

7.10 The function of a simile

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain a simile's **selection** 选择.

You must be able to:

- state what a simile's function relies on
- explain why the choice of comparison subject matters
- compare two similes for the same main subject
- analyse a simile by its selection

1 Worked examples

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

■ The claim

The function of a simile relies on the selection of the objects being compared as well as the traits of the objects. Selection is added here to unit 2's account.

■ Why choice matters

A face like marble and a face like paper both mean pale, and they mean nothing else in common. The writer chose one, and the discarded alternatives are the measure of what the chosen one does.

■ Comparing similes

Test a simile by substituting another comparison subject with the same core trait. What changes is what the original was for.

■ Analysing by selection

"The comparison could have been X; it is Y instead, which adds Z." That sentence is an analysis of selection, and it is more precise than naming the shared trait alone.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a simile's function relies on.

[2]

2.2 Explain why the choice of comparison subject matters. [2]

2.3 A simile can be tested by substitution.

(a) State the method. [2]

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

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A simile's function relies on selection of the objects and [1]

- **A** the traits of the objects
 - **B** the page number
 - **C** the poem's date
 - **D** the reader's age
-

3.2 "Like marble" and "like paper" share [1]

- **A** paleness and little else
 - **B** everything
 - **C** nothing
 - **D** their sound
-

3.3 A writer describes grief as "like a debt".

(a) State the trait transferred. [1]

(b) Explain what "like a wound" would have done instead. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **7.10 The function of a simile** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction III** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the selection of the objects being compared as well as the traits of the objects.

2.2 two comparison subjects can share the core trait and differ in everything else, so the discarded alternatives measure what the chosen one does.

2.3 (a) substitute another comparison subject with the same core trait and see what changes. (b) "the comparison could have been X; it is Y instead, which adds Z".

3.1 A. the traits.

3.2 A. paleness and little else.

3.3 (a) something owed that must eventually be paid. (b) a wound would make grief an injury that heals with time, where a debt makes it an obligation that persists until discharged.