6.5 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax

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

KEY WORDS loaded language • connotation • absolute • superlative • accusation • complacency

Objective

Build the skills to analyze **loaded language** : word choices that carry judgment, and how writers use them to accuse, praise or persuade.

You must be able to:

- identify loaded words and their connotations
- explain how diction shows a writer's judgment
- analyze loaded language in a speech

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Loaded language

neutral	loaded (negative)	loaded (positive)
tax	burden, grab	investment
change	upheaval	reform
group	gang, mob	movement
firm	stubborn	principled

Loaded words carry a judgment as well as a meaning. They are not wrong to use, but readers should notice them, and writers should use them on purpose.

■ Superlatives and absolutes

Words such as "no", "never", "every", "most shocking" make a claim as strong as possible. They create force, but they also invite readers to look for exceptions.

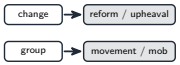
■ Worked example

Task: analyze "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States." (Douglass, 1852)

Answer: Douglass uses an absolute comparison ("not a nation on the earth") and loaded words ("guilty," "shocking and bloody") to put the United States, which praised itself as free, below every other nation. The harsh diction shocks a holiday audience out of complacency.

2 Practice

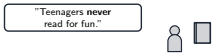
2.1 Identify a loaded word that could replace each neutral word: (a) "change"; (b) "group". [2]



2.2 Explain the difference between "The council wasted 2*million*"*and*"*Thecouncilspent*2 million". [3]



2.3 Explain one risk of using absolute words such as "never" and "every" in an argument. [3]



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3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Read the passage.

> "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour."

Frederick Douglass, speech in Rochester, New York, 5 July 1852

(a) Identify two loaded words in the passage. [1]

1 There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Douglass, 1852

(b) Explain the effect of "not a nation on the earth". [1]

(c) Explain the effect of the final phrase "at this very hour". [1]

3.2 Use the Douglass passage in Question 3.1. He spoke at a celebration of the Fourth of July.

Write one paragraph that analyzes how Douglass's loaded diction and absolute claims challenge his audience. Begin with a thesis sentence. [6]



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