

8.3 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to analyse how style **positions the reader** 定位读者.

You must be able to:

- explain how pronoun choice includes or excludes a reader
- describe the effect of a rhetorical question
- explain what a shift in register does mid-passage
- link a stylistic move to the audience it targets

1 Worked examples

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

■ Pronouns position

"We" enrolls the reader in the writer's position before any argument is made; "they" places a group outside it. A single pronoun can do more assigning than a paragraph of description.

■ Rhetorical questions

A question the writer answers themselves controls the reader's next thought. One left unanswered implies that no answer is needed—which is a claim, not a question.

■ Register shifts

Dropping from formal to plain speech marks a moment as sincere or urgent; the opposite marks it as authoritative. Where the shift falls tells you what the writer wants weighted.

2 Practice

2.1 State what "we" does to a reader.

[2]

2.2 Explain what an unanswered rhetorical question implies. [2]

2.3 A formal passage drops into plain speech for one sentence.

(a) State the likely effect. [1]

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

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 "They" applied to a group of people mainly [1]

- **A** includes them in the writer's position
- **B** places them outside it
- **C** has no effect
- **D** signals concession

3.2 A rhetorical question left unanswered functions as [1]

- **A** a genuine enquiry
- **B** a claim
- **C** a qualification
- **D** a transition

3.3 A speech uses "we" throughout and switches to "you" in its final paragraph.

(a) State what the switch does. [1]

(b) Explain why it might come at the end. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **8.3 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Audience, Tone, and Sentence Craft** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 it enrolls the reader in the writer's position before any argument has been made.

2.2 that the answer is obvious and needs no argument, which makes it a claim rather than a question.

2.3 (a) it marks the sentence as sincere or urgent. (b) say what is emphasised there and why the writer wants that point weighted.

3.1 B. the third person places the group outside the shared position.

3.2 B. it asserts that no answer is needed.

3.3 (a) it separates the audience from the writer and addresses them directly. (b) the shared "we" has built agreement, and the final "you" places the responsibility to act on the listener.