

Table 1
Definitions and Examples of Discourse Elements

Elements	Definitions	Examples
Lead	The introduction begins with a statistic, a quotation, a description, or some other device to grab the reader's attention and point toward the thesis.	"What would you choose, thousands of screaming fans beckoning you to perform your guitar solo or a quiet shelf in a library with only a couple hundred pages detailing your life. It is the sad choice between being a celebrity on one hand and a hero on the other."
Position	An opinion or conclusion on the main question	"In my opinion, every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters, although this might be difficult."
Claim	A claim that supports the position.	"The next reason why I agree that every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters is that this simple task can help each person get ahead in life and be successful."
Counterclaim	A claim that refutes another claim or gives an opposing reason to the position.	"Some may argue that obligating every individual to think seriously is not necessary and even annoying as some people may choose to just follow the great thinkers of the nation."
Rebuttal	A claim that refutes a counterclaim.	"Even though people can follow others' steps without thinking seriously in some situations, the ability to think critically for themselves is a very important survival skill."
Evidence	Ideas or examples that support claims, counterclaims, or rebuttals.	"For instance, the presidential debate is currently going on. In order to choose the right candidate, voters need to research all sides of both candidates and think seriously to make a wise decision for the good of the whole nation."
Concluding Statement	A concluding statement that restates the claims.	"To sum up, thinking seriously is important in making decisions because each decision has an outcome that affects lives. It is also important because if you think seriously it can help you succeed."

Discourse relations/Hierarchical relationships

- Parent → Child
 - Position → Claim
 - Position → Counterclaim
 - Claim → Evidence
 - Counterclaim → Rebuttal
 - Counterclaim → Evidence
 - Rebuttal → Evidence

Table 2
Effectiveness of Discourse Elements

Discourse Elements	Effectiveness	Descriptions	Examples
Lead	Effective	The lead grabs the reader's attention and strongly points toward the position.	Prompt: "Should we admire heroes but not celebrities?" Lead: Too often in today's society people appreciate only the circumstances which immediately profit themselves and they follow the pack, never stopping to wonder, "Is this really the person who deserves my attention?"
	Adequate	The lead attempts to grab the reader's attention and points toward the position.	Prompt: "Can people ever be truly original?" Lead: Originality: being able to do something that few or none have done before.
	Ineffective	The lead may not grab the readers attention and may not point to the position.	Prompt: "Can people ever be truly original?" Lead: Originality is hard to in this time and era.
Position	Effective	The position concisely states a claim closely related to the topic, a clear stance on the claim, and connects to the claim(s).	Prompt: "Should learners choose online education?" Position: "Online education is a good choice for those who strive to learn something new because it makes your learning comfortable and allows you to work at your own pace. "
	Adequate	The position addresses the topic but may state the author's stance by repeating the words from the prompt without any support.	Prompt: "Does every individual have an obligation to think seriously about important matters, even when doing so may be difficult?" Position: "Every individual have an obligation to think seriously about important matters, even when doing so may be difficult!"
	Ineffective	The position is not relevant to the topic, and/or it shows no clear stance.	Prompt: "Does every individual have an obligation to think seriously about important matters, even when doing so may be difficult?" Position: "The important matters that may disturb people in the short term, its all about people how do they think."
Claim	Effective	The claim is closely relevant to the position and backs up	Position: "I definitely agree with the statement that every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters."

		the position with specific points or perspectives. The claim is valid and acceptable.	Claim: "The next reason why I agree that every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters is because this simple task can help each person get ahead in life and be successful."
	Adequate	The claim relates to the position but may simply repeat part of the position or state a claim without support. The claim is moderately valid and acceptable.	Position: "Every individual owes it to themselves to think seriously about important matters, no matter the difficulty". Claim: " It is important to think seriously about important matters although some people do not do this".
	Ineffective	The claim is irrelevant to the position. It may also be weak and/or not acceptable.	Position: "Everyone have an obligation to think about seriously about important matters!" Claim: "I can not see the reason why would not. I feel like it is pretty much part of the human rights."
Counterclaim	Effective	The counterclaim is reasonable and relevant. It represents a valid objection to the position.	Position: "Being a twin has many benefits". Counterclaim: "The disadvantage of being a twin may be evident during the teenage years. Privacy and sexuality become more important, and rivalry for the attention of the opposite sex and from parents come into play."
	Adequate	The counterclaim is not quite a reasonable opposing opinion, or it is not closely relevant to the position.	Position: "In the United States of America, no one person has an obligation to live thier life in any certain way." Counterclaim: "Many may argue that obligating a person to make a decision one way or another would make the country better."
	Ineffective	The counterclaim is neither reasonable nor relevant.	Position: "People should have an obligation to think seriously." Counterclaim: "Some may argue that humor is what enlivens our life."
Rebuttal	Effective	The rebuttal directly answers and refutes the counterclaim.	Position: "Being a twin has many benefits". Counterclaim: "The disadvantage of being a twin may be evident during the teenage years. Privacy and sexuality become more important, and rivalry for the attention of the opposite sex and from parents come into play." Rebuttal: "However, the process of growing together is what makes the twins bond and understand each other at a level other relationship most often do not get to."
	Adequate	The rebuttal does not answer the counterclaim directly and it is not strong and/or valid.	Position: "People should have an obligation to think seriously." Counterclaim: "Yes, it can be difficult to sit down and think about these things and some could bring about many unpleasant feelings or emotions."

			Rebuttal: "However, in doing so you are able to more clearly see the big picture of what you are about to do."
	Ineffective	The rebuttal misses the target. It does not refute the counterclaim.	Position: "In the United States of America, no one person has an obligation to live their life in any certain way." Counterclaim + Rebuttal: "Many may argue that obligating a person to make a decision one way or another would make the country better, but those individuals are those who are intolerant of others opinions and lifestyles."
Evidence	Effective	The evidence is closely relevant to the claim they support and back up the claim objectively with concrete facts, examples, research, statistics, or studies. The reasons in the evidence support the claim and are sound and well substantiated.	Claim: "There are a number of instances, in either our everyday lives or special occurrences, in which one must confront an issue they do not want to face." Evidence: "For instance, the presidential debate is currently going on and in order to choose the right candidate, they must research all sides of both candidates. The voter must learn all about the morals and how each one plans to better America. This might disturb some people, given that some people may either feel too strongly about a certain candidate or that they may not feel strongly enough. However, by not researching and gaining all the possible knowledge that they can, they are hurting themselves by passing up a valuable opportunity to possibly better the country for themselves and the people surrounding them."
	Adequate	The evidence is not closely relevant to the claim it supports. The evidence contains some detailed examples but they may not be relevant to each other and only loosely bound together. The evidence uses some unsubstantiated or unsound claims or assumptions.	Claim: "Individuals do not have an obligation to others to think seriously about important matters." Evidence: "It is never fair for an individual to place their beliefs or state of mind onto someone else. An individual never knows where someone else might be in their life, and in result the individual cannot and should not force anything onto them."
	Ineffective	The evidence is irrelevant to the claim it backs up and provide few valid examples. The evidence uses unsubstantiated assumptions that sound quite unacceptable.	Claim: "I feel like it is pretty much part of the human rights." Evidence: "We cannot, not allow someone just to think, even if we know that doing is maybe difficult. Imagine that, what if somebody came up a brilliant idea in a really difficult case, but that person doesn't have enough power to make it happen, but another person has. So if he tells it to the other one, he can make it happen. This way they can help each other out, and that is how society can take a step ahead."

Concluding summary	Effective	The concluding summary effectively restates the claims using different wording. It may readdress the claims in light of the evidence provided.	<p>Position: "I definitely agree with the statement that every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters."</p> <p>Claim One: "The first reason why I believe it is very important to think seriously is because decisions completely affect your life."</p> <p>Claim Two: "The next reason why I agree that every individual has an obligation to think seriously about important matters is because this simple task can help each person get ahead in life and be successful."</p> <p>Claim Three: "Finally, even though it may be difficult, thinking hard about important matters is actually important."</p> <p>Conclusion: "To sum up, thinking seriously is important in making decisions because each decision has an outcome that affects lives. It is also important because if you think seriously it can help you succeed. Finally, it is important because issues are relevant and people need to stay involved."</p>
	Adequate	The concluding summary merely copies the claims or may restates only part of the claims. It may partially misrepresent the claims.	<p>Position: "To me, individuals have an obligation to themselves to think seriously about important matters, even when doing so may be difficult."</p> <p>Conclusion: "To me, thinking about important matters, even when difficult, is a big part of that obligation."</p>
	Ineffective	The concluding summary is irrelevant to the claims. The conclusion may also misrepresent the claims.	<p>Position: "Every individual owes it to themselves to think seriously about important matters, no matter the difficulty."</p> <p>Conclusion: "'It is immoral to let a sucker keep his money' explains Edward Norton in the movie Rounders. While stealing i never looked upon with a smile, it is often not that bad when a thoughtless person gives away their money for nothing in return."</p>

