

2.6 The function of a metaphor

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS metaphor 隐喻 • simile 明喻

Objective

Build the skills to explain a **metaphor** 隐喻.

You must be able to:

- define a metaphor in the CED's terms
- state what the differences between the two concepts may do
- state what a comparison draws on
- explain how context determines what is transferred

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

A metaphor implies similarities between two (usually unrelated) concepts or objects in order to reveal or emphasise one or more things about one of them, though the differences between the two may also be revealing. The last clause is the advanced move.

■ Differences

Where a simile transfers qualities, a metaphor's *unlikeness* can also mean something: the ways a city is **not** a furnace may be the point.

■ What it draws on

Comparisons between objects or concepts draw on the experiences and associations readers already have with those objects and concepts. The reader supplies half the meaning.

■ Context

Interpretation of a metaphor may depend on the context of its use; what is happening in a text may determine what is transferred. The same metaphor transfers different qualities in different places.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a metaphor in the CED's terms. [2]

2.2 State what a comparison draws on. [2]

2.3 Context matters to a metaphor.

(a) State the CED's claim. [2]

(b) State what the differences between the two concepts may do. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The CED says a metaphor implies similarities between two [1]

- **A** usually unrelated concepts or objects
- **B** identical objects
- **C** synonyms
- **D** rhyming words

3.2 A reader's existing associations are [1]

- **A** irrelevant
- **B** part of what the comparison draws on
- **C** always wrong
- **D** the author's

3.3 The same metaphor appears in two poems and means different things.

(a) State the CED's explanation.

[1]

(b) Explain what this requires of an analysis.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 it implies similarities between two usually unrelated concepts or objects to reveal or emphasise something about one of them.

2.2 the experiences and associations readers already have with those objects and concepts.

2.3 (a) interpretation may depend on the context of its use, since what is happening in a text may determine what is transferred. (b) the differences may also be revealing.

3.1 A. usually unrelated.

3.2 B. the reader supplies half the meaning.

3.3 (a) context determines what is transferred. (b) the analysis must show what is happening in the text at that point rather than giving the metaphor a fixed meaning.