical purpose." A choice that reads "to describe the contents of an airline safety card" is most likely a trap because it

- (A) is factually false (C) is grammatically incorrect
- (B) restates the passage's subject rather than its actual purpose (revealing the gap between the card's apparent and real function) (D) uses a word not found anywhere in the passage

Lời giải chi tiết

This is the subject-versus-purpose trap introduced in Chapter 1: describing what the passage is *about* (the safety card's contents) is not the same as stating what the passage is trying to *do* (reveal the gap between the card's stated and real function) – a classic wrong-answer pattern on purpose questions. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A question asks which choice best describes the relationship between sentence 3 (about the missing advantages of a real evacuation) and sentence 5 (about the card's true regulatory purpose). The best answer will most likely describe this relationship as

- (A) unrelated and disconnected (C) a direct contradiction between the two sentences
- (B) the specific gap identified in sentence 3 building toward and being explained by the broader claim about purpose in sentence 5 (D) a simple restatement of sentence 1

Lời giải chi tiết

Sentence 3's specific gap (missing real-world advantages) sets up the evidence that sentence 5's broader explanatory claim (the card is a liability document, not real instruction) then accounts for – a building, explanatory relationship, not disconnection, contradiction, or mere

restatement. (B).

5.16 Full passage set 10 --- writing/revision passage

Writing/Revision Passage E

[1] The school district's new attendance policy allows students to miss up to five days per semester before parents are contacted. [2] Before the policy took effect, contact happened after three absences. [3] Some teachers worried the looser threshold would increase chronic absenteeism. [4] _____ [5] The district's data from the first semester under the new policy shows chronic absenteeism (defined as missing 10% or more of school days) actually decreased slightly, from 14.2% to 13.1% of students. [6] One counselor suggested that the earlier three-absence threshold generated so many routine, low-priority calls that families sometimes stopped answering calls from the school altogether – including calls about more serious concerns. [7] Under the new policy, a call is rarer and, evidently, more likely to be answered.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence, inserted at [4], best sets up the surprising data presented in sentence 5?

- (A) "Attendance policies vary widely between school districts." (C) "Teachers have many responsibilities beyond attendance monitoring."
(B) "That prediction has not been borne out by the first semester of data." (D) "Chronic absenteeism has always been a serious problem in education."

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph needs a bridge that signals the coming data will complicate or overturn the prediction in sentence 3; only (B) does this directly, while the others are generic or fail to set up the specific reversal that sentence 5 delivers. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 6 (the counselor's explanation about families not answering routine calls) functions primarily to

- (A) introduce an unrelated complaint about teacher workload (C) contradict the data presented in sentence 5
(B) offer a plausible causal mechanism explaining the counterintuitive data in sentence 5 (D) restate sentence 2 without adding new information

Lời giải chi tiết

The counselor's explanation supplies a plausible why behind the counterintuitive finding (fewer, more meaningful calls may be more likely to be answered) – supporting and explaining sentence 5's data rather than contradicting it, introducing an unrelated complaint, or repeating sentence 2. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The overall organizational pattern of this passage most closely resembles which pattern discussed in Chapter 3?

- (A) a simple list with no logical connections mechanism for the surprising result
(B) a stated prediction, complicated by data, (C) spatial organization
 followed by a proposed explanatory (D) pure narration with no analytical claim

Lời giải chi tiết

The passage moves from a prediction (sentence 3) through complicating data (sentence 5) to an explanatory mechanism (sentence 6) – the same predict-complicate-explain shape examined in several passages throughout this book, not a list, spatial order, or pure narration. **(B)**.

The Synthesis Essay

Mục tiêu Unit: Cấu trúc và biểu điểm (rubric) của bài luận Synthesis (Question 1): Thesis (0–1), Evidence and Commentary (0–4), Sophistication (0–1); kỹ thuật đọc nhanh và lập bản đồ 6–7 nguồn tài liệu trong thời gian giới hạn; cách tránh lỗi “liệt kê nguồn” (source dump) bằng cách tổ chức bài theo lý do chứ không theo nguồn; cách trích dẫn nguồn chính xác và tự nhiên; cách xử lý nguồn trực quan/số liệu; và cách cân nhắc các nguồn mâu thuẫn nhau một cách trưởng thành — qua bộ nguồn mẫu đầy đủ, bài luận mẫu có chú giải, và nhiều đề luyện tập.

6.1 Format and the rubric

The synthesis essay (Question 1) presents six or seven short sources on a single topic – a mix of prose excerpts, at least one visual or quantitative source (a chart, table, cartoon, or photograph with caption), and sometimes a brief historical document. You read the sources, then write an essay that develops your own position on the topic, using at least three of the sources as support. The recommended time is fifty-five minutes total (roughly fifteen minutes reading, forty minutes writing), though the exam does not enforce a hard split.

The synthesis rubric, in full

- **Row A – Thesis (0–1 point):** responds to the prompt with a defensible position (not simply restating the prompt, not merely summarizing the sources, not listing without taking a position).
- **Row B – Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points):** cites and explains evidence from at least three sources; explains how each piece of evidence supports the writer’s own line of reasoning; a paper that only summarizes sources without explaining their relevance to the writer’s argument is capped at a low score in this row regardless of how many sources it mentions.
- **Row C – Sophistication (0–1 point):** demonstrates a consistently sophisticated argument through nuance (qualifying the claim, situating it in a broader context), a vivid and persuasive style, or effectively explaining the complexities of differing perspectives – earned only through sustained, not isolated, engagement.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài Synthesis được chấm theo 3 tiêu chí: **Thesis** (có luận đề khả biện, không chỉ lặp lại đề bài); **Evidence and Commentary** (trích dẫn ít nhất 3 nguồn và giải thích vì sao bằng chứng đó hỗ trợ lập luận của chính em – không chỉ tóm tắt lại nguồn); **Sophistication** (thể hiện sự tinh tế – giới hạn hóa luận điểm, đặt vấn đề trong bối cảnh rộng hơn, hoặc xử lý các góc nhìn trái chiều một cách sâu sắc). Lỗi phổ biến nhất: viết một bài chỉ **tóm tắt lần lượt từng nguồn** (source dump) thay vì xây dựng lập luận của riêng mình.

6.2 Reading and mapping sources efficiently

With six or seven sources and limited time, an unplanned read-through wastes minutes you cannot recover. A fast, disciplined first pass produces a usable source map before you write a single sentence of the essay.

A source-mapping method

1. Read the **prompt** first and restate the debatable question in your own words.
2. For each source, read quickly for its **core claim** (usually near the start) and jot a one-word tag: **For**, **Against**, **Mixed**, or **Data** (for a chart/table with no explicit argument).
3. Note beside each source **one specific, citable detail** (a number, a named example, a quoted phrase) you could actually use – not just the source’s general stance.
4. Before drafting, group sources by which **reason** they could support, not by which source number they are – this pre-sorting is what prevents a source-by-source essay later.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Trước khi viết, hãy **lập bản đồ nguồn** nhanh: với mỗi nguồn, ghi lại (1) nguồn đó **ủng hộ, phản đối, hay trung lập/số liệu**, và (2) **một chi tiết cụ thể** có thể trích dẫn. Quan trọng nhất: sắp xếp các nguồn theo **lý do** mà em sẽ dùng trong bài, **KHÔNG** theo thứ tự A, B, C, D – đây là bước quyết định giúp bài viết không trở thành một bài tóm tắt nguồn.

6.3 From sources to your own argument: avoiding the source-dump trap

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The single most common and most costly synthesis-essay error is organizing the essay **source by source** (“Source A argues... Source B argues... Source C argues...”) instead of **reason by reason**, with each paragraph pulling in whichever sources support that specific reason. A source-by-source essay reads as a summary of the packet, not an argument, and is capped well below the top of Row B even when every source is accurately described.

Source-dump versus reason-by-reason organization

Prompt (for this example): Should cities require solar panels on all new residential construction?

Weak (source-dump) paragraph: *Source A argues that solar mandates raise construction costs. Source B, a chart, shows that solar adoption has increased steadily since 2015. Source C argues that solar panels reduce long-term utility bills for homeowners. Source D describes a city that adopted a mandate in 2020.* – four sources, zero sentences of the writer’s own argument; each sentence merely reports what a source says.

Strong (reason-by-reason) paragraph: *The strongest objection to a solar mandate is its upfront cost, which Source A estimates at \$15,000–\$25,000 per new home. But this objection undersells the mandate’s actual design: Source D’s case study of a city that adopted a similar requirement in 2020 shows the cost being absorbed through a phased-in rebate program, not passed directly to buyers, while Source C’s finding that solar-equipped homes save homeowners an average of \$1,100 a year on utilities means the higher sticker price is recovered within roughly fifteen years – well within a typical mortgage term.* – one paragraph, one reason, three sources woven together in service of the writer’s own claim, with the writer’s own commentary (“undersells,” “well within a typical mortgage term”) doing real analytical work.

6.4 Citing sources correctly and smoothly

Citation conventions for the synthesis essay

- Refer to sources by their assigned letter: “Source B reports...”, “according to Source C,” “as Source A’s data shows.”
- Distinguish the **source’s** claim from **your own** claim with clear attribution verbs (*argues, reports, finds, claims, shows*) rather than blending them into an unattributed sentence that leaves the reader unsure whose idea it is.
- Vary how you introduce sources (at the start, middle, or end of a sentence) so the essay does not read as a mechanical, repetitive list of “Source X says.”
- You may quote a short phrase directly, but most strong syntheses paraphrase a source’s finding and cite it, reserving direct quotation for a phrase whose specific wording matters.

Smooth versus mechanical citation

Mechanical: Source B says test scores went up. Source E says test scores went up too. Source F says the same thing.

Smooth: The claim that tutoring programs improve outcomes is not limited to a single study: Source B’s district-level data, Source E’s controlled comparison of tutored and non-tutored students, and Source F’s five-year longitudinal review all report score gains in the same direction, even though they measure different grade levels and use different testing instruments.

The smooth version cites the same three sources while making an analytical point about their *convergence* – three independently designed studies agreeing – rather than simply listing that each one exists.

6.5 Using visual and quantitative sources

At least one source will be a chart, graph, table, cartoon, or image with a caption. Treat it exactly as you would a prose source: read it for a specific, citable detail, then use that detail in service of your own claim rather than merely describing that the source exists.

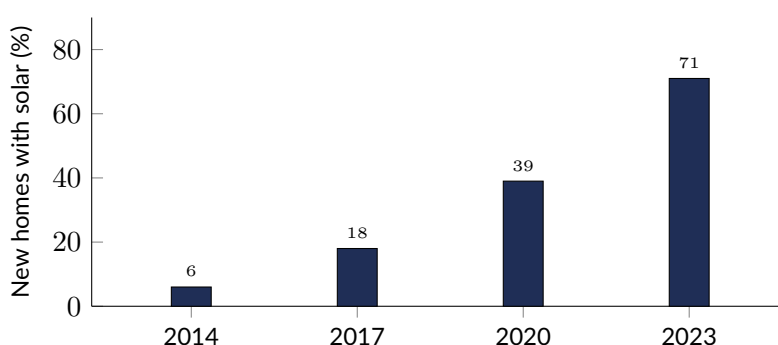


Figure 6.1: Source B (sample): share of new single-family homes built with rooftop solar in a sample metropolitan region, 2014–2023.

Citing the chart with commentary, not description

Weak use: “Source B shows that solar adoption went up.” (restates the visual; no commentary)

Strong use: *Adoption nearly quadrupled between 2017 and 2023 (Source B), and the steepest increase occurred after 2020 – the same year Source D’s case-study city adopted its mandate – suggesting that policy, not gradually shifting consumer preference alone, likely drove much of the acceleration.*

The strong version cites specific figures, isolates a specific interval, and connects the pattern to a plausible cause tied to another source, rather than simply reporting that a line goes up.

6.6 Building a defensible synthesis thesis

A synthesis thesis must do two things at once: take an arguable position on the prompt’s question, and be responsive enough to the source material that a reader can tell it was built *from* the packet, not written before reading it.

Weak thesis pattern	Why it fails
“There are many viewpoints on solar mandates.”	Reports that disagreement exists; takes no position.
“Solar mandates are good.”	Unqualified, generic; ignores the real cost concerns the sources raise.
“This essay will discuss the pros and cons of solar mandates.”	Announces a structure, not a claim.
“Solar panels are good for the environment.”	True but unresponsive to the actual debate in the sources (cost, implementation, timing).

A defensible, source-responsive thesis

“Although the upfront cost of a citywide solar mandate is real and falls hardest on first-time buyers, a phased mandate modeled on successful early adopters – paired with the rebate structures those cities used – captures the technology’s substantial long-term savings without repeating the affordability problems critics rightly warn against.”

This thesis takes a clear position (support a *phased* mandate, not an unqualified yes/no), explicitly engages the strongest objection (cost, falling on first-time buyers) rather than ignoring it, and previews a specific mechanism (a rebate structure) that a reader can expect the body paragraphs to develop with cited evidence.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Một thesis Synthesis mạnh cần vừa **có lập trường rõ ràng**, vừa **phản ánh được** rằng em đã đọc và cân nhắc các nguồn (không phải một câu có thể viết ra mà **không cần đọc** để). Cách kiểm tra nhanh: nếu thesis của em có thể áp dụng cho bất kỳ đề tài tương tự nào mà không cần đổi từ nào, nó có thể quá chung chung.

6.7 Weighing sources that disagree

Real source packets rarely point in one direction. A sophisticated synthesis essay does not ignore or hide the sources that complicate its argument – it addresses them directly, using the concession-and-rebuttal move from Chapter 2.

Addressing an inconvenient source

Source F, a homeowner's account of a delayed permitting process, is a real and specific example of the mandate's practical friction, and it would be dishonest to pretend such delays never occur. But Source F's account describes a single city's permitting office in its first year of implementation – exactly the kind of early-adoption growing pain that Source D's case study shows can be resolved through the streamlined permitting process it later adopted. An isolated early failure is not evidence against the policy itself; it is evidence for building in a permitting timeline from the start.

This paragraph does not pretend Source F does not exist or dismiss it – it engages the source seriously, then explains, with reference to another source, why it does not defeat the essay's overall claim. This kind of engagement is exactly what earns Sophistication credit.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Cherry-picking – using only the sources that agree with your position and silently ignoring the rest – is easy to spot and directly caps Sophistication credit. A stronger strategy is to choose the single most serious opposing source and address it head-on in one paragraph, rather than trying to rebut every complicating source individually.

6.8 Full annotated source set and model essay**Synthesis Prompt**

Directions: The sources below present perspectives on whether public libraries should permanently eliminate late fees for overdue materials. Read the sources carefully. Then write an essay that develops a position on this issue, using at least three of the sources for support.

Source A (op-ed excerpt): “Late fees exist for a reason: without a small financial consequence, why would anyone return a book on time? Eliminate the fee and you eliminate the incentive, and popular titles will simply vanish into permanent private collections.”

Source B (data chart, described): A chart of a mid-sized library system shows circulation of children's books rising 31% in the first year after late fees were eliminated, and average days-checked-out falling slightly from 19 to 17 days over the same period.

Source C (librarian interview excerpt): “The families who owed us the most in fees were, without exception, the families who could least afford to pay them. We were not collecting a return incentive from those families. We were collecting a reason for them to stop coming back.”

Source D (brief history): Late fees became standard practice at most American public libraries in the early twentieth century, modeled on a bookstore-style deposit-and-penalty system, at a time when library budgets depended more heavily on local fine revenue than they generally do today.

Source E (budget summary): A library system's late-fee revenue totaled \$41,000 in its final year of collection – approximately 0.6% of its total annual operating budget – while the cost of staff time spent processing, tracking, and collecting fees was estimated separately at \$28,000 for the same year.

Source F (patron account): “I stopped going to the library for two years because I was embarrassed about the \$14 I owed. It sounds small until you're the one avoiding a building you used to love because you can't pay it.”

Model Essay – Full, Annotated

Late fees were designed to solve a real problem – overdue books that never come back – but the evidence increasingly suggests they solved it by creating a larger one. **[Thesis: takes a position,**

responsive to the packet's central tension between the fee's intended purpose and its actual effect.]

A public library that quietly prices its lowest-income patrons out of the building has not protected its collection; it has abandoned the very people the collection exists to serve.

The strongest argument for late fees, raised in Source A, is that without a financial consequence, patrons have no incentive to return popular books promptly. This is a reasonable worry in theory.

[Concession.] But the data from libraries that have actually removed fees complicates it directly: Source B's system saw average checkout duration fall slightly, from nineteen days to seventeen, after fees were eliminated – the opposite of the hoarding effect Source A predicts. **[Evidence, cited and specific.]** One plausible explanation, suggested by Source C's interview, is that fees were never actually driving prompt returns among families with the resources to pay them; instead, fees were driving away the families who could not, converting a minor overdue-book problem into a much larger problem of patrons avoiding the library altogether. **[Commentary connecting two sources to build a causal explanation, not just listing them.]**

Source F's account – avoiding the library for two years over a \$14 debt – is a single story, but it is corroborated by the structural pattern in Source C's interview: the same families disproportionately affected by fees were disproportionately likely to stop returning altogether. **[Evidence from two sources triangulated, addressing the risk of relying on one anecdote alone.]** This matters because a library's core mission is access, and a policy that technically protects the collection while quietly narrowing who feels welcome to use it undermines that mission more seriously than a slightly longer average checkout time ever could.

The fiscal case for keeping fees is also weaker than it first appears. Source E's budget data shows late-fee revenue amounting to just 0.6% of one library system's operating budget, while the staff time spent tracking and collecting those fees cost nearly as much as the fees brought in. **[Evidence with specific figures, directly engaging a source that could be read as supporting the opposing side.]** Source D's history is useful here too: the fee system was built in an era when library budgets depended much more heavily on fine revenue than most do today, which suggests the practice may simply be an inherited habit rather than a policy still justified by its original financial logic. **[Historical source used analytically, not just summarized.]**

None of this means every consequence of ending late fees is neutral – a library still needs some mechanism to recover long-overdue materials, and eliminating fees does not eliminate that need entirely. **[Qualification – avoids an absolute, overclaiming conclusion.]** But the evidence across these sources points in a consistent direction: the modest returns-incentive fees may have once provided is now outweighed by the access they quietly restrict and the staff cost required to collect them. A library that measures success by who walks back through its doors, not by how promptly every book returns, should let this particular fee go. **[Conclusion extends significance – reframes the library's actual measure of success – rather than simply restating the thesis.]**

Scoring the model essay against the rubric

Row A – Thesis (1/1): the opening sentence takes a clear, defensible position (fees created a larger problem than they solved) that is responsive to the packet's central tension, not a restatement of the prompt.

Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4/4): the essay cites five of the six sources (A, B, C, D, E, F – effectively all six), consistently explains *why* each piece of evidence matters to its own claim rather than merely reporting it, and connects sources to one another (B and C; C and F; D and E) to build compound reasoning rather than a source-by-source list.

Row C – Sophistication (1/1): the essay concedes the strongest opposing argument (Source A) before complicating it with data, qualifies its own conclusion honestly (acknowledging some mechanism is still needed for long-overdue items), and closes by reframing the library's actual

measure of success – sustained, not superficial, engagement with complexity.

6.9 A second practice source set

Synthesis Prompt 2

Directions: The sources below present perspectives on whether city downtowns should limit short-term vacation rentals (such as those booked through home-sharing apps). Read the sources carefully. Then plan a position on this issue, using at least three of the sources for support.

Source A (city council testimony): *“Every unit converted to a nightly rental is a unit removed from the long-term housing supply. We cannot solve a housing shortage while subsidizing its cause.”*

Source B (data table, described): In a downtown district, the number of licensed short-term rental units rose from 40 to 310 over six years, while the district’s long-term rental vacancy rate fell from 7.2% to 2.1% over the same period.

Source C (small business owner account): *“Visitors staying in short-term rentals are exactly the customers who keep my coffee shop open in the slow season. Without that foot traffic, I’m not sure the shop survives another winter.”*

Source D (economic report excerpt): A regional economic report estimates that short-term rental guests spend, on average, 40% more per visit on local dining and retail than hotel guests staying in the same district, though the report notes this figure varies significantly by neighborhood.

Source E (renter interview): *“I’ve been outbid twice this year by landlords who realized they could make more money renting nightly to tourists than renting to me for a year. It’s not that the apartments disappeared. It’s that people like me can’t compete with that math.”*

Source F (policy comparison): A neighboring city capped short-term rentals at one unit per building and required a local-residency rule for hosts; two years later, its long-term vacancy rate had partially recovered, while short-term rental listings fell by roughly a third.

Free-Response Practice

Write a single, defensible thesis sentence for Synthesis Prompt 2 that takes a clear position while remaining responsive to at least one source that complicates it.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *“Although short-term rentals bring real, documented economic benefits to downtown businesses, the direct link between their growth and a shrinking supply of long-term housing is serious enough that a moderate cap – like the one a neighboring city has already shown can ease vacancy rates without eliminating tourism spending – is a more defensible response than either an outright ban or unrestricted growth.”* This thesis takes a specific position (a moderate cap, not a ban or the status quo), explicitly engages the strongest counter-evidence (Source C/D’s economic benefit), and points toward a specific mechanism (Source F’s comparison city) the essay’s body could develop.

Free-Response Practice

Write one body paragraph (5–7 sentences) for Synthesis Prompt 2 that uses at least two sources together, in the reason-by-reason style modeled earlier in this chapter (not a source-

by-source list).

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *The clearest evidence that short-term rentals are displacing long-term residents, not merely adding to the housing stock, is the direct inverse relationship in Source B: as licensed short-term units rose from 40 to 310, the long-term vacancy rate fell from 7.2% to 2.1% in the same district over the same six years. Source E's account puts a human face on that statistic, describing a renter repeatedly outbid by landlords who realized nightly tourist rates paid more than a year-long lease – exactly the incentive shift Source A warns about in the abstract. This is not a coincidence of timing; it is the mechanism Source A names actually playing out unit by unit. A policy response that ignores this connection, treating short-term rentals as economically costless, is ignoring the district's own data.* Note how the paragraph moves from data (B) to a human account (E) back to analytical commentary connecting both to the abstract claim in Source A, rather than presenting the three sources as a disconnected list.

6.10 Common pitfalls in synthesis writing

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The two-source essay. The prompt requires at least three sources; an essay that only develops two, however well, cannot earn full Row B credit. Before finalizing your outline, count your cited sources.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The unintegrated visual source. Many students skip the chart or image entirely because it feels harder to cite than a prose source. A visual source counts exactly the same as a prose source and is often the single most specific, quotable evidence in the packet (a precise number is easy to cite and hard to argue with).

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Restating the prompt as the thesis. “There are many perspectives on whether libraries should eliminate late fees” restates the debate; it does not take a position. If your thesis could serve as a neutral summary of the assignment itself, it is not yet a thesis.

6.11 Practice items

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best demonstrates the Row B requirement of using evidence with *commentary*, rather than merely citing a source?

- (A) “Source B shows circulation increased. Source C is an interview. Source E has a budget figure.”
- (B) “Sources B, C, and E together suggest that the fee’s true cost was not measured in overdue books but in the patrons it silently drove away, a pattern the moderate circulation increase in Source B alone cannot fully explain.”
- (C) “There are six sources in this packet, covering different aspects of the topic.”
- (D) “Source A disagrees with the essay’s position.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) either merely catalog sources or note disagreement without analysis. Only (B) synthesizes multiple sources into a single analytical claim (that the fee's real cost was patron avoidance, not overdue books) that goes beyond what any one source states alone – exactly what Evidence and Commentary credit requires. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An essay organized into six body paragraphs, one per source, in the order the sources are printed in the packet, is most likely to be penalized for

- (A) using too many sources
(B) citing sources inaccurately
(C) a source-by-source (rather than reason-by-reason) structure that reads as a summary of the packet rather than the writer's own argument
(D) using a visual source

Lời giải chi tiết

Organizing strictly by source, in packet order, is the textbook symptom of a source-dump essay: it signals that the structure came from the assignment's source order rather than from the writer's own reasoning, which caps Row B credit even if every citation is accurate. **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student's synthesis essay cites Sources A, B, and D favorably but never mentions Source F, which directly contradicts the essay's thesis. This omission is most likely to limit the essay's

- (A) Thesis score, because the thesis itself is now invalid
(B) Sophistication score, since fully engaging with a genuinely complicating source is one of the clearest ways to demonstrate sophisticated argument
(C) grammar and mechanics, which are not scored separately
(D) word count, which must include all six sources

Lời giải chi tiết

Silently ignoring the packet's strongest counter-evidence (rather than the thesis simply being wrong) is a Sophistication issue: the rubric explicitly rewards effectively explaining the complexities of differing perspectives, which requires engaging the sources that complicate the writer's claim, not just the ones that support it. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of the sentence "Source C says fees are bad for families" best demonstrates smooth, analytical citation rather than mechanical attribution?

- (A) "Source C says fees are bad for families."
(B) "Source C's librarian, drawing on years of direct interaction with patrons, argues that fees functioned less as a return incentive than as a reason for low-income families to stop visiting altogether."
(C) "According to Source C, according to the librarian, fees are bad."
(D) "Fees are bad for families, which is what Source C is about."

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) are flat, repetitive, or grammatically awkward. Only (B) integrates the source smoothly, attributes a specific credentialed perspective, and paraphrases the actual nuance of the claim (fees as a deterrent to visiting, not merely “bad”) rather than a vague summary. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student’s essay states: “Some people think fees should stay, and some people think they should go, and there are good points on both sides.” As a thesis statement, this sentence is weak primarily because it

- (A) is grammatically incorrect rather than an argument
(B) takes no defensible position of its own, functioning as a summary of the debate
(C) cites too many sources
(D) is too short

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence accurately describes that a debate exists but never commits to the writer’s own position, which is exactly what a thesis must do to earn Row A credit – the issue is substantive (no position taken), not length or grammar. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Given the six sources in the late-fee prompt above, which combination would provide the most *varied* type of evidence for a single body paragraph arguing that fees disproportionately harmed low-income patrons?

- (A) Source A and Source D only (both background/argument, no data or personal account) Source F (personal account)
(B) Source C (professional testimony), Source E (quantitative comparison), and
(C) Source B alone, repeated with different framing
(D) Source A and Source C, which make the same type of claim

Lời giải chi tiết

Mixing an expert/professional perspective (C), a quantitative comparison (E), and a first-hand personal account (F) provides the strongest, most varied triangulation of evidence types for this specific claim, following the “vary evidence type” principle from Chapter 2; the other options are narrower or redundant. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student wants to use Source A (which argues fees are necessary) in an essay that ultimately argues fees should be eliminated. The most sophisticated way to use Source A is to

- (A) omit Source A entirely to avoid weakening the essay's position
- (B) misrepresent Source A's argument to make it easier to dismiss
- (C) state Source A's argument accurately, concede its genuine merit, then explain with evidence why the essay's overall position still holds
- (D) quote Source A at length without any commentary

Lời giải chi tiết

Omitting or misrepresenting the strongest opposing source both weaken Sophistication credit (the first through unaddressed complexity, the second through a straw man); quoting without commentary earns no analytical credit either. Accurately conceding a source's merit before rebutting it with evidence is the mature, sophisticated move rewarded by the rubric. (C).

Free-Response Practice

Using Synthesis Prompt 2 (short-term rentals) above, identify the source you would treat as the "strongest complicating source" against a thesis that supports capping short-term rentals, and write one sentence showing how you would concede and then respond to it.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Strongest complicating source:** Source C/D (the economic benefit to local businesses). **Concession and response:** *"The revenue short-term rentals bring to local businesses, documented in Source D's 40% spending premium, is real and should not be dismissed – but Source F's comparison city shows that a moderate cap reduced short-term listings by only about a third while still allowing the district's tourism economy to continue functioning, suggesting the choice is not between full economic benefit and none, but between an unregulated version of that benefit and a more sustainable one."*

Bài tập luyện tập

A synthesis essay's conclusion reads only: "In conclusion, fees should be eliminated, as I have shown." This conclusion most needs revision because it

- (A) fails to extend the essay's significance or address any remaining complexity, missing an opportunity for Sophistication credit
- (B) is factually inaccurate
- (C) introduces a brand-new source not previously discussed
- (D) is written in the first person

Lời giải chi tiết

A bare restatement of the thesis, with no extension of significance and no acknowledgment of remaining complexity (such as the legitimate need for some overdue-item mechanism), does the minimum a conclusion can do and misses a clear opportunity to earn Sophistication credit through a more developed closing move. (A).

6.12 Planning under time pressure: a fifteen-minute reading routine

With fifty-five minutes total and six or seven sources, a realistic reading budget is roughly ninety seconds to two minutes per source, leaving time to plan an outline before writing. The routine

below turns that budget into a repeatable habit rather than a vague intention to “read fast.”

A repeatable fifteen-minute routine

- **Minute 0–1:** read the prompt twice; write the debatable question in your own words at the top of your plan.
- **Minutes 1–11:** read each source, tagging stance (For/Against/Mixed/Data) and one citable detail per source, as modeled earlier in this chapter.
- **Minutes 11–13:** group your tagged sources into two, occasionally three, reasons – not source-by-source, reason-by-reason.
- **Minutes 13–15:** write a one-sentence thesis and a one-line plan for each body paragraph (which reason, which two or three sources support it).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Với 6–7 nguồn trong khoảng 15 phút đọc, hãy dùng một **quy trình lặp lại** thay vì “đọc nhanh tùy cảm tính”: đọc đề (1 phút) → đọc + gán nhãn từng nguồn (10 phút) → nhóm nguồn theo lý do (2 phút) → viết thesis + dàn ý nhanh (2 phút). Quy trình này đảm bảo em luôn có **dàn ý theo lý do** trước khi viết câu đầu tiên của bài luận, tránh rơi vào cấu trúc liệt kê nguồn.

6.13 A third practice source set: shorter, for timed drilling

Synthesis Prompt 3

Directions: The sources below present perspectives on whether employers should be allowed to require employees to respond to work messages outside of scheduled work hours. Read the sources, then plan (do not necessarily write in full) a synthesis response using at least three sources.

Source A (labor advocate statement): “An employee who is expected to answer messages at 9 p.m. is, in every meaningful sense, still working at 9 p.m. – whether or not the paycheck reflects it.”

Source B (survey data, described): A survey of 2,200 salaried employees found that those who reported regularly responding to after-hours messages also reported sleep-quality scores 19% lower, on average, than employees who did not.

Source C (small-business owner statement): “My team is eleven people. If a client emails at 7 p.m. about an emergency, we do not have the luxury of a ‘nine-to-five only’ policy and still keeping that client.”

Source D (comparative policy note): Several countries have adopted a legal “right to disconnect,” allowing employees to ignore work communications outside contracted hours without penalty; early reports from one such country found no significant change in reported business productivity two years after the law took effect.

Source E (employee interview): “I don’t mind checking my phone once at 8 p.m. The problem is that ‘once’ became ‘constantly,’ and nobody ever officially decided that – it just happened.”

Free-Response Practice

For Synthesis Prompt 3, write a source map in the format modeled earlier in this chapter: for each source, note its stance tag (For/Against/Mixed/Data) and one specific, citable detail.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Source A** – Against (unpaid off-hours messaging is really work) – citable detail: the “still working at 9 p.m.” framing. **Source B** – Data – citable detail: 19% lower sleep-quality scores among regular after-hours responders. **Source C** – For / Mixed (practical necessity for small businesses) – citable detail: an eleven-person team’s client-retention concern. **Source D** – Data / Against unrestricted messaging – citable detail: no significant productivity change two years after a right-to-disconnect law. **Source E** – Mixed, leaning Against current practice – citable detail: the “once” that became “constantly” without anyone deciding it. Note that Sources C and D are in direct tension (a small business’s practical need vs. evidence that limits do not hurt productivity broadly) – exactly the kind of complicating pair a strong essay should address, not avoid.

Free-Response Practice

Write a defensible thesis for Synthesis Prompt 3 that engages the tension between Source C and Source D identified above.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “While small businesses like the one described in Source C have a genuine, immediate need to reach employees outside standard hours in rare emergencies, the broader evidence – both the sleep-quality costs in Source B and the absence of any productivity loss under right-to-disconnect laws in Source D – suggests that a narrow emergency exception, not an unrestricted expectation of constant availability, best serves both employees and employers.” This thesis takes a specific, qualified position (a narrow exception, not a blanket rule either way) and is explicitly responsive to the packet’s central tension rather than picking one source and ignoring the rest.

6.14 Practice items, continued**Bài tập luyện tập**

A synthesis essay draft reads: “According to Source A, off-hours messaging counts as work. According to Source B, sleep quality drops. According to Source C, small businesses need flexibility. According to Source D, productivity does not change. According to Source E, expectations crept up gradually.” Even though every citation is accurate, this paragraph would most likely be capped in Row B because it

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| (A) cites too many sources | how the sources relate to one another |
| (B) is a source-by-source list that never advances the writer’s own claim or explains | (C) contains a factual error |
| | (D) fails to use any statistics |

Lời giải chi tiết

Every sentence here simply restates what a source says, in packet order, with no analytical connection between sources and no advancement of the writer’s own argument – the textbook source-dump structure, regardless of citation accuracy or source count. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student planning an essay on Synthesis Prompt 3 decides to organize body paragraphs as: (1) the health/wellbeing cost of after-hours messaging, (2) the legitimate business cases where some flexibility is needed, (3) a proposed middle-ground policy addressing both. This plan is best described as

- (A) a source-by-source structure source as a separate section
- (B) a reason-by-reason structure that also anticipates and resolves the packet's central tension, rather than treating each (C) an evidence dump
- (D) unrelated to any of the sources provided

Lời giải chi tiết

Each paragraph is organized around a distinct *reason* or resolution, not a specific source, and the plan explicitly builds toward resolving the tension between employee wellbeing and business need – exactly the reason-by-reason, tension-aware structure this chapter recommends. **(B).**

Bài tập luyện tập

Which sentence best integrates Source B's data into an argument with commentary, rather than simply reporting the finding?

- (A) “Source B found that sleep quality dropped by 19%.”
- (B) “A 19% drop in reported sleep quality is not a minor inconvenience; sustained sleep loss at that scale is associated with measurable declines in decision-making and long-term health, which means the ‘always available’ expectation carries a cost that a company’s short-term convenience does not offset.”
- (C) “Sleep is important for health.”
- (D) “Source B conducted a survey of employees.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) either restate the finding or add an unrelated generality. Only (B) explains the *significance* of the specific figure (what a 19% drop plausibly means and why it outweighs short-term convenience), which is exactly the commentary Row B rewards. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A writer wants to use Source D (the right-to-disconnect law with no productivity loss) to respond to Source C's concern about small-business flexibility. Which response demonstrates the most sophisticated handling of this tension?

- (A) Ignoring Source C's concern entirely since Source D contradicts it
- (B) Dismissing Source C as unimportant because it is not based on formal data
- (C) Acknowledging that Source D's national-level data may not fully address an eleven-person business's specific emergency needs, and proposing a narrow, emergency-only exception rather than treating the two sources as fully incompatible
- (D) Concluding that Source C and Source D cannot both be true

Lời giải chi tiết

The most sophisticated response neither ignores nor dismisses the small-business concern, nor treats the two sources as flatly contradictory; it identifies the actual scope difference between national aggregate data and one specific business's situation, then proposes a targeted policy that respects both. (C).

6.15 A revision workshop: from source-dump to synthesis**Before: a source-dump paragraph**

"Source A says fees are necessary to encourage returns. Source B is a chart showing circulation went up after fees were removed. Source C is an interview with a librarian who says fees hurt low-income families. Source D gives some history about when fees started. Source E has budget numbers. Source F is a personal story about a patron."

Diagnosis: every sentence follows the identical "Source X is/says Y" pattern, in packet order, with zero words of the writer's own analysis connecting any two sources to each other or to a claim. This paragraph would earn minimal Row B credit even though all six sources are accurately described.

After: the same six sources, organized by reason

"The strongest argument for keeping late fees – that they encourage prompt returns – turns out not to hold up against the libraries that have actually tested it. Source B's data shows checkout duration falling slightly after one library eliminated fees, the opposite of what Source A's return-incentive logic would predict. Source C's librarian interview offers a plausible explanation for this counterintuitive result: fees were never effectively driving returns among families who could pay them, but were driving away entirely the families who could not, a pattern Source F's account of a single overdue-fee-related absence corroborates at the individual level. Source E's budget data adds a final, practical consideration – the fees generated barely more revenue than the staff cost of collecting them – while Source D's history suggests the practice may simply be an inherited habit from an earlier era of library funding rather than a policy still justified by current evidence."

What changed: the paragraph now opens with a claim (the return-incentive argument does not hold up), and every source is introduced specifically to support, complicate, or explain *that claim* – not simply reported in packet order. The same six sources produce a dramatically stronger Row B response purely through reorganization and added commentary, with no new evidence at all.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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So sánh hai đoạn văn trên cho thấy: cùng **sáu nguồn giống nhau**, nhưng cách tổ chức khác nhau tạo ra điểm số hoàn toàn khác nhau. Đoạn "after" không thêm bất kỳ thông tin mới nào – nó chỉ **sắp xếp lại theo lý do** và thêm **commentary** nối các nguồn với nhau. Đây là bài học quan trọng nhất của chương: điểm Evidence and Commentary phụ thuộc vào **cách em dùng nguồn**, không phải **số lượng nguồn em nhắc đến**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Comparing the "before" and "after" paragraphs above, the single most important change is

- (A) the addition of new sources not present in the original packet
- (B) reorganizing the same six sources around a claim, with commentary connecting them to one another and to that claim
- (C) a change in the underlying facts reported by each source
- (D) the removal of Source D entirely

Lời giải chi tiết

No new sources are added, no facts change, and Source D remains present in both versions; the transformation comes entirely from reorganizing the identical evidence around a specific claim and adding analytical commentary connecting the sources to each other. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Using the six sources from Synthesis Prompt 2 (short-term rentals) earlier in this chapter, write a source-dump-style paragraph (source by source, no commentary) and then revise it into a reason-by-reason paragraph, following the workshop model above.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model (**source-dump**): *Source A says short-term rentals reduce housing supply. Source B is a data table showing units rising and vacancy falling. Source C is a business owner who benefits from tourist spending. Source D gives spending statistics. Source E is a renter's account. Source F describes a comparison city's policy.* **Revised (reason-by-reason)**: *The clearest evidence that short-term rentals displace long-term housing, not merely add to it, is the inverse relationship in Source B: as licensed units rose from 40 to 310, long-term vacancy fell from 7.2% to 2.1% over the same six years – exactly the mechanism Source A warns about in the abstract, and exactly what Source E's account of being repeatedly outbid by nightly-rate landlords describes at an individual level. Source F's comparison city shows this mechanism is not inevitable: a moderate cap partially reversed the vacancy decline while short-term listings fell only about a third, suggesting the real choice is not all-or-nothing but a matter of degree. Source C and Source D's economic benefits are real, but they describe a trade-off to be managed, not evidence that the housing effect in Sources A, B, and E is not happening.*

6.16 A peer-review checklist

Before submitting (or, in practice, before moving on from a timed practice essay), run through the checklist below. It condenses this chapter's rubric discussion into a fast, actionable review.

Synthesis self-review checklist

1. Does my thesis take a specific, arguable position that responds to the packet's actual central tension – not just the topic?
2. Have I cited at least three sources, and does each citation include commentary explaining its relevance, not just its content?
3. Is my essay organized by reason, with each body paragraph pulling in whichever sources support that specific reason – not organized source by source?
4. Have I engaged with at least one source that complicates my position, rather than citing only sources that agree with me?
5. Does my conclusion extend the argument's significance or resolve a tension, rather than

simply restating my thesis?

Applying the checklist to a flawed sample essay excerpt

"Late fees should be eliminated. Source A disagrees, but Source A is wrong. Source B shows circulation went up. Source C is an interview. In conclusion, late fees should be eliminated, as I have shown."

Checklist review: (1) the thesis does take a position, but it is not clearly responsive to the packet's actual tension (it does not preview any specific reasoning). (2) only two sources are used (B and C; A is dismissed, not engaged), falling short of the three-source minimum with real commentary. (3) the structure is source-by-source, not reason-by-reason. (4) Source A is dismissed ("Source A is wrong") rather than seriously engaged – exactly the unearned dismissal this chapter's pitfalls warn against. (5) the conclusion is a bare restatement. This excerpt would score very low on all three rubric rows despite touching three sources by name.

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Checklist tự đánh giá là công cụ nhanh để **tự phát hiện lỗi** trước khi hết giờ: (1) thesis có phản hồi đúng **mâu thuẫn trung tâm** của bộ nguồn không; (2) đã trích **ít nhất 3 nguồn kèm commentary** chưa; (3) tổ chức theo **lý do** hay theo **nguồn**; (4) đã xử lý **ít nhất 1 nguồn gây khó** một cách nghiêm túc chưa; (5) kết bài có **mở rộng ý nghĩa** hay chỉ lặp lại thesis. Áp dụng checklist này vào ví dụ lỗi ở trên cho thấy: dù có nhắc tên 3 nguồn, bài vẫn có thể bị điểm thấp nếu vi phạm hầu hết các tiêu chí.

Bài tập luyện tập

Applying the checklist above, the sample essay excerpt's treatment of Source A ("Source A disagrees, but Source A is wrong") is best diagnosed as a violation of which checklist item?

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) item 1 (thesis specificity) only | why the essay's position still holds |
| (B) item 4: dismissing a complicating source without genuine engagement, rather than conceding its merit and explaining | (C) item 2 (citing at least three sources) only |
| | (D) no violation; dismissing an opposing source is always an acceptable strategy |

Lời giải chi tiết

Simply asserting that a complicating source is "wrong" with no explanation is the unearned-dismissal pattern this chapter repeatedly warns against; genuine engagement requires conceding whatever merit the source has and explaining, with evidence, why it does not defeat the overall claim – exactly checklist item 4. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Using the peer-review checklist, identify the single most significant weakness in the following essay excerpt and explain how you would revise it: "Fees hurt people. Source F proves this. Source C also proves this. Fees should end."

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Most significant weakness:** only two sources are used, both cited with no real commentary (“proves this” is asserted, not explained), and the essay’s claim is vague (“hurt people” rather than a specific, defensible position). **Revision approach:** incorporate a third source (such as Source E’s budget data) and replace “proves this” with specific commentary explaining how each source’s evidence supports the claim – for example, explaining that Source F’s account and Source C’s professional testimony describe the same mechanism (fee-driven avoidance) at two different scales (individual and institutional), which is a much stronger analytical move than simply asserting that each source “proves” the point.

Bài tập luyện tập

A synthesis essay uses only Source B (the circulation chart) and Source E (the budget figures), both quantitative, while ignoring the three prose sources entirely. This essay’s approach is most vulnerable to which criticism?

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) using too many sources | sources (C, F) could add |
| (B) lacking variety of evidence type, since two quantitative sources alone miss the human, testimonial dimension the prose | (C) citing sources inaccurately |
| | (D) failing to meet the minimum of three sources, since only two are used |

Lời giải chi tiết

Using only two sources falls short of the rubric’s three-source minimum for full Row B credit – the most direct and serious criticism available here, more fundamental than the secondary (and also valid) point that two quantitative sources alone lack the varied evidence types described in Chapter 2. (D).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following synthesis thesis statements is most vulnerable to the criticism that it could have been written without reading any of the sources?

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) “Although the upfront cost of a solar mandate is real, a phased approach modeled on early-adopter cities captures its savings without repeating their affordability problems.” | (C) “While Source B’s data shows adoption accelerating after 2020, Source A’s cost concerns remain unaddressed by current policy, which this essay proposes to resolve through phased implementation.” |
| (B) “Solar power is good for the environment and everyone should support it.” | (D) “Renewable energy is a topic many people have opinions about.” |

Lời giải chi tiết

(B) and (D) are generic enough to have been written before opening the source packet at all – they engage no specific source content. (A) and (C) reference specific packet details; between them, this question asks which is *most* vulnerable, and (B)’s sweeping, source-free generality is the clearest example. (B).

6.17 A note on timing: reading versus writing balance

Students who read all seven sources with equal, careful attention often run out of writing time; students who skim every source equally fast often draft an essay with weak, generic evidence. The strongest approach is deliberately **uneven**: identify quickly (within the first minute per source) which two or three sources are richest in specific, usable detail, and read those two or three more slowly than the rest.

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VN

Không cần đọc **mọi nguồn với tốc độ và độ sâu bằng nhau**. Sau khi lướt nhanh cả 6–7 nguồn, hãy nhận diện **2–3 nguồn giàu chi tiết cụ thể nhất** và đọc kỹ hơn những nguồn đó – đây là cách phân bổ thời gian hiệu quả hơn là đọc đều tất cả các nguồn với cùng tốc độ.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student spends exactly the same ninety seconds on all seven sources, including one source that is a simple one-line quotation and one source that is a dense data table with several distinct figures. This time allocation is most likely to result in

- (A) a well-balanced, optimal use of reading time than a single-line quotation that can be absorbed almost instantly
- (B) under-mining of the data table's full potential, since a source rich in specific citable detail likely deserves more time
- (C) no meaningful difference in essay quality
- (D) a violation of exam rules

Lời giải chi tiết

Equal time allocation ignores that sources vary enormously in how much specific, usable detail they contain; a dense data table can usually yield several distinct citable figures worth the extra time, while a one-line quotation is fully absorbed almost immediately – uneven, detail-weighted time allocation is more efficient. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student's synthesis essay earns full marks on Row A and Row B but scores 0 on Row C (Sophistication). Which of the following essay features is the most likely explanation?

- (A) The essay cited only three sources. thesis.
- (B) The essay's argument, while well-supported, never qualifies its claim, never engages a genuinely complicating source, and closes with a bare restatement of the
- (C) The essay used more than 500 words.
- (D) The essay was organized reason-by-reason rather than source-by-source.

Lời giải chi tiết

Reason-by-reason organization and adequate sourcing are exactly what earns Row A/B credit and would not explain a Row C score of zero; a fully competent but entirely unqualified, uncomplicated, thesis-repeating essay is the classic profile of strong Row A/B credit paired with no Sophistication credit. (B).

6.18 A final full case study: two complete introductions compared

Two synthesis introductions for the same prompt, compared

Prompt: Should employers be allowed to monitor employees' work computers for productivity purposes?

Introduction A: *"There are many different views on whether employers should monitor employee computers. Some sources say it helps productivity, and some sources say it invades privacy. This essay will explore both sides."* – restates the debate, previews a structure ("both sides"), and takes no position; this reads as a summary of the assignment, not a thesis.

Introduction B: *"Monitoring software can tell an employer exactly how many minutes an employee spent in a spreadsheet – but, as Source C's engineering-team study suggests, it cannot tell that employer whether those minutes were productive or merely present. Employers have a legitimate interest in productivity, but the specific metrics most monitoring software actually captures measure activity, not output, which means a policy built on this software risks punishing exactly the kind of deep, uninterrupted focus that produces the highest-quality work."* – opens with a specific tension drawn from the source packet, takes a clear position (monitoring's metrics are misaligned with its stated goal), and previews a defensible line of reasoning.

The two introductions could respond to an identical source packet, yet only Introduction B demonstrates that the packet was actually read and synthesized into an original claim – the difference this entire chapter has been building toward.

Bài tập luyện tập

The single most important difference between Introduction A and Introduction B is that Introduction B

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) is longer | "both sides" structure with no stance |
| (B) takes a specific, source-responsive position rather than merely previewing a | (C) uses more difficult vocabulary |
| | (D) avoids mentioning the prompt's topic |

Lời giải chi tiết

Length and vocabulary are incidental; the decisive difference is that Introduction B stakes out a specific, defensible, source-grounded position (monitoring's metrics are misaligned with its own stated goal), while Introduction A merely announces that a debate with two sides exists. (B).

The Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Mục tiêu Unit: Cấu trúc và biểu điểm bài luận Rhetorical Analysis (Question 2): Thesis, Evidence and Commentary, Sophistication; phân biệt **phân tích tu từ** với **viết bài quan điểm cá nhân** (lỗi nhầm lẫn phổ biến nhất); kỹ thuật đọc và chú giải văn bản theo SOAPStone; cách chọn 2–3 chiến lược tu từ để **đào sâu** thay vì liệt kê nhiều biện pháp hời hợt; hai cách tổ chức bài (theo chiến lược hoặc theo mạch vận động của văn bản); và luyện tập qua văn bản mẫu có chú giải đầy đủ cùng bài luận mẫu chấm theo rubric.

7.1 Format and the rubric

The rhetorical analysis essay (Question 2) presents a nonfiction passage – typically 500 to 700 words, often with a short introductory note giving context (the speaker, occasion, and audience). Your task is to write an essay that analyzes how the writer’s rhetorical choices contribute to their purpose. The recommended time is forty minutes.

The rhetorical analysis rubric, in full

- **Row A – Thesis (0–1 point):** responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis about how the writer’s rhetorical choices contribute to a specific purpose or effect – not a bare re-statement of the passage’s topic.
- **Row B – Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points):** provides specific evidence (quoted or closely paraphrased) from the passage and explains how that evidence illustrates and develops a line of reasoning about the writer’s rhetorical choices; consistently ties evidence back to purpose and effect, not just to naming a device.
- **Row C – Sophistication (0–1 point):** demonstrates sophisticated understanding through nuanced analysis (explaining how strategies build on or interact with one another), attention to the complexity of the rhetorical situation, or a vivid, precise writing style – sustained, not isolated to one sentence.

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VN

Bài Rhetorical Analysis được chấm theo cùng 3 tiêu chí như Synthesis: **Thesis** (luận đề nêu rõ các **lựa chọn tu từ** phục vụ **mục đích** nào), **Evidence and Commentary** (trích dẫn cụ thể từ văn bản + giải thích **hiệu ứng**, không chỉ gọi tên biện pháp), **Sophistication** (phân tích cách các chiến lược **tương tác** với nhau, không phải liệt kê rời rạc).

7.2 The single most important distinction: analysis, not argument

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The rhetorical analysis essay does **not** ask whether you agree with the writer’s position. It asks **how** the writer builds that position – what choices of diction, syntax, structure, and appeal the writer makes, and what effect those choices produce. An essay that spends its paragraphs arguing for or against the passage’s topic, rather than analyzing the

passage's rhetoric, has answered the wrong question and cannot earn full credit no matter how well-argued it is.

Argument essay vs. rhetorical analysis essay: the same passage, two very different responses

Passage excerpt (a mayor's speech): "We did not rebuild this waterfront for tourists. We rebuilt it for the grandmother who lost her porch light for three days after the storm and never once heard her name mentioned in a single budget hearing until now."

Wrong approach (argument, not analysis): *I agree with the mayor that waterfront infrastructure should prioritize residents over tourists. Cities everywhere spend too much on attracting visitors and not enough on the people who already live there...* – this essay argues about the topic the speech raises, not about how the speech works rhetorically. It would score very low on an AP Lang rhetorical analysis prompt.

Correct approach (analysis): *The mayor's anaphoric structure ("We did not... We rebuilt it for...") first negates an assumed audience (tourists) before replacing it with a deliberately specific, humanized figure (a grandmother, a porch light), converting an abstract budget decision into a concrete moral claim that is far harder for a listening audience to dismiss than a policy statistic would be...* – this essay analyzes the rhetorical mechanism the speaker uses, regardless of whether the writer personally supports the policy.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Lỗi nghiêm trọng nhất trong bài Rhetorical Analysis: viết một bài **đồng tình/phản đối** quan điểm của tác giả (giống bài Argument) thay vì phân tích **tác giả đã lập luận như thế nào**. Hãy luôn tự hỏi: "Tôi đang viết về **cái mà tác giả nói**, hay về **cách tác giả nói ra điều đó**?" Chỉ có câu hỏi thứ hai mới đúng yêu cầu đề bài.

7.3 Reading the passage strategically

A reading method for rhetorical analysis

1. Read the **introductory note** first (it usually gives speaker, occasion, and audience – a pre-built SOAPSTone start).
2. Read the full passage once for **overall purpose and structure** before annotating any device.
3. On a second pass, mark **shifts** (tone, syntax, address) and any place the passage's argument clearly **turns** – these are usually where the most fruitful analysis lives.
4. Choose **two or three** strategies that recur or matter most to the passage's purpose, rather than annotating every device you can name.

7.4 Selecting strategies: quality over quantity

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Device-hunting – naming every device you can spot ("the author uses alliteration, then a metaphor, then anaphora, then a rhetorical question...") without explaining any of them in depth – is the most common way strong readers still lose Evidence and Commentary credit. Two or three strategies, each traced across multiple examples and tied clearly to purpose, will always outscore a longer list of one-sentence device labels.

Device-hunting versus focused analysis

Weak (device-hunting): *The author uses alliteration in “steady, sober stewardship.” The author also uses a metaphor when describing the economy as a ship. The author uses a rhetorical question at the end. These devices make the speech persuasive.* – three devices named, none explained, and the final sentence is a vague, unsupported assertion.

Strong (focused): *The speech’s extended ship metaphor – introduced early (“steady the ship”), developed in the middle (“the crew that stayed at their posts”), and resolved in the final line (“we do not abandon ship in a storm we ourselves can outlast”) – gives the audience a single, coherent image to hold onto across a speech that otherwise moves through several distinct policy areas, letting the speaker unify disparate proposals under one emotionally resonant frame of endurance rather than abandonment.* – one device, traced across the whole passage, tied specifically to a rhetorical effect (unifying disparate content, framing endurance).

7.5 Building the thesis: beyond “ethos, pathos, logos”

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: A thesis that only says “the author uses ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade the audience” is a formula, not an argument – it could be written about almost any persuasive text without reading a word of the actual passage. A strong thesis names the *specific* strategies this particular passage uses and the *specific* effect or purpose they serve.

Weak thesis pattern	Why it fails
“The author uses ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade the reader.”	Generic formula; names no specific choice from this passage.
“This passage has a lot of imagery and figurative language.”	Descriptive inventory, not an argument about effect.
“The author is a good writer who makes strong points.”	Vague evaluation with no rhetorical vocabulary or specificity.

A strong, specific rhetorical analysis thesis

“By pairing an unusually plain, even blunt, admission of past failure with an extended metaphor of rebuilding, the speaker transforms what could have read as a defensive apology into a forward-looking call to action, converting the audience’s likely skepticism into cautious investment in the plan that follows.”

This thesis names two specific, interacting strategies (plain diction admitting failure; an extended rebuilding metaphor), states the specific rhetorical problem they solve (converting likely skepticism), and previews the essay’s line of reasoning without relying on the generic ethos/-pathos/logos formula.

7.6 Organizing the essay: by strategy or by movement

Organization	Best used when...	Shape
By strategy	the passage sustains two or three identifiable techniques throughout (an extended metaphor, a recurring appeal, a consistent syntactic pattern)	one body paragraph per strategy, drawing examples from across the whole passage
By movement through the text	the passage's argument clearly builds or shifts in stages (background → complication → resolution; calm → urgent)	one body paragraph per stage (beginning, middle, end), tracking how strategies evolve

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Có hai cách tổ chức bài Rhetorical Analysis phổ biến: **theo chiến lược** (mỗi đoạn = một biện pháp/chiến lược xuyên suốt cả bài) – phù hợp khi văn bản dùng nhất quán 2–3 kỹ thuật; hoặc **theo mạch vận động** (mỗi đoạn = một giai đoạn của văn bản: mở đầu – giữa – kết) – phù hợp khi lập luận của văn bản **thay đổi/leo thang** qua các phần. Không có cách nào “đúng hơn” – hãy chọn cách phản ánh đúng cấu trúc thật của văn bản đang phân tích.

7.7 Full annotated passage: a graduation address

Passage — “Graduation Address, Riverside Technical Institute”

[1] I want to begin with an uncomfortable number: forty percent of you started this program with someone beside you who did not finish it. [2] I am not telling you that to make you feel lucky. [3] I am telling you because I think you have spent three years quietly carrying a question you have not said out loud: what made you different from the friend who left? [4] I do not think you were smarter. [5] I have graded your exams. [6] I think you were simply more stubborn on the days it mattered most – the Tuesday after a failed midterm, the week your shift got extended and your lab report did not, the semester your ride fell through and you walked forty minutes in February rather than miss a deadline. [7] Stubbornness is not a virtue anyone puts on a diploma. [8] It should be. [9] Because the degree in your hand today was not earned on your best day. [10] It was earned on your worst ones, one stubborn Tuesday at a time. [11] Carry that. [12] Not the ceremony, not the cap, not even this speech – carry the Tuesday.

Full annotation

SOAPSTone: **Speaker:** an instructor at the institute (“I have graded your exams”). **Occasion:** a graduation ceremony. **Audience:** the graduating class, primarily; secondarily, family members present. **Purpose:** to reframe the graduates’ achievement away from talent and toward persistence, honoring a quality institutions rarely name explicitly. **Subject:** the source of the graduates’ success. **Tone:** direct, unsentimental, quietly admiring.

Strategy 1 – an unexpected opening statistic used against expectation (sentences 1–3): the speech opens not with celebration but with an uncomfortable fact (40% attrition), immediately followed by an explicit denial of the expected reading (“I am not telling you that to make you feel lucky”). This preempts a predictable, low-stakes response (relief) and redirects the audience toward the speech’s real subject: an unasked question the graduates have been carrying.

Strategy 2 – concrete, specific anecdote over abstraction (sentence 6): rather than asserting

“you worked hard,” the speaker builds a triad of hyper-specific, sensory scenarios (a Tuesday after a failed midterm, an extended shift, a forty-minute walk in February) – concrete images the audience can each map onto a real memory, making the praise feel earned and individually true rather than generic.

Strategy 3 – short, declarative sentences at moments of emphasis (sentences 4–5, 7–8, 11): against the longer, cumulative sentence 6, the speaker repeatedly drops to short, blunt sentences (“I do not think you were smarter.” “It should be.” “Carry that.”). Each short sentence lands immediately after a longer build-up, using syntax itself to create emphasis at the speech’s key turns.

Strategy 4 – anaphora and epistrophe in the closing lines (sentences 9–12): the repeated structure “It was earned...” and the repetition of “Tuesday” at the close (epistrophe-like return to a key term) tie the entire speech’s argument to a single, concrete, memorable image, converting an abstract claim about character into something the audience can literally carry away in one word.

7.8 Model essay based on this passage

Model Essay — Full, Annotated

Commencement speeches conventionally praise achievement in general terms – talent, hard work, bright futures. This speaker does something more specific and, as a result, more persuasive: by opening with an uncomfortable statistic, developing praise through hyper-concrete anecdote rather than abstraction, and closing on a single repeated image, the speaker redefines the graduates’ accomplishment as a product of persistence rather than talent, in a way calculated to feel true rather than merely flattering. **[Thesis: names three specific, interacting strategies and states the specific rhetorical effect – avoiding the ethos/pathos/logos formula.]**

The speech’s opening move works against audience expectation before it works with it. A commencement address beginning with a dropout statistic (“forty percent of you started this program with someone beside you who did not finish”) risks sounding somber at a celebratory event, and the speaker seems aware of this risk: sentence 2 explicitly forecloses the easy, low-stakes reading (“I am not telling you that to make you feel lucky”). **[Evidence, quoted, with commentary explaining the strategic choice, not just naming it.]** By naming and rejecting the expected response, the speaker forces the audience to sit with the harder, unasked question the rest of the speech will answer – a technique that earns the graduates’ attention precisely by refusing the easiest possible opening line. **[Commentary tied explicitly to effect on audience.]**

Rather than asserting the graduates’ hard work in general terms, the speaker builds specificity into the speech’s central claim. Sentence 6’s triad of scenarios – a Tuesday after a failed midterm, an extended shift eating into lab-report time, a forty-minute February walk after a ride fell through – trades the safety of abstraction for concrete, sensory particulars that any given graduate might recognize as their own memory. **[Evidence, specific, quoted phrases.]** This specificity does real rhetorical work: unlike the vague, exchangeable praise of a typical commencement speech (“you worked so hard”), these particular images cannot be swapped into any other graduation address, which is exactly what makes the praise land as earned rather than performed. **[Commentary explaining why the specific technique produces a specific effect – praise that reads as earned, not performed.]**

The speech’s syntax reinforces its argument at exactly the moments that matter most. Short, blunt sentences (“I do not think you were smarter.” “It should be.” “Carry that.”) consistently follow longer, more elaborated sentences, and each one lands with disproportionate emphasis precisely because of that contrast. **[Evidence and a pattern traced across the passage, not a single isolated example.]**

This is not incidental phrasing; it is a deliberate rhythm that trains the audience, by the speech's midpoint, to treat every short sentence as a turning point worth remembering – which is exactly what happens in the closing line, when “Carry the Tuesday” arrives as the shortest, most weighted sentence of all. **[Sophistication: connects an earlier pattern to the closing move, showing how strategies build on one another across the whole passage.]**

The speech's final image – “Tuesday,” repeated across the closing sentences – does the most concentrated rhetorical work of the entire address. By explicitly telling the graduates to carry “not the ceremony, not the cap, not even this speech,” the speaker strips away every conventional symbol of the occasion in favor of one specific, ordinary word that stands in for every difficult, unglamorous day the earlier anecdotes described. **[Evidence, explained with attention to the deliberate rejection of conventional symbols.]** A graduation speech that ends by discarding its own ceremonial props is, in effect, arguing against its own genre's usual sentimentality – a risk that only pays off because the speech has spent its entire length earning the audience's trust in plain, concrete language rather than grand abstraction. **[Sophistication: recognizes the speech's self-aware tension with its own genre conventions, connecting back to Chapter 1's genre discussion.]**

Scoring the model essay against the rubric

Row A – Thesis (1/1): the introduction names three specific, interacting strategies and states a precise rhetorical effect (redefining achievement as persistence, not talent), avoiding a generic ethos/pathos/logos formula.

Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4/4): each body paragraph cites specific, quoted textual evidence and explains how that evidence produces a specific effect, consistently tying analysis back to the thesis's claim about persuasive effect rather than merely summarizing content.

Row C – Sophistication (1/1): the essay traces how strategies build across the passage (short syntax trained early, paying off at the close) and situates the speech's final move against genre convention – sustained, structural insight rather than an isolated clever observation.

7.9 A second passage for practice

Passage – Op-Ed Excerpt, “The Quiet Cost of Convenience”

[1] Every app on my phone wants to save me time, and I have never felt more rushed in my life. [2] The grocery app promises a fifteen-minute delivery window. [3] The calendar app color-codes my day into blocks so tight that a single delayed meeting collapses the whole afternoon like a row of dominoes. [4] None of this is an accident. [5] Convenience, it turns out, is not the opposite of urgency. [6] It is urgency's newest disguise. [7] I do not think the engineers who built these tools set out to make us anxious. [8] I think they set out, honestly, to save us time – and then discovered, the way every industry eventually discovers, that a customer who feels slightly behind opens the app more often than a customer who feels at ease.

Free-Response Practice

Write a defensible, specific rhetorical analysis thesis for the op-ed passage above (avoid the generic “ethos, pathos, logos” formula).

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “By building the essay around a paradox – that tools built for convenience have produced urgency instead – and then tracing that paradox to a plausible, unsentimental business explanation rather than a conspiracy, the writer converts a personal complaint about being ‘rushed’ into a credible, structural critique of an entire industry’s incentives.” This names the specific device (a sustained paradox) and the specific rhetorical payoff (moving from complaint to credible structural critique), rather than a generic appeals formula.

Free-Response Practice

Identify one specific rhetorical strategy in sentences 5–8 and write 3–4 sentences of analysis explaining how it serves the passage’s purpose, following the model of full commentary demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Strategy: antithesis and paradox** (“Convenience... is not the opposite of urgency. It is urgency’s newest disguise.”). The writer sets up and then immediately overturns the reader’s default assumption – that convenience and urgency are opposites – compressing the essay’s entire argument into two short, balanced sentences. The word “disguise” does particular work here: it implies deliberate concealment rather than accidental side effect, which primes the reader for the essay’s next move (an explanation grounded in business incentive, not personal failing). By resolving the paradox with a plausible, restrained explanation (sentence 7’s concession that engineers likely did not intend harm) rather than an accusatory one, the writer earns credibility for a critique that could otherwise sound conspiratorial.

7.10 Common pitfalls

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Summarizing instead of analyzing. A paragraph that retells what the passage says (“the speaker talks about how the graduates worked hard and had to walk in the cold”) without ever naming a rhetorical choice or its effect is summary, not analysis, and earns little Row B credit no matter how accurate it is.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Ignoring the rhetorical situation. An essay that never uses the introductory context (who the speaker is, the occasion, the audience) misses easy, specific evidence for its thesis. The context line is provided for a reason – use it.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Treating every device as equally important. Not every metaphor or short sentence in a passage is worth a full paragraph. Choose the strategies that do the most rhetorical work for the passage’s *specific* purpose, not simply the ones that are easiest to spot.

7.11 Practice items**Bài tập luyện tập**

An essay analyzing the graduation speech spends its second paragraph arguing that graduates really should feel proud of themselves, without discussing any specific word choice, sentence structure, or strategy from the passage. This paragraph is best diagnosed as

- (A) a strong Row B paragraph because it engages the speech's theme
- (B) an argument-essay-style paragraph that has drifted away from rhetorical analysis
- (C) a strong example of sophistication
- (D) a correctly organized paragraph by strategy

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph engages the speech's *topic* (whether graduates should feel proud) rather than its *rhetoric* (how the speaker builds that claim), which is exactly the argument-essay drift this chapter warns against; it would earn little to no Row B credit on a rhetorical analysis prompt. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

Which thesis best avoids the generic “ethos, pathos, logos” formula while still being specific and defensible?

- (A) “The speaker uses ethos, pathos, and logos throughout the speech to persuade the audience.”
- (B) “The speaker’s speech is well written and persuasive.”
- (C) “By pairing a deliberately uncomfortable opening statistic with vivid, individualized anecdotes, the speaker replaces generic graduation-speech praise with specific evidence that reframes the graduates’ achievement as earned through persistence rather than talent.”
- (D) “This speech discusses graduation and hard work.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) is the generic formula; (B) is a vague evaluation with no rhetorical vocabulary; (D) merely names a topic. Only (C) identifies specific, interacting strategies (an opening statistic, individualized anecdotes) and states a precise effect (reframing achievement as persistence), which is exactly what a strong thesis requires. (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student’s essay names five different devices (alliteration, anaphora, a metaphor, a rhetorical question, and asyndeton) across a single paragraph, with one sentence per device and no discussion of how any of them serves the passage’s purpose. This paragraph’s chief weakness is

- (A) using too few devices
- (B) device-hunting: naming devices without developing any of them into sustained analysis tied to purpose
- (C) failing to quote the passage at all
- (D) organizing by strategy rather than by movement

Lời giải chi tiết

Naming five devices in one sentence each, with no development or connection to purpose, is the textbook device-hunting weakness this chapter warns against; two or three strategies developed in depth would score far higher than five listed briefly. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A passage's argument clearly shifts in tone from calm and measured in its first third to urgent and imperative in its final third. Which organizational strategy would most naturally fit this passage?

- (A) organizing strictly by device type regardless of where each device appears
- (B) organizing by movement through the text, tracking how strategies evolve from the calm opening to the urgent close
- (C) organizing by paragraph length
- (D) avoiding any discussion of tone entirely

Lời giải chi tiết

A passage whose argument clearly evolves in stages is best served by an essay organized around that same movement (beginning, middle, end), tracking how the tonal shift itself is built rather than fragmenting the analysis by isolated device type. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best demonstrates Sophistication credit in a rhetorical analysis essay, as opposed to accurate but basic Evidence and Commentary?

- (A) correctly identifying that the speaker uses a metaphor in line 4
- (B) explaining that the speaker's short sentences in the opening train the audience to notice short sentences as turning points, which pays off in the passage's final line
- (C) summarizing the passage's main topic accurately
- (D) listing every rhetorical device that appears in the passage

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) are accurate but basic (identification or summary, without connecting strategies across the passage). Only (B) demonstrates the kind of structural, cross-passage insight – showing how an early technique sets up and pays off in a later one – that the rubric associates with sophisticated understanding. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An essay's introduction spends three sentences summarizing the historical background of the speaker before stating any thesis about the speaker's rhetorical choices. This introduction is

- (A) ideal, because historical context is always the most important part of an introduction
- (B) acceptable only if the background is brief and clearly leads into a specific, defensible thesis about rhetorical strategy
- (C) irrelevant and should never appear in any rhetorical analysis essay
- (D) a requirement for earning the Sophistication point

Lời giải chi tiết

Brief, relevant context (especially from the passage's own introductory note) can be useful, but it is not sufficient on its own – the introduction must still arrive at a specific, defensible thesis

about rhetorical choices and their effect; background alone does not earn Row A or Row C credit. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

“The author uses imagery to describe the scene.” As a piece of rhetorical analysis commentary, this sentence is weak primarily because it

- (A) is grammatically incorrect the reader
- (B) names a device without quoting specific text or explaining any resulting effect on (C) is too long
- (D) contradicts the passage's actual content

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence names a general category (imagery) without a single specific example or any explanation of effect – exactly the kind of unsupported device-naming this chapter’s pitfall box warns against, regardless of grammar or length. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Choose one of the two passages analyzed in this chapter (the graduation address or the op-ed on convenience) and write one body-paragraph topic sentence that names a specific strategy AND states a specific effect, without simply repeating the thesis word for word.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model (op-ed passage): *“The writer’s restrained, almost sympathetic treatment of the engineers in sentence 7 – conceding they likely ‘set out, honestly, to save us time’ – is what allows the essay’s structural critique of the industry to land as credible analysis rather than an angry accusation.”* This topic sentence names a specific strategy (restrained, concessive characterization of the engineers) and states a specific effect (credibility, not accusation) distinct from the thesis’s own wording, giving the paragraph a clear job to do.

7.12 Handling passages with an unstated or ambiguous purpose

Not every passage announces its purpose directly. Some of the most fruitful rhetorical analysis prompts involve a speaker whose surface purpose (informing, describing, entertaining) conceals a deeper persuasive aim – and noticing that gap is itself a sophisticated analytical move.

Passage — A Restaurant Review with a Hidden Argument

"The soup was excellent: a clear broth, precisely seasoned, clearly the work of someone who has made it ten thousand times. The dining room, however, has not been renovated since it opened in 1987, and the single server on duty during a Friday dinner rush apologized to every table, individually, for a wait that was not her fault. It is worth asking why a restaurant capable of a soup this precise has never once been capable of hiring a second server on its busiest night."

On its surface, this passage is a restaurant review – informative, evaluative, describing food and service. But its actual rhetorical work is argumentative: the final sentence reframes every preceding descriptive detail (the soup’s quality, the server’s individual apologies, the dated dining room) as evidence for an implied claim about management priorities, not simply a report of one dinner. A reader who treats this passage as pure description, without noticing the final

sentence's reframing function, would miss the passage's real purpose entirely.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage's final sentence ("It is worth asking why...") primarily functions to

- (A) ask a genuine question the writer cannot answer
- (B) retroactively reframe the preceding descriptive details as evidence for an implied critique of the restaurant's management, revealing the passage's real purpose
- (C) praise the restaurant's soup one final time
- (D) shift the passage into an entirely unrelated topic about restaurant history

Lời giải chi tiết

The rhetorical question is not a genuine request for information; it retroactively converts the earlier factual details (excellent soup, an overworked lone server, an outdated dining room) into evidence for an implied critique of understaffing, revealing that the passage's real purpose was argumentative, not purely descriptive. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

A student's essay analyzing this passage focuses its thesis entirely on the writer's praise of the soup, treating the passage as a straightforward positive review. This thesis is most likely to

- (A) earn full credit, since the soup is accurately described as excellent
- (B) miss the passage's actual rhetorical purpose, since the passage's real argumentative work happens in its final, reframing sentence
- (C) be correct because most restaurant reviews are primarily about food quality
- (D) be irrelevant to the rubric entirely

Lời giải chi tiết

A thesis that treats the passage as simple praise misses its actual purpose, which the final sentence reveals to be a critique of staffing decisions built through accumulated, reframed detail – exactly the kind of unstated-purpose passage this section warns readers to watch for. (B).

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Không phải văn bản nào cũng nêu rõ mục đích ngay từ đầu. Một số văn bản (như bài review nhà hàng ở trên) **trông có vẻ** chỉ miêu tả/thông tin, nhưng thực chất câu cuối **định hình lại** toàn bộ chi tiết trước đó thành bằng chứng cho một lập luận ngầm. Khi phân tích, luôn tự hỏi: "Đoạn văn này có **một câu/đoạn nào** khiến ta phải nhìn lại và hiểu khác đi những gì đã đọc trước đó không?" Đó thường là nơi **mục đích thật** của văn bản được bộc lộ.

7.13 A fourth passage: analyzing structure across a full argument

Passage — Op-Ed, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Traffic”

[1] Every city council meeting about traffic eventually arrives at the same sentence: “We need more lanes.” [2] It is, on its face, a reasonable-sounding solution to a visible problem. [3] It is also a solution this city has tried four times since 1994, each time with the same result: a brief improvement, followed within three years by traffic returning to its previous level or worse. [4] Engineers have a name for this: induced demand. [5] Wider roads do not just handle more existing cars; they attract new trips that would not have happened on a more congested road, until the road fills back up to the same uncomfortable equilibrium as before. [6] Knowing this, why do we keep proposing the same fix? [7] Because “add lanes” is simple to explain in a thirty-second public comment, while “restructure the transit system so fewer people need a car at all” takes longer to explain and years longer to show results – and elected officials answer to a public that wants results before the next election, not after it.

Structural annotation

Movement 1 (sentences 1–3): establishes a familiar, repeated pattern (the same proposed solution, four times, same result) using concrete historical specificity (“since 1994,” “four times”) rather than a vague claim that the policy “doesn’t work.” **Movement 2 (sentences 4–5):** introduces a technical concept (induced demand) and explains its mechanism precisely, converting the writer’s opinion into something grounded in an established engineering principle rather than personal preference. **Movement 3 (sentences 6–7):** pivots from *what* happens to *why* it keeps happening despite being known, using a rhetorical question (sentence 6) to invite the reader into the writer’s own reasoning process before answering it with a specific, structural explanation about incentives (short public-comment windows, election timelines) rather than blaming individual officials personally.

Bài tập luyện tập

The passage’s organization is best described as

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) a list of three unrelated complaints about city government | a pattern, explaining its technical cause, then explaining the structural incentive that perpetuates it despite the known cause |
| (B) a chronological narrative with no analytical structure | |
| (C) movement through the text: establishing | (D) a comparison between two different cities’ traffic policies |

Lời giải chi tiết

Each of the three sections builds directly on the last (pattern → mechanism → incentive that perpetuates the mechanism), which is a clear example of organizing by movement through an escalating argument, not a list, a simple narrative, or a city-to-city comparison (no second city is introduced). (C).

Bài tập luyện tập

The specific detail “since 1994” and “four times” in sentence 3 primarily serves to

7.14 More practice items

Bài tập luyện tập

A rhetorical analysis essay claims the traffic op-ed's use of "induced demand" is an appeal to logos because it cites a real engineering concept, but the essay never explains what induced demand actually means or how it functions in the passage's argument. This paragraph would most likely

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) earn full Evidence and Commentary credit because it correctly identifies logos | (C) earn full Sophistication credit automatically |
| (B) earn limited credit because naming the appeal without explaining the concept's actual mechanism fails to develop the | (D) be irrelevant to the passage's actual argument |

Lời giải chi tiết

Correctly labeling an appeal is only the first step; without explaining what the concept means and how the passage uses it to build its argument, the analysis remains shallow identification rather than developed commentary, which limits Row B credit regardless of the label's accuracy. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following is the most sophisticated observation a student could make about the relationship between sentences 3 and 4–5 of the traffic passage?

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) "Sentence 3 is about the past, and sentences 4–5 are about engineering." | into a predictable, well-understood phenomenon – strengthening the claim considerably." |
| (B) "By naming a specific, technical mechanism (induced demand) immediately after establishing a repeated historical pattern, the writer converts what could be dismissed as a coincidence or bad luck | (C) "Sentences 4–5 are longer than sentence 3." |
| | (D) "The writer uses different vocabulary in sentences 4–5." |

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) note surface-level or structural facts without connecting them to rhetorical effect. Only (B) explains precisely *why* the sequencing matters – converting an apparent coincidence into a predictable, credible pattern – which is the kind of connective, effect-focused insight the rubric rewards as sophisticated. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student's rhetorical analysis essay on the restaurant review passage spends its entire second paragraph arguing that restaurants in general should hire more staff during peak hours. This paragraph most clearly

- (A) demonstrates excellent Row B analysis ment
- (B) repeats the error warned against earlier in this chapter: arguing about the passage's topic rather than analyzing how the passage builds its (unstated) argument (C) earns automatic Sophistication credit for offering a policy solution
- (D) is required by the rubric

Lời giải chi tiết

Arguing in favor of a real-world staffing policy is exactly the argument-essay drift this chapter identifies as the single most damaging error in rhetorical analysis writing – the task is to analyze the passage's rhetorical construction, not to argue about the topic it raises. (B).

7.15 A revision workshop: from summary to analysis

Before: a summary paragraph

"In this part of the speech, the speaker talks about how forty percent of students did not finish the program. He says he is not telling the class this to make them feel lucky. Then he talks about how the students worked hard, giving examples like failing a midterm and walking in the cold. He says stubbornness should be on a diploma. This part of the speech is effective."

Diagnosis: every sentence retells what the passage says, in the order it says it, without naming a single rhetorical strategy, quoting precise language, or explaining an effect on the audience. The closing claim ("this part of the speech is effective") is an unsupported assertion, not a conclusion earned by any analysis in the paragraph.

After: the same content, converted to analysis

"The speech's opening statistic works against, not with, the audience's expectations: by immediately following the uncomfortable forty-percent figure with an explicit denial of the easy reading ('I am not telling you that to make you feel lucky'), the speaker forecloses a comfortable, low-effort response before the audience can settle into it. This same refusal of the easy option structures the speech's central evidence: rather than asserting that the graduates worked hard, the speaker develops a triad of hyper-specific scenarios (a failed midterm, a February walk after a lost ride) whose concreteness makes the closing claim – that 'stubbornness' belongs on a diploma – feel earned by particular memory rather than asserted as empty praise."

What changed: the paragraph now names specific strategies (the denial-of-easy-reading move; the specific-scenario triad), quotes precise language, and explains a specific effect (foreclosing a comfortable response; making praise feel earned) tied to the writer's own analytical claim – with no vague, unsupported "this is effective" assertion needed, because the analysis itself demonstrates the effectiveness.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

So sánh hai đoạn trên: đoạn "before" chỉ kể lại nội dung theo thứ tự có sẵn – không trích dẫn cụ thể, không nêu tên chiến lược, không giải thích hiệu ứng. Đoạn "after" **phân tích**: gọi tên chiến lược cụ thể, trích nguyên văn, và giải thích **tại sao** chiến lược đó tạo ra hiệu ứng cụ thể lên người đọc/nghe. Đây chính là ranh giới giữa **tóm tắt** (summary, ít điểm) và **phân tích** (analysis, điểm cao) mà chương này nhấn mạnh xuyên suốt.

Bài tập luyện tập

The single biggest difference between the “before” and “after” paragraphs above is that the “after” version

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) discusses entirely different content from the “before” version | tent in its original order |
| (B) names specific strategies, quotes precise language, and explains a specific effect, rather than retelling the passage’s con- | (C) is simply longer, with no substantive difference |
| | (D) avoids mentioning the passage’s content at all |

Lời giải chi tiết

Both paragraphs discuss the same underlying content from the graduation speech; the transformation is entirely in *how* that content is treated – named strategies, precise quotation, and explained effect replace mere retelling, which is a substantive difference in kind, not just length. (B).

Free-Response Practice

Rewrite the following summary sentence as analysis, naming a specific strategy and its effect: “In the passage about the ladder, the author talks about how nobody reads the warning label and then explains why that happens.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *By opening with a specific, itemized list of ladder warnings before revealing that virtually no one reads them, the writer sets up a deliberate gap between formal availability and actual use of information, which the passage’s later definitional move (‘technically available... actually absorbed only in hindsight’) then names explicitly – turning a simple anecdotal observation into the passage’s central analytical claim.* This version names the specific technique (the list-then-reveal structure, followed by an explicit definitional reframing) and explains its effect (establishing a gap the passage later names as its main point) rather than simply reporting that the author “explains why.”

7.16 A peer-review checklist

Rhetorical analysis self-review checklist

1. Does my thesis name specific strategies from *this* passage and a specific effect, avoiding the generic ethos/pathos/logos formula?
2. Am I analyzing *how* the writer builds their argument, rather than arguing about whether I agree with the passage's topic?
3. Have I chosen two or three strategies to develop in depth, rather than listing every device I noticed?
4. Does each piece of evidence include a specific quotation or close paraphrase, followed by an explanation of effect – not just a device label?
5. Does my essay show how strategies interact or build across the passage, rather than treating each paragraph as an isolated observation?

Applying the checklist to a flawed sample paragraph

"The speaker uses ethos, pathos, and logos. He also uses alliteration and a metaphor. I think the graduates deserve to feel proud, since they worked very hard for years to get here. The speech is persuasive."

Checklist review: (1) the opening uses the generic ethos/pathos/logos formula with no passage-specific detail. (2) the middle sentences drift into agreeing with the graduates' pride (the passage's topic) rather than analyzing the speech's rhetoric – the argument-essay-drift error this chapter identifies as the most damaging. (3) five different elements are named (three appeals plus two devices) with no development of any. (4) no quotation appears anywhere. (5) nothing connects across the passage. This paragraph would score very low despite using correct rhetorical vocabulary.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Checklist tự đánh giá cho bài Rhetorical Analysis giúp em phát hiện đúng lỗi phổ biến nhất: **lạc đề sang bài Argument** (viết về việc mình có đồng tình với nội dung hay không), dùng **công thức chung** (ethos/pathos/logos) thay vì chi tiết cụ thể của văn bản, và **liệt kê biện pháp** thay vì phân tích sâu 2–3 chiến lược.

Bài tập luyện tập

In the flawed sample paragraph above, the sentence "I think the graduates deserve to feel proud, since they worked very hard for years" violates which checklist item?

- (A) item 3 (choosing 2–3 strategies to develop) rather than analyzing the speech's rhetorical construction
- (B) item 2: it argues about the passage's topic (whether graduates deserve pride)
- (C) item 5 (showing how strategies interact)
- (D) item 4 (quoting specific evidence)

Lời giải chi tiết

This sentence takes a personal position on the topic the speech raises (graduates' pride) rather than analyzing how the speech is rhetorically built – exactly the argument-essay drift that checklist item 2 is designed to catch, distinct from strategy selection, synthesis across the passage, or quotation. **(B).**

Free-Response Practice

Using the peer-review checklist, revise the flawed sample paragraph's opening sentence ("The speaker uses ethos, pathos, and logos.") into a specific, passage-appropriate thesis fragment naming at least one concrete strategy.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *“By pairing an uncomfortable opening statistic with a triad of hyper-specific personal anecdotes, the speaker replaces the generic praise typical of commencement addresses with evidence the audience can recognize as their own, earned experience.”* This revision names two specific, passage-appropriate strategies (the statistic, the anecdote triad) and a specific effect (earned, recognizable praise), rather than invoking the generic three-appeals formula.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student essay states: “The author’s tone is negative.” As rhetorical analysis commentary, the single word “negative” is weakest because it

- (A) is grammatically incorrect
- (B) is too imprecise; a more specific tone word (indignant, scornful, resigned) would better capture the author's exact attitude and support more precise analysis
- (C) is too long
- (D) does not appear anywhere in Chapter 4's tone vocabulary table

Lời giải chi tiết

“Negative” is grammatically fine and even appears as a category header in Chapter 4’s tone table, but as a description of a specific author’s attitude it is far too broad; a precise word (indignant, scornful, resigned) supports much more specific, creditable analysis of the actual passage. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A rhetorical analysis essay's thesis names three strategies but the body paragraphs discuss them in a different order than the thesis lists them, with no acknowledgment of the change. This mismatch is most likely to

- (A) improve the essay's Sophistication score automatically
- (B) create minor confusion about the essay's organization, though it does not necessarily prevent full credit if each strategy is
- (C) invalidate the entire essay
- (D) be required by the rubric

Lời giải chi tiết

A thesis-to-body order mismatch is a minor organizational rough edge, not a fatal flaw – graders primarily reward the quality and depth of evidence and commentary for each named strategy, though matching order generally reads more smoothly and professionally. **(B).**

7.17 A fifth passage for practice: a charitable appeal

Passage — Fundraising Letter Excerpt

[1] You do not need to read another statistic about hunger to know it is a real problem; you already know that. [2] So instead, I want to tell you about Marisol, who is eight, and who told one of our volunteers last week that her favorite subject is science because “the classroom is warm and my stomach doesn’t growl during silent reading.” [3] Forty dollars covers Marisol’s meals for two weeks. [4] I am not asking you to solve hunger. [5] I am asking you to make sure one classroom, for one child, stays warm and quiet in the specific way she needs it to be.

Bài tập luyện tập

Sentence 1’s explicit refusal to open with a statistic (“You do not need to read another statistic... you already know that”) primarily functions to

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) suggest that statistics about hunger do not exist | appeals, clearing space for the more specific, personal appeal that follows |
| (B) preempt a familiar, potentially fatigue-inducing genre convention of charitable | (C) criticize other charities for using statistics |
| | (D) provide a citation for a specific statistic |

Lời giải chi tiết

By naming and setting aside the statistic-opening convention many readers have grown fatigued by in charitable appeals, the writer clears rhetorical space for the more specific, individualized appeal (Marisol’s quote) that follows – not a claim that statistics do not exist, a criticism of other charities, or a citation. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The quoted detail from Marisol (“the classroom is warm and my stomach doesn’t growl during silent reading”) is rhetorically significant primarily because it

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) provides a general statistic about childhood hunger rates | generic |
| (B) converts an abstract problem (hunger) into one child’s specific, sensory, and slightly unexpected description of relief, making the appeal concrete rather than | (C) criticizes the reader for not already donating |
| | (D) introduces a counterargument the letter will go on to refute |

Lời giải chi tiết

The quotation’s specificity and its slightly unexpected angle (a warm, quiet classroom rather than a direct statement about food) make the appeal concrete and memorable in a way a general statistic or a direct criticism of the reader would not, converting an abstract issue into one particular, vivid experience. (B).

Bài tập luyện tập

The final two sentences (“I am not asking you to solve hunger. I am asking you to make sure one classroom... stays warm and quiet...”) rely most heavily on which structural device?

Bài tập luyện tập

If a grader covered up the passage title and read only Thesis A, they would most likely be unable to tell

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) whether the essay concerns a persuasive text at all | strategy or detail unique to this text |
| (B) which specific passage the essay is actually analyzing, since the thesis names no | (C) whether the essay is written in English |
| | (D) how many paragraphs the essay contains |

Lời giải chi tiết

Thesis A's generic formula could apply to nearly any persuasive passage, so a grader reading it in isolation could not identify which specific text it addresses – exactly the diagnostic test this chapter has recommended throughout for catching an overly generic thesis. **(B)**.

The Argument Essay

Mục tiêu Unit: Cấu trúc và biểu điểm bài luận Argument (Question 3): Thesis, Evidence and Commentary, Sophistication; kỹ thuật “giải mã” đề bài và định nghĩa thuật ngữ trước khi lập luận; xây dựng “ngân hàng bằng chứng” từ kiến thức/trải nghiệm cá nhân khi **không có nguồn cho sẵn**; áp dụng line of reasoning và phương pháp lập dàn ý bốn bước vào bài Argument; mở bài/kết bài tránh công thức sáo rỗng; và tổng ôn cuối sách qua bài luận mẫu có chú giải đầy đủ cùng nhiều đề luyện tập.

8.1 Format and the rubric

The argument essay (Question 3) presents a short passage or statement – often a quotation, a claim, or a brief debate framing – and asks you to develop and support your own position using evidence from your reading, experience, coursework, or observation. Unlike the synthesis essay, **no sources are provided**: you supply all of the evidence yourself. The recommended time is forty minutes.

The argument rubric, in full

- **Row A – Thesis (0–1 point):** responds to the prompt with a defensible position, not a re-statement of the prompt or a simple list of both sides with no position taken.
- **Row B – Evidence and Commentary (0–4 points):** provides specific, relevant evidence and explains how that evidence supports the writer’s own line of reasoning; a paragraph built on vague, unsupported generalizations (“many people believe...”, “throughout history...” with no specific example) is capped well below full credit.
- **Row C – Sophistication (0–1 point):** demonstrates a sophisticated argument through nuance (an appropriately qualified thesis, a genuinely engaged counterargument), a vivid and persuasive style, or by situating the issue within a broader context – sustained, not a single throwaway phrase.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Bài Argument có cùng 3 tiêu chí chấm điểm như hai bài luận trước, nhưng **khác biệt lớn nhất: không có nguồn tài liệu cho sẵn**. Em phải tự tạo bằng chứng từ **kiến thức, trải nghiệm, quan sát cá nhân**. Sai lầm phổ biến nhất: liệt kê 3–4 ví dụ hời hợt thay vì **đào sâu một ví dụ thật cụ thể** – đây là yếu tố quyết định điểm Evidence and Commentary.

8.2 Unpacking the prompt

Before brainstorming any evidence, spend the first few minutes precisely defining the prompt’s key terms. Many weak argument essays do not fail because of poor evidence – they fail because the writer argued a slightly different, easier question than the one actually asked.

Defining terms before arguing

Prompt: “Some believe that discipline is more valuable than talent. Write an essay that argues your own position on the relative value of discipline and talent.”

Before drafting, a careful writer asks: what does “discipline” mean here – raw willpower, or a learnable set of habits? What does “more valuable” mean – more predictive of long-term success, more admirable morally, or more within a person’s control? A writer who silently assumes “discipline” means “natural self-control you either have or don’t” will end up arguing a very different (and weaker) essay than a writer who defines it as “a trainable set of habits,” because the second definition opens the door to evidence about how discipline is built, not just whether some people have more of it than others.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: If a prompt’s key term is genuinely ambiguous, **define it explicitly in your thesis or opening paragraph** rather than leaving your reader to guess which meaning you are using. This is not padding – a stated definition sharpens your entire line of reasoning and is itself a legitimate method of development (Chapter 3).

8.3 Building an evidence bank without provided sources

Categories of self-generated evidence

- **History** – a specific, named historical event, decision, or figure (not a vague “throughout history” generalization).
- **Literature and media** – a specific book, film, or public figure’s documented choices, described accurately.
- **Current events** – a specific, real, recent event or policy you can describe with real detail.
- **Personal experience or observation** – a specific, well-explained anecdote from your own life or something you have witnessed directly.
- **Hypothetical reasoning** – a carefully constructed thought experiment, used sparingly and only when real examples are hard to generate.

One specific, deeply explained example almost always outscores three shallow, unexplained ones. A single paragraph that traces cause and effect in detail – what happened, why it happened, and what it proves about the thesis – demonstrates far more analytical control than a list of three examples given a sentence each.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Vì Question 3 **không có nguồn cho sẵn**, học sinh phải tự tạo bằng chứng từ kiến thức, trải nghiệm, hoặc quan sát cá nhân. Sai lầm phổ biến: liệt kê 3–4 ví dụ hời hợt. Cách làm tốt hơn: chọn **một** ví dụ thật cụ thể và **phân tích sâu** trong nguyên một đoạn văn – đây là yếu tố quyết định điểm Evidence and Commentary.

Shallow list versus one deep example

Shallow (three examples, one sentence each): *Thomas Edison failed many times before inventing the lightbulb. J.K. Rowling was rejected by many publishers before Harry Potter succeeded. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. These examples show that failure leads to*

success. – three famous names, no specific mechanism explained, no real analysis.

Deep (one example, fully developed): *In 1999, NASA lost the \$125 million Mars Climate Orbiter because one engineering team calculated thrust in pound-force while another used newtons, and no process existed to catch the mismatch before launch. The failure was expensive and, in the moment, deeply embarrassing for an agency built on precision. But it exposed a flawed assumption – that competent teams working independently would naturally stay consistent – that had gone unnoticed through years of successful missions. In the aftermath, NASA overhauled its cross-team verification procedures, changes credited with preventing similar errors in every mission since. The failure did not simply cost NASA a spacecraft; it revealed a structural weakness that ongoing success had been quietly hiding, and only the failure made that weakness visible enough to fix.* – one paragraph, one example, and a fully traced mechanism (what went wrong, why, and what changed as a result).

8.4 Line of reasoning in the argument essay

The four-step planning method from Chapter 3 (dump, cut, group, order) applies directly here, with one addition specific to Question 3: because you generate your own evidence, it is easy to accumulate too many partial examples. Discipline yourself to select the two reasons – not the four or five – you can develop in real depth in forty minutes.

From evidence bank to a two-reason outline

Prompt: “Write an essay that argues your own position on whether specialization (deep expertise in one field) or versatility (broad competence across several fields) better prepares a person for long-term success.”

Dump: specialists command higher salaries in narrow fields; generalists adapt better when an industry disappears; many successful entrepreneurs combine skills from unrelated fields; deep expertise takes years to build; automation is eliminating narrow technical roles faster than broad ones; some professions legally require narrow specialization (surgeons, pilots).

Cut/group: the salary point and the automation point both support the same underlying reason (labor-market risk); the entrepreneur point and the “combining skills” point both support a second, distinct reason (innovation at the intersection of fields).

Order: Reason 1 (labor-market risk: narrow specialization is vulnerable to disruption in ways broad competence is not) → Reason 2, building on Reason 1 (versatility does not just protect against disruption – it actively produces the kind of cross-field innovation that pure specialists rarely generate) → counterargument (some fields legitimately require narrow, deep specialization, such as surgery) and response (the claim is about *general* preparation for a changing economy, not every profession without exception).

8.5 Introductions and conclusions that earn points

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The “dictionary opener” (“*Webster’s dictionary defines success as...*”) is a formulaic, low-value opening that wastes time and rarely earns credit. Start instead with a clear, qualified claim or a brief, purposeful frame for the debate.

Model introduction

Prompt: “Some people believe that failure is essential to success. Write an essay that argues your own position on the value of failure.”

Model introduction: *Failure is rarely celebrated in the moment it happens – it is usually renamed later, once success has made it safe to call a ‘lesson.’ Although failure can be genuinely discouraging in the short term, and not every failure leads somewhere useful, it is often the mechanism by which individuals and institutions are forced to identify and correct the flawed assumptions that unchecked success conceals.*

This introduction avoids a dictionary opener, states a clear and *qualified* thesis (acknowledging failure’s real cost before asserting its value), and sets up a line of reasoning built around the idea of “concealed flawed assumptions.”

An effective conclusion does more than restate the thesis: it extends the argument’s significance to a broader context, resolves a tension the essay raised, or explains a real-world stake – often where the Sophistication point is actually earned. A conclusion that only repeats the thesis in different words leaves that point unclaimed.

8.6 Full annotated model essay

Argument Prompt

Directions: “Some people believe that curiosity – the active desire to understand things one does not yet understand – is the single most valuable trait a person can develop. Write an essay that argues your own position on the value of curiosity relative to other traits, such as discipline or talent.”

Model Essay – Full, Annotated

Curiosity is rarely listed alongside discipline and talent as a trait worth deliberately cultivating, perhaps because it looks less like effort and more like distraction. But curiosity is not the opposite of discipline – it is what makes discipline worth sustaining, because a person rarely disciplines themselves for years toward a question they have stopped caring about. **[Thesis: takes a clear, qualified position – not that curiosity replaces discipline, but that it sustains it – avoiding an absolute, indefensible claim.]**

Consider a specific case: in the 1980s, a research chemist named Spencer Silver was trying to develop an extremely strong adhesive and instead produced one so weak it barely held paper together – a result that, by the standards of his original assignment, was a failure. **[Evidence: a specific, named, real example, not a vague generalization.]** Rather than discarding the compound, Silver spent years showing it to colleagues at internal seminars, curious whether anyone could find a use for a glue that was interesting precisely because it did not work as intended. **[Evidence continues, developing the mechanism.]** A colleague, Art Fry, eventually connected the weak adhesive to his own frustration with bookmarks falling out of his hymnal – and the Post-it Note was born. **[Evidence concludes with the outcome.]** What is notable is not simply that a failure became a success, but that it took someone’s undirected curiosity – persisting past the point where the original assignment had already been declared finished – to make the connection at all. Discipline alone would have filed the failed adhesive away and moved to the next assigned task; it was curiosity, not diligence, that kept the door open long enough for Fry’s need to walk through it. **[Commentary: explains precisely why curiosity, specifically, and not discipline, drove the outcome – direct engagement with the prompt’s actual comparison.]**

This does not mean discipline is unimportant – turning a curious observation into a working product still required years of engineering, testing, and organizational patience that curiosity alone does

not supply. **[Concession: engages seriously with the value of discipline rather than dismissing it.]** But the Post-it Note case suggests a more precise relationship between the two traits than a simple ranking: curiosity tends to generate the raw material – the unexpected question, the anomaly worth pursuing – that discipline then refines into something usable. A disciplined person with no curiosity has nothing worth disciplining themselves toward; a curious person with no discipline generates interesting questions that are never carried far enough to matter. **[Rebuttal: reframes the comparison instead of simply picking a side, showing sophistication.]**

The same pattern appears outside of invention, in ordinary academic life. A student who is curious about why a mathematical proof works, not merely whether they can reproduce it for a test, tends to retain the underlying method long after a purely disciplined memorizer has forgotten the specific problem it was attached to – because curiosity built a structure of understanding that discipline alone, applied to memorization, does not build. **[Second, distinct piece of evidence, developed with real explanation rather than left as a bare assertion.]** This is not an argument that talent and discipline do not matter; a curious person with no underlying ability and no follow-through will not get far either. It is an argument that curiosity is the trait most likely to determine what a person's discipline and talent eventually get pointed toward – and, over a long enough timeline, that direction may matter more than the raw quantity of either. **[Conclusion: qualifies the claim honestly, extends its significance beyond the immediate examples, and closes on a precise, defensible final distinction rather than a bare restatement of the thesis.]**

Scoring the model essay against the rubric

Row A – Thesis (1/1): the introduction takes a specific, qualified position (curiosity sustains discipline, rather than replacing it) that is genuinely arguable and previews a clear line of reasoning.

Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4/4): the essay develops two specific, well-explained pieces of evidence (the Post-it Note case, the math-student example) in real depth, consistently explaining why each supports the specific claim rather than simply narrating events.

Row C – Sophistication (1/1): the essay concedes discipline's real value, then reframes the entire comparison (curiosity generates direction; discipline refines it) rather than picking one trait as simply "better," and the conclusion extends this reframing to a broader claim about long-term outcomes.

8.7 A second prompt for practice

Argument Prompt 2

Directions: "Some people believe that tradition – inherited practices, institutions, and ways of doing things – provides essential stability, while others believe that a willingness to break with tradition is necessary for meaningful progress. Write an essay that argues your own position on the relative value of tradition and innovation."

Free-Response Practice

Write a single, defensible, appropriately qualified thesis sentence responding to Argument Prompt 2.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *“Tradition is most valuable not as a fixed set of rules to be preserved unchanged, but as a record of previously solved problems – and the willingness to break with it becomes necessary precisely when the problem a tradition was built to solve has itself changed.”* This thesis avoids simply picking a side (tradition vs. innovation) and instead offers a more precise, qualified relationship between the two, previewing a line of reasoning about when each is appropriate.

Free-Response Practice

Using the evidence-bank categories from this chapter (history, literature/media, current events, personal experience, hypothetical reasoning), brainstorm ONE specific, real example you could develop in depth for Argument Prompt 2, and explain in one sentence why it fits your thesis.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: **Category: current events/institutional history.** *Example: a long-standing orchestra’s tradition of blind auditions (musicians audition behind a screen so judges cannot see who is playing) was itself once a break from tradition when introduced in the 1970s and 80s, and is credited with substantially increasing the proportion of women hired in major orchestras – it fits the thesis because the blind-audition rule is now itself a defended ‘tradition,’ showing that today’s stabilizing tradition was yesterday’s necessary break from an older one.* This example is specific (a named, real institutional practice), traceable in a real mechanism (screened auditions changing hiring outcomes), and directly illustrates the thesis’s precise claim about tradition being a record of a previously solved problem.

8.8 Common pitfalls

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The unqualified absolute thesis. A thesis like “Tradition is always more valuable than innovation” is easy to attack and hard to defend across every possible case; a qualified thesis (identifying *when* or *why*) is both more defensible and more likely to earn Sophistication credit.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: The example list. Three examples given one sentence each (“Edison failed. Rowling failed. Jordan failed.”) will always score lower than one example developed in a full paragraph with real explanation of mechanism and significance.

(!) Lỗi thường gặp: Ignoring the counterargument entirely. An essay that never engages the strongest opposing view misses an easy, well-established path to Sophistication credit (Chapter 2’s concession-and-rebuttal pattern applies directly here).

8.9 Practice items**Bài tập luyện tập**

Given the prompt about failure and success, which introduction most effectively establishes a defensible, appropriately qualified thesis?

- (A) “Webster’s dictionary defines failure as ‘lack of success.’ This essay will discuss failure.”
- (B) “Failure is bad and nobody likes it, but sometimes it happens to people.”
- (C) “Although failure can be genuinely discouraging in the short term, it is often the mechanism by which individuals and institutions are forced to correct the flawed assumptions that unchecked success conceals.”
- (D) “There are many different types of failure, including academic failure, financial failure, and social failure.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) is a formulaic dictionary opener; (B) is vague and takes no real position; (D) is a classification, not an argument. Only (C) states a clear, qualified, arguable position with an implied line of reasoning. **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

For an essay defending the thesis in choice (C) above, which piece of evidence would be most effective?

- (A) a general statement that “many successful people have failed before”
- (B) one specific, well-explained historical example developed in a full paragraph, showing exactly how a failure exposed a flawed assumption and led to a correction
- (C) a list of five different failed companies named without explanation
- (D) a dictionary definition of “resilience”

Lời giải chi tiết

Specificity and depth of development earn Evidence-and-Commentary credit far more reliably than breadth. One well-explained example that traces cause and effect in detail outperforms a vague generalization, an unexplained list, or an irrelevant definition. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student’s argument essay body paragraph reads: “Throughout history, many great leaders have shown curiosity. Many scientists have also shown curiosity. Curiosity is clearly important.” This paragraph’s chief weakness is

- (A) incorrect grammar
- (B) vague, unsupported generalization with no specific, named example or explained mechanism
- (C) too much specific detail
- (D) an overly narrow, single-example focus

Lời giải chi tiết

“Many great leaders” and “many scientists” name no one specifically and explain no mechanism; this is the vague-generalization weakness the chapter’s evidence-bank section explicitly warns against, not excessive detail or narrowness. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student defines a prompt's key term ("resilience") explicitly in the introduction before making any claim about its value. This choice is best understood as

- (A) unnecessary padding that wastes time otherwise ambiguous term
(B) a legitimate strategic move that sharpens the entire essay's line of reasoning around a specific, chosen meaning of an (C) a violation of AP Lang formatting rules
(D) irrelevant to the essay's score

Lời giải chi tiết

Explicitly defining an ambiguous key term is a legitimate method of development (Chapter 3) that sharpens the writer's own line of reasoning and helps the reader track exactly what claim is being defended – not padding, a rule violation, or irrelevant to scoring. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of the following overly absolute thesis is most defensible? "Innovation is always better than tradition."

- (A) "Innovation is good." fully changed; otherwise, the accumulated knowledge embedded in tradition remains the safer guide."
(B) "Tradition and innovation both exist."
(C) "Innovation should replace tradition only when the problem a given tradition was designed to solve has itself meaning- (D) "Innovation is always better than tradition, no matter the situation."

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (B) are vague and take no real position; (D) repeats the same indefensible absolute. Only (C) narrows the claim to a specific, defensible condition (when the underlying problem has changed), which is both more arguable and more sophisticated than an unqualified absolute. **(C)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student's conclusion states only: "In conclusion, as I have shown, curiosity is valuable." This conclusion is weak primarily because it

- (A) uses incorrect grammar (C) introduces new evidence not discussed in the body paragraphs
(B) merely restates the thesis without extending its significance or resolving any tension the essay raised (D) is too long

Lời giải chi tiết

A bare restatement of the thesis does the minimum a conclusion can do; it neither extends the claim's significance nor engages with any complexity the essay raised, missing the opportunity most conclusions have to contribute toward a Sophistication point. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

An essay argues that discipline matters more than curiosity, and its only body paragraph states: “Discipline is important because you need it to succeed. Everyone knows this.” This paragraph is weak primarily because it

- (A) is too specific
- (B) provides no actual evidence, relying entirely on an unsupported, circular assertion
- (C) addresses a counterargument too directly
- (D) uses an inappropriate tone

Lời giải chi tiết

The paragraph offers no specific evidence at all – “everyone knows this” is an appeal to popularity, not proof – and essentially restates its own claim as its own support, which is the opposite of too much specificity, direct counterargument engagement, or a tone problem. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Write one body paragraph (5–6 sentences) for Argument Prompt 2 (tradition vs. innovation) that develops ONE specific, real, well-explained example in depth, following the “deep example” model from this chapter.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *In the early 2000s, a well-established encyclopedia company built over generations of trusted, expert-written volumes faced a direct challenge from an openly editable, crowd-written alternative – a model that violated nearly every tradition of editorial authority the older company had built its reputation on. The company’s initial response was to defend its traditional model, expanding marketing rather than reconsidering its format, and within a decade it had ceased print production entirely. The lesson is not that tradition itself was the failure; expert review remains genuinely valuable. The failure was treating a specific tradition – centralized, slow editorial control – as permanently necessary rather than as one solution to a problem (accuracy at scale) that a new technology had already begun solving differently. A tradition defended past the point where its original problem has changed does not preserve stability; it preserves vulnerability.* Note the paragraph traces a real mechanism (why the tradition failed, specifically) rather than simply naming the example and moving on.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which of the following best demonstrates sophisticated engagement with a counterargument in an argument essay, rather than a simple concession or a dismissal?

- (A) “Some people disagree with me, but they are wrong.”
- (B) “Critics of blind auditions argue that removing visual cues also removes context a judge might legitimately need; this concern has merit for roles requiring visible stage presence, but for a purely acoustic art form, the fact that blind auditions measurably changed hiring outcomes suggests the ‘context’ being removed was mostly bias, not information.”
- (C) “I will not address the counterargument because my position is obviously correct.”
- (D) “Both sides have some good points and some bad points.”

Lời giải chi tiết

(A) and (C) dismiss opposition without engagement; (D) is vague and non-committal. Only (B) names the specific legitimate concern, concedes it where genuinely applicable (visible stage presence), and then explains precisely why it does not defeat the overall claim in the relevant context – exactly the nuanced move that earns sophistication credit. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A timed argument essay has 40 minutes available. Which time allocation best reflects the priorities established across this book's three essay chapters?

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) 35 minutes planning, 5 minutes writing | of reasoning, then the remainder drafting and briefly reviewing |
| (B) almost no planning, writing continuously for the full 40 minutes | |
| (C) roughly 5–7 minutes unpacking the prompt and outlining a two-reason line | (D) 40 minutes writing a single very long body paragraph with no introduction or conclusion |

Lời giải chi tiết

Some planning time consistently produces better-organized, more defensible essays (Chapter 3's four-step method), but planning must remain brief relative to drafting time; a short, focused outline followed by sustained drafting – with a real introduction and conclusion – best reflects the priorities developed throughout this book. **(C)**.

8.10 A second full model essay**Model Essay – Argument Prompt 2 (Tradition vs. Innovation)**

A tradition that has outlived the specific problem it was built to solve is not stability – it is inertia wearing stability's clothes. Tradition is most valuable not as a fixed set of rules to be preserved unchanged, but as a record of previously solved problems, and the willingness to break with it becomes necessary precisely when the problem a tradition was built to solve has itself changed. [Thesis: re-frames the debate rather than simply picking a side, previewing a specific line of reasoning about when tradition holds and when it should yield.]

Consider the practice of blind auditions in professional orchestras, in which musicians play behind a screen so judges cannot see who is performing. When the practice was introduced in the 1970s and 1980s, it was itself a sharp break from a much older tradition of open, visible auditions – and it was controversial, precisely because it discarded a long-standing method of evaluation. [Evidence: a specific, named, real institutional example.] The break paid off: orchestras that adopted blind auditions saw a measurable increase in the proportion of women advancing through audition rounds, a result attributed to removing visual cues that had allowed unconscious bias to shape supposedly objective judgments of musical skill. [Evidence continues, with a specific mechanism – bias, not competence, being removed.] What is notable for this essay's argument is what happened next: blind auditions themselves became a defended tradition, and orchestras that later proposed modifying the practice faced exactly the kind of institutional resistance the original innovators once faced from defenders of open auditions. [Commentary: connects the example directly to the thesis's central claim about tradition being a snapshot of a solved problem, not a permanent rule.]

This does not mean tradition is disposable or that innovation is automatically an improvement – a school that abandons a decades-old peer-tutoring program simply because it is old, without evi-

dence the underlying need has changed, risks discarding a genuinely effective solution for no reason beyond novelty. **[Concession: takes innovation-for-its-own-sake seriously as a real risk, avoiding an unqualified pro-innovation claim.]** The blind-audition case is instructive here too: the practice is defended today not out of nostalgia but because the specific problem it solves – bias in evaluation – has not gone away. A tradition earns its continued place by still solving its original problem, not merely by being old. **[Rebuttal: refines the claim rather than abandoning it, showing the essay is not simply “pro-innovation.”]**

The same logic clarifies when tradition should yield. A city’s decades-old zoning tradition of separating residential and commercial land uses solved a real early-twentieth-century problem – proximity to noisy, sometimes hazardous industrial activity. **[Second, distinct example, again specific and well-explained.]** In a modern city with light manufacturing and clean, quiet small businesses, the same zoning tradition can prevent exactly the kind of walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods residents say they want, because the tradition persists even though the specific hazard it was built to prevent has largely disappeared. Here, unlike the blind-audition case, the original problem has genuinely changed, which is precisely why this essay’s thesis treats tradition’s value as conditional rather than absolute. **[Commentary explicitly distinguishes the two examples using the thesis’s own stated criterion – has the underlying problem changed or not – demonstrating sustained, structural analysis rather than two disconnected anecdotes.]**

Tradition and innovation, understood this way, are not opposites competing for loyalty; they are two different tools for the same underlying task – solving real problems – deployed at different moments in a problem’s life. The relevant question is never simply “should we keep this tradition,” but “does the specific problem this tradition was built to solve still exist in the form the tradition assumes?” A society that asks that question honestly, case by case, will neither cling to inertia nor discard hard-won solutions for the sake of novelty. **[Conclusion: extends the thesis’s reframing into a general, transferable principle rather than merely restating the opening claim.]**

Scoring the second model essay against the rubric

Row A – Thesis (1/1): the opening reframes the debate around a specific, testable criterion (whether the original problem has changed) rather than simply choosing tradition or innovation.

Row B – Evidence and Commentary (4/4): two specific, real, well-developed examples (blind auditions; zoning tradition) are each explained in depth, with commentary that ties each back to the thesis’s precise criterion rather than a generic “this proves my point.”

Row C – Sophistication (1/1): the essay explicitly concedes that innovation-for-its-own-sake is a real risk, uses the two examples contrastively to demonstrate the thesis’s criterion in both directions (tradition holding; tradition yielding), and closes by generalizing the argument into a transferable principle.

8.11 Practice items, continued

Bài tập luyện tập

The second model essay’s use of two contrasting examples (blind auditions, where tradition should hold, and zoning, where it should yield) rather than two examples pointing the same direction primarily serves to

- (A) pad the essay's length with unnecessary repetition
- (B) demonstrate the thesis's stated criterion working correctly in both directions, which is a more sophisticated demonstration than two examples that only support one side
- (C) contradict the essay's own thesis
- (D) introduce a counterargument the essay fails to address

Lời giải chi tiết

Using one example where tradition should persist and one where it should yield – both explained through the same stated criterion (has the underlying problem changed) – demonstrates that the thesis's framework actually works as a general rule, not just a justification picked to fit one preferred outcome; this is a stronger, more sophisticated demonstration than two same-direction examples. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student drafting an argument essay on the tradition/innovation prompt writes only: "Tradition is good sometimes and innovation is good other times, and it depends on the situation." Compared to the model thesis in this chapter, this draft thesis is weaker primarily because it

- (A) takes the identical position as the model thesis with no meaningful difference
- (B) fails to state a specific, testable criterion for distinguishing when each applies,
- (C) is too long
- (D) avoids qualifying the claim at all

Lời giải chi tiết

Both theses avoid an absolute claim, but only the model thesis specifies an actual testable criterion (whether the original problem has changed) that the rest of the essay can be organized around; "it depends on the situation" is too vague to generate a specific, developable line of reasoning. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision would most improve a body paragraph that currently reads only: "Blind auditions are a good example of innovation working. They helped orchestras."

- (A) No revision needed; the paragraph is already sufficiently developed.
- (B) Add a specific mechanism (what changed, how it changed hiring outcomes, and why that supports the essay's specific thesis criterion), following the depth modeled in the second model essay.
- (C) Delete the example entirely and replace it with a general statement about innovation.
- (D) Add three more brief, undeveloped examples instead of developing this one further.

Lời giải chi tiết

The original two sentences assert an outcome without explaining any mechanism; the strongest revision develops the *same* example in depth (as modeled throughout this chapter)

rather than deleting it or diluting the paragraph with additional shallow examples. **(B)**.

8.12 A revision workshop: from example list to deep example

Before: a shallow example list

"Many great inventions came from curiosity. The telephone, the airplane, and penicillin were all discovered by curious people. This shows that curiosity is important for innovation. Many other examples exist as well."

Diagnosis: three famous inventions are named with no mechanism explained for any of them, and the vague closing sentence ("many other examples exist") gestures at breadth instead of committing to depth – the exact "shallow list" pattern this chapter warns against.

After: one example, fully developed

"Alexander Fleming did not set out to discover an antibiotic; he returned from a two-week vacation to find that a stray mold spore had contaminated one of his bacterial culture plates, and – where a less curious researcher might have simply discarded the ruined plate – he noticed that the bacteria near the mold had died, and stopped to ask why. That single moment of curiosity, sustained past the point where the original experiment had already technically failed, led to the identification of penicillin and, eventually, to antibiotics that have saved an estimated hundreds of millions of lives. The discovery did not require Fleming to be more disciplined than his colleagues; it required him to treat an apparent failure as a question worth pursuing rather than a mess worth discarding."

What changed: instead of three names with no mechanism, the paragraph now traces one specific event in enough detail to show exactly how curiosity (not discipline, not talent) produced the outcome – the contaminated plate, the choice to notice rather than discard, and the significance of that specific choice. This single, fully developed example does more analytical work than three unexplained names.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

So sánh hai đoạn trên: đoạn "before" nêu **ba ví dụ nổi tiếng** nhưng không giải thích **cơ chế** nào cả – đọc xong người đọc chỉ biết "có nhiều người tò mò đã phát minh ra thứ gì đó," không biết **tại sao** sự tò mò đó lại quan trọng. Đoạn "after" chỉ dùng **một ví dụ** nhưng giải thích chính xác **khoảnh khắc** tò mò đã dẫn đến điều gì, và **vì sao** đó là tò mò (không phải may mắn hay kỷ luật). Đây là kỹ năng quan trọng nhất của bài Argument: **đào sâu, không mở rộng**.

Bài tập luyện tập

The primary weakness of the "before" paragraph, corrected in the "after" version, is that it

- | | |
|--|--|
| (A) uses examples that are too obscure for most readers to recognize | outcomes |
| (B) names outcomes (famous inventions) without explaining any mechanism connecting curiosity specifically to those | (C) is factually inaccurate about the inventions named |
| | (D) fails to mention curiosity at all |

Lời giải chi tiết

The “before” paragraph’s examples are well-known and not factually wrong, and curiosity is mentioned – the actual weakness is the total absence of any explained mechanism showing curiosity, specifically, causing the outcome, which the “after” version corrects through detailed development of a single case. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Choose one of the shallow examples from the “before” paragraph (the telephone or the airplane) and develop it, in the style of the “after” model, into 3–4 sentences that trace a specific mechanism connecting curiosity to the outcome. (You may use plausible, general knowledge of the invention’s history.)

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *The Wright brothers were not the only engineers of their era interested in flight, but they were unusually curious about a specific, overlooked variable: how birds actively shifted their wing shape to steer, rather than relying on fixed control surfaces alone. Most contemporaries focused on generating enough lift and power; the Wrights spent years testing gliders specifically to answer a narrower, curiosity-driven question about control in the air. That narrower question – not superior funding or materials, both of which better-resourced competitors had – is what let them achieve sustained, controlled flight first.* Note the paragraph names a specific mechanism (curiosity about a narrow, overlooked variable) rather than simply asserting that curiosity was involved.

8.13 A peer-review checklist**Argument essay self-review checklist**

1. Have I defined any genuinely ambiguous key term in the prompt before arguing about it?
2. Does my thesis take a qualified, defensible position rather than an unqualified absolute or a vague “it depends”?
3. Have I developed at least one example in real depth (mechanism, cause, significance), rather than listing several examples briefly?
4. Have I engaged the strongest counterargument with a concession and a rebuttal, rather than ignoring it or dismissing it?
5. Does my conclusion extend the argument’s significance, rather than simply restating the thesis?

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Checklist tự đánh giá cho bài Argument tập trung vào lỗi phổ biến nhất của dạng bài này: **liệt kê nhiều ví dụ hời hợt** thay vì **đào sâu một ví dụ**, và **bỏ qua phản biện** thay vì xử lý nó một cách nghiêm túc bằng nhượng bộ–phản biện (concession–rebuttal).

8.14 Rapid thesis-writing drill

The four mini-prompts below are designed for fast, repeated practice: read each prompt, spend no more than two minutes, and write only a single qualified thesis sentence – the skill this chapter

identifies as the foundation every other essay element depends on.

Free-Response Practice

Mini-prompt 1: “Some people believe that competition brings out the best in people, while others believe that collaboration does. Argue your own position.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “*Competition sharpens performance most reliably when the competitors are working toward individually measurable goals, but once a task genuinely requires combining different people’s specialized knowledge, collaboration – not competition – becomes the mechanism that actually produces the best outcome.*” This thesis avoids picking one trait as universally superior and instead specifies the condition (individually measurable vs. knowledge-combining tasks) under which each applies.

Free-Response Practice

Mini-prompt 2: “Some believe that public recognition is the most effective way to motivate people, while others believe it can backfire. Argue your own position.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “*Public recognition motivates most effectively when it highlights a specific, replicable behavior rather than a person’s general talent, because behavior-focused praise shows others exactly what to do next, while talent-focused praise can create pressure that discourages the very risk-taking that produced the achievement in the first place.*” The thesis is specific (behavior-focused vs. talent-focused praise) and defensible, rather than a flat yes/no on recognition in general.

Free-Response Practice

Mini-prompt 3: “Some believe that specialization in a single skill leads to mastery, while others believe that exposure to varied skills leads to greater creativity. Argue your own position.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “*Specialization reliably produces technical mastery, but the historical record of major creative breakthroughs suggests that many of the most original insights come from people who transplant a method mastered in one narrow field onto a completely different problem – meaning breadth is not opposed to mastery but is often what gives an existing mastery somewhere new to go.*” This thesis reframes the apparent opposition (specialize vs. diversify) into a more precise relationship, similar to the reframing move modeled in this chapter’s tradition/innovation essay.

Free-Response Practice

Mini-prompt 4: “Some believe that admitting uncertainty makes a leader appear weak, while others believe it builds trust. Argue your own position.”

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: “A leader who admits uncertainty about a genuinely unresolved question builds more durable trust than one who projects false confidence, but only if that admission is paired with a clear account of what would resolve the uncertainty – otherwise, the admission risks reading as an absence of a plan rather than as honesty.” The qualifier (“only if... paired with a clear account”) is exactly the kind of appropriately limited, defensible claim this chapter’s earlier sections identify as more sophisticated than an unqualified stance in either direction.

Bài tập luyện tập

A student essay argues that hard work matters more than natural talent, using only the sentence: “Hard work is important because you have to work hard to get good at things.” This sentence’s primary weakness is

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) it is too specific | (C) it addresses a counterargument too thoroughly |
| (B) it is circular, essentially restating the claim (working hard matters) as its own support | (D) it uses an inappropriately casual tone |

Lời giải chi tiết

The sentence does not actually provide independent support – “you have to work hard to get good at things” simply restates the original claim in different words, a circular structure with no real evidence, rather than being overly specific, over-addressing counterarguments, or a tone problem. **(B)**.

Bài tập luyện tập

Which revision of the following conclusion best extends the essay’s significance rather than merely restating its thesis? Original: “In conclusion, curiosity is more important than discipline.”

- | | |
|---|--|
| (A) “In conclusion, curiosity is more important than discipline, as I have shown.” | experiment or a wrong turn looks like nothing more than wasted effort.” |
| (B) “Curiosity, then, is not opposed to discipline but is what gives discipline something worth sustaining – a distinction worth remembering the next time a failed | (C) “Curiosity is important. Discipline is also important. Both matter.” |
| | (D) “In summary, this essay discussed curiosity and discipline.” |

Lời giải chi tiết

(A), (C), and (D) restate the thesis or topic without adding anything; only (B) extends the essay’s claim into a broader, transferable insight (recognizing curiosity’s value at the moment a failure looks like waste) that goes beyond a bare repetition of the original sentence. **(B)**.

8.15 Expanding the evidence bank: a current-events example

Not every strong example needs to come from famous history. A specific, well-explained current event or firsthand observation can be just as effective as a famous case, provided it is developed with the same depth.

A current-events example, fully developed

Claim being supported: accountability structures matter more than individual willpower in sustaining good habits.

A city's public health department recently tracked participation in a free smoking-cessation program under two different designs. In the first design, participants simply received a self-help packet and a hotline number; six months later, 9% reported still not smoking. In the second design – otherwise identical – participants were assigned a weekly check-in call with the same counselor throughout the program; six months later, 34% reported still not smoking. The materials were the same; the information was the same; the only change was a recurring, external point of accountability. This suggests that the department's original assumption – that giving people the right information was the main barrier – was only partly correct. The larger barrier was structural: willpower alone, unsupported by any recurring check-in, is a much less reliable mechanism than a habit reinforced by scheduled, external accountability.

Note that the example is specific (comparing two program designs), traces a mechanism (accountability, not information, is the active ingredient), and states a clear significance (revising what the department's own assumption should have been) – exactly the depth this chapter has modeled throughout, even though the example is not a famous historical event.

GIẢI THÍCH TIẾNG VIỆT

VN

Không nhất thiết phải dùng **ví dụ lịch sử nổi tiếng** – một sự kiện thời sự hoặc quan sát cá nhân **cụ thể** và được **phân tích sâu** vẫn mạnh không kém. Điều quan trọng không phải là **độ nổi tiếng** của ví dụ, mà là em có thể **giải thích cơ chế** (tại sao điều đó xảy ra, và nó chứng minh điều gì) một cách chi tiết hay không.

Bài tập luyện tập

The smoking-cessation example above is effective primarily because it

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) involves a well-known historical figure | clear |
| (B) isolates a single controlled variable (accountability) between two otherwise identical program designs, making the mechanism behind the claim unusually | (C) uses more statistics than any other example in this chapter |
| | (D) avoids making any specific numerical claim |

Lời giải chi tiết

The example's strength comes from its controlled comparison – two designs identical except for one variable – which isolates the actual mechanism (accountability) far more convincingly than a famous name, a raw statistic count, or vague language would; historical fame is not required for a deep, effective example. **(B)**.

Free-Response Practice

Following the smoking-cessation model above, brainstorm one personal-observation example (not a famous historical case) that could support the claim: "Small, specific defaults shape behavior more reliably than general encouragement." Write 2–3 sentences developing it.

Lời giải chi tiết

A strong model: *My school cafeteria once moved the fruit bowls from the end of the lunch line, where they were easy to skip, to the very front, where every student had to walk past them first. No announcement encouraged healthier eating, and no menu items changed. Fruit consumption still rose noticeably within a few weeks, simply because the default path through the line now required passing the fruit before reaching less healthy options – a small positional change doing more than any poster ever had.* This example is specific, personally observed, and traces a mechanism (default positioning, not willpower or persuasion) precisely in the style modeled throughout this chapter.

8.16 A final full case study: two complete introductions compared**Two argument-essay introductions for the same prompt, compared**

Prompt: “Some believe that the ability to remain calm under pressure is more valuable than raw intelligence. Argue your own position.”

Introduction A: “Webster’s dictionary defines calm as ‘not showing or feeling nervousness.’ Both calmness and intelligence are important qualities. This essay will discuss which one matters more.” – a dictionary opener, a vague dual-importance claim, and no actual position.

Introduction B: “Raw intelligence identifies the best possible move in a crisis; it is calmness that determines whether a person can actually execute that move instead of freezing, panicking, or acting on the first impulse that arrives. In situations where the stakes are highest and the time to think is shortest, this makes composure – not intelligence – the trait that most reliably determines the outcome, even though intelligence remains what makes composure worth having in the first place.” – takes a specific, qualified position (composure matters more in high-stakes, low-time situations specifically) and previews a relationship between the two traits rather than a flat ranking.

As with the rhetorical analysis and synthesis introductions compared earlier in this book, the deciding factor is not vocabulary or length – it is whether the introduction commits to a specific, defensible claim that the rest of the essay can actually develop.

Bài tập luyện tập

Introduction B’s qualifying phrase “in situations where the stakes are highest and the time to think is shortest” primarily serves to

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) weaken the essay by admitting uncertainty | of a qualified thesis |
| (B) narrow the claim’s scope to the specific conditions under which it is most defensible, which is a strength, not a weakness, | (C) contradict the rest of the introduction |
| | (D) repeat the prompt’s wording without adding anything |

Lời giải chi tiết

Narrowing a claim’s scope to its most defensible conditions is exactly the qualifying move this book has modeled as a strength throughout (Chapters 2, 3, and this chapter) – it makes the thesis more precise and harder to refute, not weaker, contradictory, or redundant with the prompt. (B).

8.17 Bringing it all together

Every AP Lang task – multiple-choice, synthesis, rhetorical analysis, and argument – draws on the same underlying skills built across this book: reconstructing a rhetorical situation, building a defensible and appropriately qualified claim, supporting that claim with specific evidence explained through real commentary, and organizing paragraphs into a genuine line of reasoning rather than a list. The exam simply asks you to apply that same toolkit to different raw material – someone else's sources, someone else's passage, or your own knowledge.

Ôn tập nhanh: (1) luôn dựng lại SOAPSTone trước khi phân tích bất kỳ văn bản nào; (2) mọi bằng chứng cần đi kèm **commentary** – đừng bao giờ để bằng chứng “tự nói”; (3) các đoạn văn phải nối tiếp nhau theo *line of reasoning*, tránh cấu trúc liệt kê có thể đảo thứ tự tùy ý; (4) khi phân tích tu từ, chọn **2–3 chiến lược** để đào sâu thay vì liệt kê nhiều biện pháp rời rạc; (5) Sophistication đến từ việc **giới hạn hóa luận điểm** (qualifying) và xử lý phản biện một cách nghiêm túc, không phải từ vựng hoa mỹ; (6) ở bài Synthesis, tổ chức theo **lý do**, không theo **nguồn**; (7) ở bài Rhetorical Analysis, luôn phân tích **cách** tác giả lập luận, không phải **đồng tình/phản đối** với nội dung; (8) ở bài Argument, một ví dụ được đào sâu luôn mạnh hơn nhiều ví dụ hời hợt; (9) ở phần trắc nghiệm, luôn kiểm tra các câu hỏi sửa bài (writing/revision) phục vụ đúng **mục đích** và **đối tượng** của đoạn văn, không chỉ đúng ngữ pháp; (10) quản lý thời gian nghiêm ngặt ở cả ba phần thi – không có điểm trừ khi đoán, nên không bao giờ để trống câu trả lời.

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Bảng vàng học viên

AP 5/5 — Calculus AB/BC
SAT 1590 / 1570 / 1550

AP 4–5 — Biology, Chemistry
IELTS 8.0–9.0

IB 90/100 — Economics
Duolingo 110 · PTE 90

Cảm nhận học viên & phụ huynh

"Bạn đã cải thiện được tư duy Writing — kỹ năng từng là nỗi sợ lớn nhất — và cuối cùng đã đậu vào trường top như mong muốn. Thái độ học tập cực kỳ nghiêm túc; ngay cả khi nằm viện vẫn cố gắng học đều đặn."

— Phan Thị Thanh Hằng • IELTS Overall 8.5

"Cần tất cả kỹ năng trên 7.5 để xét vào trường top 1 Anh Quốc về Y học (chương trình UKFPO của NHS) — và đã đạt mục tiêu sau khi học Writing 1-1."

— Trần Hoàng Bảo Ngọc • IELTS Overall 8.0 (Writing 6.0 → 7.5)

"Gia đình và bé xin cảm ơn thầy cô đã giúp con có hành trang chín chu khi qua Mỹ. Đạt điểm 5 môn Giải tích trong thời gian ngắn là quá mãn nguyện."

— Phụ huynh • AP Calculus BC 5/5

"Em cảm ơn thầy đã luôn đồng hành. Nhờ thầy, em học vững hơn rất nhiều dù thời gian ôn không dài."

— Học viên • AP Calculus AB 4

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

FEEDBACK PHỤ HUYNH & HỌC VIÊN AP



Phụ huynh • AP Calculus BC: 5

"Gia đình cảm ơn thầy cô đã giúp con có hành trang chín chu khi qua Mỹ. Đạt điểm 5 môn Giải tích trong thời gian ngắn là quá mãn nguyện."



Phụ huynh • AP Calculus BC

"Mẹ con xin gửi lời cảm ơn chân thành tới thầy và cả nhóm. Thời gian ôn rất ngắn nhưng con nhận được rất nhiều sự hỗ trợ."



Học viên • AP Calculus AB: 4 • Statistics: 3

"Em cảm ơn thầy Steven đã luôn đồng hành. Nhờ thầy, em học vững hơn rất nhiều dù thời gian không dài."

Feedback phụ huynh & học viên AP — nhiều môn đạt điểm 4 & 5

Điểm thi thật của học viên

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN
ĐIỂM SỐ AP

8020 ENGLISH

AP Biology: 4 · AP Chemistry: 4

AP Calculus AB: 5

AP Calculus BC: 5

AP Chemistry: 5

Bảng điểm AP thật của học viên – nhiều môn đạt điểm 4 & 5

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KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN
ĐIỂM SỐ PTE

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Em báo điểm nha c

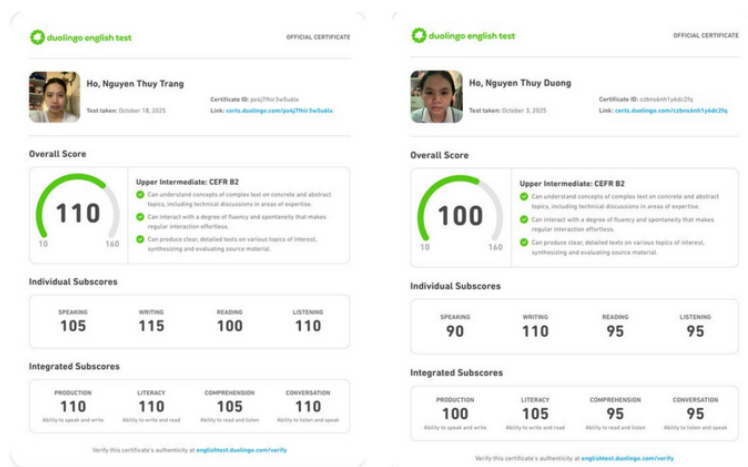
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Bảng điểm PTE thật của học viên

Học viên 8020 – PTE Academic 90

KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

ĐIỂM SỐ DUOLINGO



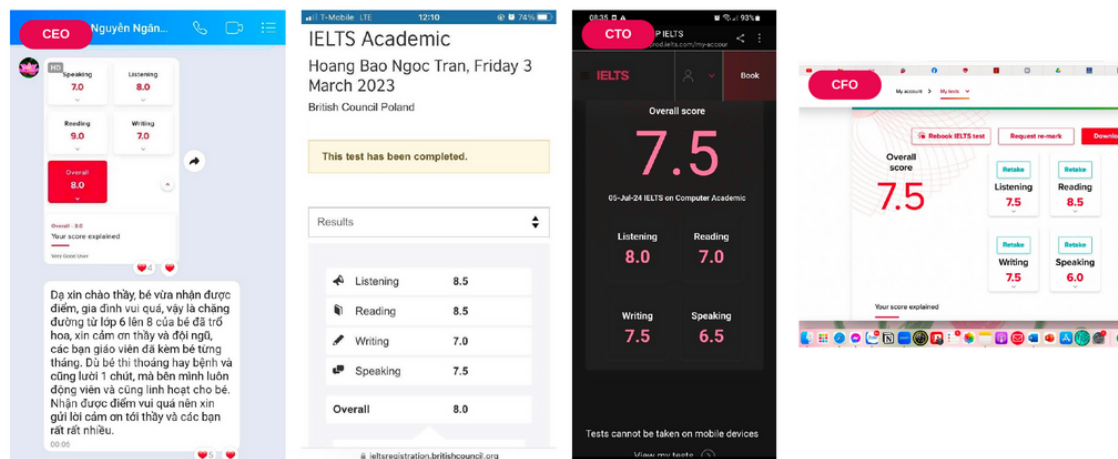
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KẾT QUẢ HỌC VIÊN

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