

The APC Method of Argument

Follow the 3 step process:

STEP 1:

Specifically answer the question with a **clear argument**.

STEP 2:

Support your answer (STEP 1) with **specific text-based proof**.

STEP 3:

Explain your proof (STEP 2) and **connect** your support to your answer (STEP 1).

- Be direct. Do not waste time with “fluffy” introductions. Restate the question only if you directly answer it. Do not rewrite the question simply to take up space. In general, however, don’t restate the prompt. Don’t write a thesis.
- Only quote what you need. It is okay to quote a word or a phrase. There is no time or space for large block quotes.
- Use quotation marks correctly. No credit is given when you plagiarize.
- Do not give paragraph or line references. Include/quote what you actually need. You cannot just say, “This is shown in paragraph 6.” You have to show the proof; no grader will ever go back to the passage to find your proof for you. Also, writing a number reference wastes precious space.

Assertion	Proof	Commentary
Argument	Support	Explain
A sentence (text-based opinion) that goes toward answering the prompt.	Text-support (integrated quotations or paraphrase) that illustrates your point.	Explanation of (1) why/how this text proves your argument and (2) why your argument and the evidence you have selected are significant
Mini-thesis	Quotations	Insight/what the reader must INFER
Claim	Evidence	Reasoning
Proposition/hypothesis/theory/problem	Data	Impact

This method can be shortened to “APC” – ARGUMENT – PROOF – COMMENTARY

METHOD	QUESTIONS TO ASK	EXAMPLES	NOTES AND HOW TO APPLY IN CLASS
DEFINITION	Does it exist? How do we classify it? To what degree is it _____? How would it be placed on a scale of others classified with it? What is its form? What is it made of? What can it do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what is a "classic"? Twain: "'Classic.' A book which people praise and don't read." what is "science"? <i>Genus:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madison's differences between the nature of a republic and the nature of a pure democracy in <i>Federalist No. 10</i> <i>Division:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> King's 4 basic steps to a nonviolent campaign in "Letter from Birmingham Jail" 	
COMPARISON	How are they similar? How are they different? What is the degree of comparison? For dissimilar pairs: What are possibly significant similarities? For similar pairs: ...significant differences?	Similarity (analogy): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islands in the Galapagos Difference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical science vs. humanities (argue important similarities in thinking process) Degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machiavelli: create the image of being a virtuous man if not really a virtuous man King's argument ("LBJ") that the white moderate hurts civil rights more than extremists 	
CAUSE-EFFECT	What will be the effect of X event? What was the cause of X event? What is the correlation between these things? Are these things causally related or merely correlated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will a vaccine prevent its target? Will it have other effects? (e.g. Salk and polio) Social patterns: rise/decline in crime, birthrate, marriage, investment, etc. 	
CIRCUMSTANCE/CONTEXT	It is possible or impossible? What are the facts (and how do we know them or agree on them)? What might be the facts in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict the probability of X outcome based on X facts "If the power and the desire to do something are present, then that something will be done" (e.g.: crimes, nuclear war) 	

SAMPLE ARGUMENTS:

DEFINITION:

COMPARISON:

CAUSE-EFFECT

CIRCUMSTANCE/CONTEXT