

2.5 The function of a simile

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain a **simile** 明喻.

You must be able to:

- define a simile
- state what a simile does between its two terms
- name the two subjects of a comparison
- write about a simile in terms of transfer

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

A simile uses the words "like" or "as" to liken two objects or concepts to each other. The signal words are part of the definition.

■ Transfer

Similes liken two different things to transfer the traits or qualities of one to the other. The transfer is the function; identifying the simile is not yet analysis.

■ Two subjects

The thing being compared is the main subject; the thing to which it is being compared is the comparison subject. Naming them keeps an answer from reversing the transfer.

■ The form of an answer

"The comparison subject is X, whose quality of Y is transferred to the main subject Z, so the reader now sees Z as..." —state the quality, not just the pair.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a simile.

[2]

2.2 State the function of a simile and name the two subjects. [3]

2.3 Identifying a simile is not analysis.

(a) State what an analysis must add. [2]

(b) Give the form of an answer. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 In "her voice was like gravel", the comparison subject is [1]

- **A** her voice
 - **B** gravel
 - **C** the reader
 - **D** the poem
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3.2 A simile transfers [1]

- **A** traits or qualities
 - **B** page numbers
 - **C** rhyme
 - **D** metre
-

3.3 A poem likens a city to a furnace.

(a) Name the two subjects. [1]

(b) Explain what quality is transferred and to what effect. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **2.5 The function of a simile** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Poetry I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 a comparison using "like" or "as" to liken two objects or concepts to each other.

2.2 it transfers the traits or qualities of one to the other; the main subject is the thing being compared and the comparison subject is the thing it is compared to.

2.3 (a) which quality is transferred and what effect the transfer has on the reader. (b) "the comparison subject is X, whose quality of Y is transferred to the main subject Z".

3.1 B. gravel is what the voice is compared to.

3.2 A. traits or qualities.

3.3 (a) the city is the main subject and the furnace the comparison subject. (b) heat and containment transfer, so the city reads as something that consumes what it holds.