

Exercise walk-through

Developing a line of reasoning and commentary ■ 3.4

eXercise

You must be able to

- order your claims so each makes the next possible
- write commentary that carries the reader from one claim to the next
- place a concession where it does most work
- avoid a sequence of unconnected paragraphs

Method — Ordering claims

Before writing, list your claims and ask of each: what must the reader already accept for this to land? That ordering is your structure, and it is rarely the order in which you thought of them.

Method — Commentary across paragraphs

The last sentence of a paragraph and the first of the next carry the reasoning. “If the harm is real, the question is who bears the cost” moves the argument without announcing a topic.

Method — Placing a concession

Concede immediately before the claim the objection would damage. Conceding at the end reads as a retreat; conceding at the start can undercut you before you begin.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the question to ask of each claim when ordering an argument.

Solution 2.1

Method: Commentary across paragraphs

Worked steps

what must the reader already accept for this claim to land **B1**; the answers give the order **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State where a concession does most work and why.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

immediately before the claim the objection would damage **B1**, so the objection is answered before it can interrupt **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

An essay's three paragraphs each defend a separate point with no connection.

- (a) Name the weakness.
- (b) State one fix.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) there is no line of reasoning — the paragraphs do not build **B1**. (b) reorder them so each depends on the last, and connect them with linking commentary **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

The reasoning between paragraphs is usually carried by

- A** the topic sentence alone
- B** the last sentence of one and the first of the next
- C** the thesis
- D** the title

Solution 3.1

Method: Commentary across paragraphs

- A the topic sentence alone
- B the last sentence of one and the first of the next** 
- C the thesis
- D the title

Worked steps

- B.** those two sentences are where one claim hands over to the next.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Placing a concession at the very end of an argument tends to read as

- A** decisive
- B** a retreat
- C** a thesis
- D** an introduction

Solution 3.2

Method: Placing a concession

A decisive

B a retreat 

C a thesis

D an introduction

Worked steps

B. a late concession undoes the case just made.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 2 marks

Plan a three-claim line of reasoning for: “Cities should charge for road use at peak times.”

- (a) List the three claims in order.
- (b) State where you would concede and why.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) a workable dependent order, e.g. congestion imposes real costs → those costs fall unevenly → pricing is the fairest available remedy **B2**. (b) a concession named and placed before the claim it protects, with a reason **B2**.