

8.4 The function of a symbol

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to read **attitude from symbols** 象征中的态度.

You must be able to:

- state the CED's claim about symbols and attitude
- explain how the use of a symbol reveals perspective
- distinguish the symbol's meaning from the speaker's use of it
- analyse a symbol as evidence about a speaker

1 Worked examples

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

■ The claim

Symbols in a text and the way they are used may imply that a narrator, character, or speaker has a particular attitude or perspective.

■ Use reveals perspective

"And the way they are used" is the operative phrase. The same symbol handled with reverence or with contempt tells you about the handler.

■ Meaning and use

A symbol's meaning is what it stands for; its use is what the speaker does with it. Two speakers can share a symbol and reveal opposite perspectives through how they invoke it.

■ As evidence

Ask: what does this speaker assume the reader will feel about this symbol, and what does that assumption reveal about them?

2 Practice

2.1 State the CED's claim about symbols and attitude.

[2]

2.2 Distinguish a symbol's meaning from its use. [2]

2.3 A symbol is evidence about a speaker.

(a) State the question to ask. [2]

(b) State the operative phrase in the CED's sentence. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Symbols may imply that a speaker has a particular [1]

- **A** attitude or perspective
 - **B** age
 - **C** occupation
 - **D** accent
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3.2 Two speakers using the same symbol may reveal [1]

- **A** opposite perspectives
 - **B** identical views
 - **C** nothing
 - **D** the author's opinion
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3.3 One speaker calls a flag "a rag"; another calls it "the colours".

(a) State what differs. [1]

(b) Explain what each reveals. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **8.4 The function of a symbol** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Poetry III** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 symbols and the way they are used may imply that a narrator, character or speaker has a particular attitude or perspective.

2.2 the meaning is what the symbol stands for; the use is what the speaker does with it.

2.3 (a) what the speaker assumes the reader will feel about the symbol and what that assumption reveals about them. (b) "and the way they are used".

3.1 A. attitude or perspective.

3.2 A. opposite perspectives.

3.3 (a) not the symbol but the use. (b) "a rag" reduces it to material and denies the loyalty attached; "the colours" invokes that loyalty as a shared and unquestioned thing.