

5.5 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax

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

KEY WORDS syntax 句法 • diction 用词 • parallel structure 平行结构 • repetition 重复
• style 文体

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	B
C	D

- 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	B
C	D

- 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]

3.4 Full free-response task. A nature writer describes an abandoned quarry. She calls the machinery “*asleep*” rather than derelict; her sentences run long and unbroken while she describes the returning plants, and become short and clipped when she names what was taken out of the ground. The final paragraph is one sentence of nine words.

Write an essay that analyses how the writer's diction and syntax convey her attitude towards the quarry.

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A — Thesis (1), Row B — Evidence and Commentary (4), Row C — Sophistication (1).**

[6]

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