

# Identifying the Line of Reasoning

## Duration

Two class sessions of approximately 40 minutes each

## Resources

### 1. Study Guide



### 2. Student Handout



### 3. Teacher Handout



### 4. Student Worksheet



## Objectives of Lesson

- To introduce students to the Line of Reasoning

## College Board Objectives from the 2019–20 CED

- CLE 3.A:** “Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.”
- REO 5.A:** “Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis.”
- REO 5.B:** Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.

## Activities

- Introducing line of reasoning
- Reading rhetoric to identify and evaluate the line of reasoning

## How to Use This Lesson Plan

This lesson is designed to introduce a key concept to students: the line of reasoning, which is a cornerstone of the AP® English Language course. To be successful on the exam, students must be able to identify and evaluate an author’s line of reasoning as well as develop their successful argument through a strong line of reasoning. In this lesson, you will review the line of reasoning study guide with your students and provide them with an opportunity to read a passage to identify and evaluate the line of reasoning. This scaffolding activity is perfect for the beginning of the school year when students first begin to analyze rhetoric. At the end of this lesson, there is an enrichment activity for students as well.

### TEACHER’S NOTE

This lesson pairs well with the Lesson Plan: Identifying the Rhetorical Situation. The skills covered in these two lessons are essential to student success in the AP® English Language course. Therefore, the lessons utilize the same passage, Malala Yousafzai’s address to her fellow youth at the United Nations. This lesson should be used after the “Identifying the Rhetorical Situation” plan.

### TEACHER’S NOTE

This purpose of this assignment is to introduce Line of Reasoning to your students. Because of this, the prompt included with the passage is slightly longer than what students will see on the AP® English Language exam. Additionally, it does stray from the stable wording that students will see on the rhetorical analysis prompt because students are not reading to analyze the rhetorical choices that Yousafzai utilizes but to examine the Line of Reasoning.

## LESSON: INTRODUCING THE LINE OF REASONING

### Introducing the Study Guide

To begin this lesson, distribute the “Study Guide: The Line of Reasoning.” This document will clarify line of reasoning for students.

Best defined as the arrangement of claims and evidence that leads to a conclusion, line of reasoning is a relatively new term in AP® Language. However, AP® Capstone teachers and students are familiar with this term. Important for evaluating the credibility of an argument, AP® Language students must be able to identify and create their own logical line of reasoning as mentioned on each rubric for the exam's free-response questions.

Your students may easily identify the central claim of an argument, especially if it is presented early in the passage; however, students must learn that a thesis can be effective at the end of a speech, or it may not even be explicitly stated. This does not mean the argument or line of reasoning is ineffective. In fact, those rhetorical choices can make the argument more successful. Additionally, students must be able to recognize the supporting claims and evidence to evaluate a line of reasoning. The cohesion of these elements should work together to lead to a conclusion. For example, if a speaker is trying to convince his audience to join a movement, he or she might begin by acknowledging reasons why listeners might be hesitant to join, effectively addressing the counter-argument early on to increase his/her credibility and gain the audience’s trust. Speakers often organize the argument based on the rhetorical situation, which is why this lesson works best after students understand the rhetorical situation.

### Identifying and Evaluating Yousafzai’s Line of Reasoning

After reviewing the study guide, distribute the Student Handout: “Malala Yousafzai’s Speech” (or ask them to get out the copy they used for the rhetorical situation lesson) and the Worksheet: “Identifying and Evaluating the Line of Reasoning.” Direct students to review the prompt to refamiliarize themselves with the rhetorical situation so that they accurately identify the claims and evidence Yousafzai employs to develop her line of reasoning. As they read through the passage, they will complete the graphic organizer. Please use the Teacher Version of the worksheet to support your students. This activity should take the majority of a 40–50 minute class period. If student do not finish, we recommend that they finish it outside of class to review together in your next class session.

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

To help students better understand line of reasoning, inform them that it is essentially the outline of the writer’s argument. Students are very familiar with outlining their own work; now, they must begin to reverse outline arguments in order to evaluate whether or not authors’ arguments are truly valid.

#### TEACHER’S NOTE

Before releasing students to identify a line of reasoning on their own, you could show a quick speech to your students and identify the line of reasoning as a whole class. Because this is a new skill, we recommend that you choose a speech that you are very familiar with and easy for students to work with. You can also check out Ashton Kutcher’s Teen Choice Award acceptance speech. It is a quick five minute speech with a clear line of reasoning.

#### ENRICHMENT

If you are looking to extend this lesson and provide more opportunities for practice, you can ask students to find their own examples of contemporary rhetoric and identify the line of reasoning. They can share their pieces with the class and explain what is or is not effective about the arrangement of the ideas or even make recommendations for improvement. This activity could also help them prepare for the writing questions on the multiple-choice section of the exam.

## Line of Reasoning

### What is the Argument?

- The conclusion (position) supported by a series of connected premises (claims or reasons) that are supported by evidence.

### What is the Line of Reasoning?

- The formal structure of an argument. In other words, the way that claims and reasons are arranged to lead to the conclusion.

### Identifying the Line of Reasoning

Another way to think of line of reasoning is that it is an author's train of thought, the arrangement of his ideas. Often, we can identify a writer's overall claim early in the passage, then use the rest of the content to strengthen the overall claim by making supporting claims (reasons) and including specific evidence to support the claims. However, as we encounter more sophisticated writing, we begin to see that an effective line of reasoning may present the overall claim at the end of the passage. Both modes are appropriate—as long as the claims, reasons, and evidence work together to construct a clear and strong argument.

### Evaluating the Line of Reasoning

Like everything in the AP® English Language, identifying something is never enough. The objectives in this course require that you can evaluate the effectiveness of an author's line of reasoning and develop a successful line of reasoning of your own. The good news is that once you can evaluate the line of reasoning in an argument, you should be able to create a strong line of reasoning. Below are questions that you can use to help evaluate and develop a line of reasoning?

- What is the author's overall claim? Where is it presented? Is it explicitly stated or implied? How do these choices impact the strength of the argument?
- What is the writer's first supporting claim (reason)? How does it connect to the thesis? Does the writer include specific evidence to support this claim? Why or why not?
- What are the following supporting claims (reason)? How do they connect? (Are they similar? Does one further prove the previous claim? Does one offer a counter-argument and the next present a refutation?) How do they connect to the overall argument? Are there specific pieces of evidence to support these supporting claims (reasons), why or why not?
- Finally, how do the pieces work together to prove the overall argument? What does the arrangement reveal about the writer's understanding of the rhetorical situation?

#### WHY IS LINE OF REASONING IMPORTANT?

Logical appeals, a vital component of effective rhetoric, are not just the statements of facts or numbers. In fact, logic does not focus on the content of claims in an argument. It focuses on the relationships between claims and conclusions.

#### REVERSE OUTLINE:

When identifying a writer's line of reasoning, a good practice to use is a reverse outline. This best works as a two step process. First, identify the main idea of each of each paragraph. Keep it short and simple and in your own words. This ensures that you understand the main idea. You might see that a few paragraphs have similar or even identical main ideas. That is okay. Perhaps the evidence or the rhetorical choices are different, strengthening the overall line of reasoning.

Second, note how the main idea of each paragraph advances the argument. Does one address a counter-argument? Is the following paragraph a refutation? Do two body paragraphs juxtapose each other? The expectation of a solid line of reasoning is that the paragraphs are NOT interchangeable. Each claim builds off of another, leading to a strong conclusion. This is very important in developing your own argument. If you find that you can switch paragraphs around, your line is weak. Strengthen it by including transitional phrases or sentences. Refer back to previous claims or evidence to connect the paragraphs together.

# Malala Speech

On July 12, 2013, the first ever Youth Takeover of the UN took place in New York City, which brought together hundreds of young education advocates from around the world, including Malala Yousafzai, who made her first public speech since being attacked by the Taliban in Pakistan in 2012. Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist, UN messenger of peace and the youngest Nobel Laureate, delivered this address on education to the youth assembly on ‘Malala Day,’ her 16th birthday. Read the passage carefully. Then, identify the elements of the rhetorical situation present as Yousafzai develops her message that education is power.

Dear sisters and brothers, we realize the importance of light when we see darkness. We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced. In the same way, 50  
 Line when we were in Swat, the north of Pakistan, we realized  
 5 the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns.

The wise saying, “The pen is mightier than sword” was true. The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid 55  
 10 them. And that is why they killed 14 innocent medical students in the recent attack in Quetta. And that is why they killed many female teachers and polio workers in Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa and FATA. That is why they 60  
 15 they are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring into our society.

I remember that there was a boy in our school who was asked by a journalist, “Why are the Taliban against 65  
 20 education?” He answered very simply. By pointing to his book he said, “A Talib doesn’t know what is written inside this book.” They think that God is a tiny, little conservative being who would send girls to the hell just because of going to school. The terrorists are misusing 70  
 25 the name of Islam and Pashtun society for their own personal benefits. Pakistan is peace-loving democratic country. Pashtuns want education for their daughters and sons. And Islam is a religion of peace, humanity, and brotherhood. Islam says that it is not only each 75  
 30 child’s right to get education, rather it is their duty and responsibility.

Dear fellows, today I am focusing on women’s rights and girls’ education because they are suffering the most. There was a time when women social activists asked 80  
 35 it by ourselves. I am not telling men to step away from speaking for women’s rights rather I am focusing on women to be independent to fight for themselves.

Dear sisters and brothers, now it’s time to speak up. So today, we call upon the world leaders to change 40  
 their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity.

- We call upon the world leaders that all the peace deals must protect women and children’s rights. A deal that goes against the dignity of women and their rights is unacceptable.
- 45 • We call upon all governments to ensure free compulsory education for every child all over the world.

- We call upon all governments to fight against terrorism and violence, to protect children from brutality and harm.
- We call upon the developed nations to support the expansion of educational opportunities for girls in the developing world.
- We call upon all communities to be tolerant—to reject prejudice based on cast, creed, sect, religion or gender. To ensure freedom and equality for women so that they can flourish. We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.
- We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave—to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential.

Dear brothers and sisters, we want schools and education for every child’s bright future. We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and 65  
 education for everyone. No one can stop us. We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world.

Because we are all together, united for the cause of 70  
 education. And if we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice 75  
 and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of schools. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright peaceful future.

So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, 80  
 poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons.

One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world.

Education is the only solution. Education First.

## Evaluating the Line of Reasoning

To develop an effective argument, writers must develop a logical line of reasoning, which is best defined as the arrangement of claims and evidence that leads to a conclusion. Readers must be able to identify an author's line of reasoning to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of an author's argument. Complete this graphic organizer to identify the line of reasoning in the passage.

<b>EVALUATING THE LINE OF REASONING</b>	
<b>THESIS/CENTRAL CLAIM:</b> <i>The thesis is not always found at the beginning of a passage; it could be explicitly stated, or it may be implicit; read the entire text before determining the thesis.</i>	
<i>Education is the weapon to end illiteracy, poverty, and terrorism around the world.</i>	
<b>CLAIM #1:</b>	
<i>Extremists are afraid of education.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b> <i>If the extremists oppress people who are afraid of education, it must have the power to end the oppression.</i>
<b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b> <i>Extremists murdered medical students. They killed polio workers (educated people). They are bombing schools.</i>	
<b>CLAIM #2:</b>	
<i>Some Taliban members are uneducated themselves; therefore, they are easily manipulated to believe the lies from the terrorist leaders.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM?</b> <i>Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.</i> <i>This claim furthers the previous one, explaining especially how terrorist leaders can manipulate their followers to believe that education is harmful.</i>
<b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b> <i>Anecdote from Yousafzai</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b> <i>This claim/evidence supports the argument by illustrating how terrorists misuse religion to justify their behavior and implies that if the extremists were able to read themselves, they would not blindly follow terrorist leaders.</i>

<b>CLAIM #3:</b>	
<i>Women's rights and girls' education are suffering the most.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM? Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.</b> <i>This claim/evidence shifts from addressing terrorist behavior to outlining the behaviors that her audience can exhibit and changes that they can fight for.</i>
<b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b> <i>Yousafzai lists changes that must occur: free education for every child, actively fight against terrorism, expand educational opportunities for girls, tolerant communities, etc.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b> <i>By outlining specific changes that she wants her audience to support and world leaders to implement, she reinforces her belief that education can lead to peace and prosperity if everyone in the world receives these opportunities and all governments fight against terrorism that prohibits the education of children.</i>
<b>CLAIM #4:</b>	
<i>By using the power and strength of their words and education, the united youth can change the world, and they must do so to help those who suffer.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM? Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.</b> <i>While the previous list of changes Yousafzai requests might have intimidated her audience, she reminds them that they can accomplish the tasks if they are united and use their education for good. She also reminds them why the hard work is necessary.</i>
<b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b> <i>There are millions of people who are suffering from poverty, injustice, and ignorance. Millions are out of school. Books, pens, teachers, children can change the world.</i>	<b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b> <i>By using the education they have received, the youth can see the power that it wields and fight to educate others, weaponizing those who struggle against terrorism and poverty.</i>
<b>EVALUATION:</b> <i>How do the claims and evidence work together to prove the thesis? Why is this line of reasoning effective?</i>	
<i>Yousafzai's line of reasoning is effective because each claim builds off of one another. By beginning with a justification of how she knows terrorists fear education and why they so strongly oppose it, her claim that it is the only way to beat the injustices of the world is more powerful. Shifting to directives that her peers can follow and fight for empowers them to act, and finally, by reminding her audience who already has access to the most powerful tool in the world makes them one of the most influential groups in the world and emboldens them to fight for education for all.</i>	

# Evaluating the Line of Reasoning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

To develop an effective argument, writers must develop a logical line of reasoning, which is best defined as the arrangement of claims and evidence that leads to a conclusion. Readers must be able to identify an author’s line of reasoning to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of an author’s argument. Complete this graphic organizer to identify the line of reasoning in the passage.

EVALUATING THE LINE OF REASONING	
<p><b>THESIS/CENTRAL CLAIM:</b> <i>The thesis is not always found at the beginning of a passage; it could be explicitly stated, or it may be implicit; read the entire text before determining the thesis.</i></p>	
<p><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	
<p><b>CLAIM #1:</b></p>	
<p><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	<p><b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>
<p><b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	
<p><b>CLAIM #2:</b></p>	
<p><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	<p><b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM? Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>
<p><b>SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	
<p><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>	<p><b>HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Write or type your response in this area.</i></p>

**CLAIM #3:**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM? Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**CLAIM #4:**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE CONNECT TO THE PREVIOUS CLAIM? Does it clarify the previous claim? Is it similar? Is it a counter-argument? Explain.**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**SPECIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**HOW DOES THIS CLAIM/EVIDENCE SUPPORT THE THESIS?**

*Write or type your response in this area.*

**EVALUATION: How do the claims and evidence work together to prove the thesis? Why is this line of reasoning effective?**

*Write or type your response in this area.*