

8.5 The function of a metaphor

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain a **conceit** 奇喻.

You must be able to:

- define a conceit in the CED's terms
- state what conceits often compare
- state what multiple comparisons may do
- distinguish a conceit from an ordinary extended metaphor

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

A **conceit** is a form of extended metaphor that often appears in poetry. Conceits develop complex comparisons that present images, concepts, and associations in surprising or paradoxical ways.

■ What they compare

Often, conceits are used to make complex comparisons between the natural world and an individual.

■ Multiple comparisons

Multiple comparisons, representations, or associations may combine to affect one another in complex ways. In a conceit the comparisons interact rather than merely accumulate.

■ Against extended metaphor

5.5's extended metaphor persists and expands. A conceit adds **surprise or paradox**: the comparison is unlikely enough that the reader notices the act of comparing.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a conceit in the CED's terms.

[2]

2.2 State what conceits often compare. [2]

2.3 A conceit differs from an ordinary extended metaphor.

(a) State the difference. [2]

(b) State what multiple comparisons may do. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Conceits present images and associations in [1]

- **A** surprising or paradoxical ways
- **B** predictable ways
- **C** alphabetical order
- **D** silence

3.2 Conceits often compare an individual to [1]

- **A** the natural world
- **B** another poem
- **C** the reader
- **D** the poet

3.3 A poem compares two lovers to the legs of a compass for thirty lines.

(a) Name the device. [1]

(b) Explain what makes it more than an extended metaphor. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **8.5 The function of a metaphor** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Poetry III** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 a form of extended metaphor developing complex comparisons that present images, concepts and associations in surprising or paradoxical ways.

2.2 the natural world and an individual.

2.3 (a) a conceit adds surprise or paradox, so the comparison is unlikely enough that the reader notices the act of comparing. (b) they may combine to affect one another in complex ways.

3.1 A. surprising or paradoxical.

3.2 A. the natural world.

3.3 (a) a conceit. (b) the comparison is unlikely rather than natural, so the reader attends to the ingenuity of the comparison as well as to what it transfers.