

Exercise walk-through

Developing commentary ■ 8.8

eXercise

You must be able to

- state the three sophisticated moves
- explain what 'broader context' means for a poem
- explain why alternative readings are especially apt in poetry
- avoid claiming sophistication without doing the work

Method — Three moves

Explain the significance or relevance of an interpretation within a broader context, discuss alternative interpretations, or use relevant analogies.

Method — Broader context

For a poem this usually means what the interpretation shows about how the poem works, or about a problem the poem shares with others — not biography or period background dropped in for its own sake.

Method — Alternative readings

8.3 established that ambiguity allows different readings. Poetry therefore supplies alternatives constantly, and acknowledging one is often the most natural sophistication move available.

Method — Not a claim

Writing “this is significant because it reflects the human condition” claims significance without establishing it. The move must actually connect the reading to something outside it.

Practice 2.1 ■ 3 marks

State the three sophisticated moves.

Solution 2.1

Method: Three moves

Worked steps

explain significance within a broader context **B1**; discuss alternative interpretations **B1**; use relevant analogies **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain what “broader context” usually means for a poem.

Solution 2.2

Method: Broader context

Worked steps

what the interpretation shows about how the poem works **B1**, or about a problem it shares with other texts **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Sophistication must be done, not claimed.

(a) State the failure mode.

(b) State why alternatives are especially apt in poetry.

Solution 2.3

Method: Alternative readings

Worked steps

- (a) claiming significance without connecting the reading to anything outside it **B2**.
- (b) ambiguity allows different readings, so alternatives are constantly available **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Claiming an interpretation “reflects the human condition”

A claims significance without establishing it

B is a strong move

C is required

D is an analogy

Solution 3.1

Method: Not a claim

A claims significance without establishing it



B is a strong move

C is required

D is an analogy

Worked steps

A. claimed, not established.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Alternatives are especially available in poetry because of

A ambiguity

B rhyme

C brevity

D metre

Solution 3.2

Method: Alternative readings

A ambiguity



B rhyme

C brevity

D metre

Worked steps

A. ambiguity.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

An essay ends by naming a rival reading and saying why its own explains more.

- (a) State which move this is.
- (b) Explain why it belongs at the end.

Solution 3.3

Method: Not a claim

Worked steps

(a) discussing an alternative interpretation **B1**. (b) the essay's own reading must be established first **B1** so the comparison has something to weigh the rival against **B1**.