

3.10 Control over the elements of composition

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write with **conventional control** 规范.

You must be able to:

- state what grammar and mechanics allow a writer to do
- explain why this is a communication issue rather than an etiquette one
- identify the errors that most obscure meaning
- proofread for meaning rather than for rules

1 Worked examples

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

■ What they allow

Grammar and mechanics that follow established conventions of language allow writers to clearly communicate their interpretation of a text. The stated purpose is clarity of interpretation.

■ Not etiquette

The CED does not say correct writing is polite or expected; it says it lets the interpretation reach the reader. An error matters in proportion to what it obscures.

■ The worst errors

Unclear pronoun reference (which character?), a misplaced modifier (who did what?), and a sentence with no main verb. Each of these hides the claim, which is the one thing the essay exists to make.

■ Proofreading for meaning

Read each sentence asking whether a stranger could say who did what to whom. That test finds the errors that cost marks and ignores the ones that do not.

2 Practice

2.1 State what grammar and mechanics allow a writer to do. [2]

2.2 Name two errors that most obscure meaning. [2]

2.3 An error matters in proportion to what it obscures.

(a) State the test to apply when proofreading. [2]

(b) State the CED's stated purpose for conventions. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The CED's stated purpose for grammar and mechanics is [1]

- **A** politeness
- **B** clear communication of an interpretation
- **C** tradition
- **D** length

3.2 Unclear pronoun reference obscures [1]

- **A** which character is meant
- **B** the page number
- **C** the genre
- **D** the title

3.3 A sentence leaves it unclear whose motive is being described.

(a) State the error type. [1]

(b) Explain why it costs more than a spelling slip.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **3.10 Control over the elements of composition** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Longer Fiction or Drama I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 clearly communicate their interpretation of a text by following established conventions of language.

2.2 any two of: unclear pronoun reference; a misplaced modifier; a sentence with no main verb.

2.3 (a) ask whether a stranger could say who did what to whom. (b) to allow the writer's interpretation to be clearly communicated.

3.1 B. clear communication.

3.2 A. which character is meant.

3.3 (a) unclear pronoun reference. (b) it hides the claim the sentence exists to make, whereas a misspelling leaves the meaning recoverable.