4.5 Recognizing methods of development

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 17 marks**

KEY WORDS satire • irony • proposal • exaggeration • tone • target

Objective

Build the skills to recognize how a writer develops a **proposal** or a **satire**, including cause and effect and **irony**.

You must be able to:

- identify cause and effect and proposal structures
- recognize irony and satire
- explain why a writer uses an outrageous proposal

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Proposal structure

step	content
problem	what is wrong
causes	why it happens
proposal	what should be done
benefits	the good effects
objections answered	why critics are wrong

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■ Satire

Satire uses humor, exaggeration and **irony** to attack a real problem. In **verbal irony** the writer means the opposite of what the words say. A reader must notice the gap between the calm tone and the shocking content.

clue	example
a calm, reasonable voice	"I humbly propose..."
a monstrous idea	eating children
real targets	landlords, politicians, cruelty to the poor

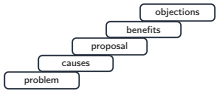
■ Worked example

Task: explain the method in Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729).

Answer: Swift copies the cause-and-effect structure of a serious economic plan, but the plan is to sell poor children as food. The calm structure makes the cruelty of real policies toward the Irish poor visible: readers are shocked by the proposal, then see that the real treatment of the poor is little better.

2 Practice

2.1 Identify two steps in a proposal structure. [2]



2.2 Explain what verbal irony is, using an example. [3]



2.3 Explain why a satirist might use a calm, serious tone for an outrageous idea. [3]



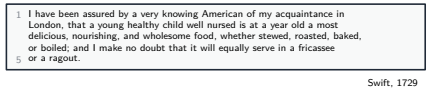
3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the passage.

> "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout."

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal*, 1729

(a) Identify the source of authority the speaker cites. [1]

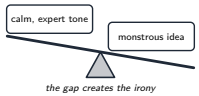


(b) Explain the effect of the list "stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled". [1]

(c) Explain what Swift is really attacking. [1]

3.2 Use the Swift passage in Question 3.1. Ireland in 1729 suffered famine, and many Irish families were very poor under English rule.

Write one paragraph that analyzes how Swift uses irony in this passage to make his readers see the cruelty of real policies toward the poor. Begin with a thesis sentence. [6]



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Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

any two, for example: the problem; the causes; the proposal; the benefits; objections answered

2.2

verbal irony is when a writer says the opposite of what they mean; an example, for example saying "What lovely weather" in a storm, or Swift calling his horrible plan "modest"; the reader must notice the gap between the words and the situation to understand the real meaning

2.3

the calm tone imitates the voice of real officials and experts; the contrast with the shocking idea surprises readers and makes them think; so readers notice that real policies, also described calmly, may be just as cruel, which is the satire's target

3.1

(a) "a very knowing American" acquaintance

(b) the cooking list treats children as ordinary food, so the calm detail makes the idea more horrifying

(c) the cruelty and greed of English landlords and rulers toward the poor of Ireland, who were left to starve

3.2

thesis: a defensible thesis about how irony exposes real cruelty

evidence: quotes or describes the calm authority "a very knowing American"; quotes or describes "delicious, nourishing, and wholesome" or the cooking list

commentary: explains how the reasonable, expert voice imitates real policy writers; explains how the ordinary food words create a shocking gap that forces readers to react

sophistication: explains the satire's target and situation, for example that readers' horror at eating children reflects back on how they already treat the poor

model: "Swift makes cruelty visible by describing it in the calm voice of an expert. His speaker trusts 'a very knowing American,' just as a real planner would cite authorities, so the tone sounds respectable. Then the words of a recipe, 'delicious, nourishing, and wholesome,' 'stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled,' are attached to a child. The gap between the polite language and the monstrous idea shocks the reader. Yet the shock turns back on the reader: a society that let Irish children starve was already treating them as things to be used. The proposal is only an honest version of what was happening."

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