

Exercise walk-through

The function of an allusion ■ 8.6

eXercise

You must be able to

- state what allusions create and why
- explain what 'shared knowledge' presupposes
- distinguish emotional from intellectual associations
- handle an allusion whose reference you must reconstruct

Method — The claim

Because of shared knowledge about a reference, allusions create emotional or intellectual associations and understandings.

Method — Shared knowledge

The allusion works only if the reader has the reference. A poet alluding to a sacred text assumes a readership that knows it, so the allusion is also evidence about the poem's assumed audience.

Method — Two kinds of association

An **emotional** association brings a feeling attached to the reference; an **intellectual** one brings an idea or an argument. Many allusions do both.

Method — Reconstructing

When the reference is unfamiliar, find out what it is known for, then ask which part of that the poem's context needs. That is 5.7's method, applied where the shared knowledge is no longer shared.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State what allusions create and why.

Solution 2.1

Method: The claim

Worked steps

emotional or intellectual associations and understandings **B1**, because of shared knowledge about the reference **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Distinguish emotional from intellectual associations.

Solution 2.2

Method: The claim

Worked steps

an emotional association brings a feeling attached to the reference **B1**; an intellectual one brings an idea or argument **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Shared knowledge is an assumption.

- (a) State what it reveals about the poem.
- (b) State the method when the reference is unfamiliar.

Solution 2.3

Method: Reconstructing

Worked steps

(a) that the poem assumes a readership possessing the reference **B1**, which is evidence about its intended audience **B1**. (b) find what the reference is known for and ask which part the context needs **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Allusions work because of

A shared knowledge about a reference

B rhyme

C length

D punctuation

Solution 3.1

Method: The claim

A shared knowledge about a reference



B rhyme

C length

D punctuation

Worked steps

A. shared knowledge.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

An emotional association brings

A a feeling attached to the reference

B an argument

C a definition

D a date

Solution 3.2

Method: Two kinds of association

A a feeling attached to the reference



B an argument

C a definition

D a date

Worked steps

A. a feeling.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A modern reader misses an allusion a contemporary reader would have caught.

- (a) State what has changed.
- (b) Explain what the reader should do.

Solution 3.3

Method: Shared knowledge

Worked steps

(a) the knowledge is no longer shared **B1**. (b) reconstruct what the reference was known for **B1** and determine which part of it the poem's context requires **B1**.