

5.5 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to analyse **diction** 用词, **comparison** and **syntax** 句法.

You must be able to:

- describe the connotation of a word choice, not only its meaning
- explain what a metaphor or analogy asks the reader to accept
- describe a syntactic pattern and its effect
- link any of these to purpose

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Connotation

"Firm" and "stubborn" describe the same behaviour and evaluate it oppositely. Naming the connotation, and what it does for the writer's purpose, is the analysis; naming the word is not.

■ What a comparison claims

Every metaphor imports a structure. Calling a debate a "battle" makes opponents enemies and compromise a defeat. Ask what the comparison licenses the reader to think.

■ Syntax

Short sentences after long ones create emphasis. A long periodic sentence that delays its main verb builds suspense. Repetition of a structure —parallelism —makes items feel equivalent and complete.

2 Practice

2.1 State the difference between a word's meaning and its connotation. [2]

2.2 Explain what calling a debate a "battle" asks the reader to accept. [2]

2.3 A paragraph of long sentences ends with a three-word sentence.

(a) State the effect. [1]

(b) State how you would link it to purpose. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Choosing "stubborn" rather than "firm" mainly changes [1]

- **A** the denotation
- **B** the evaluation carried by the word
- **C** the sentence length
- **D** the audience

3.2 Parallel structure across three clauses tends to make the items feel [1]

- **A** unrelated
- **B** equivalent and complete
- **C** contradictory
- **D** hypothetical

3.3 A writer describes a policy as "a lifeline".

(a) State what the metaphor imports. [1]

(b) Explain what it forecloses. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **5.5 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Organization, Coherence, and Style** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 meaning is what the word refers to; connotation is the evaluation or association it carries.

2.2 that the parties are enemies rather than participants, and that compromise would be a defeat rather than an outcome.

2.3 (a) emphasis —the short sentence lands hard after the long ones. (b) state what is emphasised and why the writer wants that point to land.

3.1 B. the denotation is the same; the evaluation is not.

3.2 B. parallelism suggests equivalence and closure.

3.3 (a) rescue from drowning —urgency and the absence of alternatives. (b) it forecloses debate about whether the policy is the right remedy, since refusing a lifeline is not a position anyone can defend.