

8.8 Developing commentary

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to write **sophisticated poetry commentary** 高层次评述.

You must be able to:

- state the three sophisticated moves
- explain what 'broader context' means for a poem
- explain why alternative readings are especially apt in poetry
- avoid claiming sophistication without doing the work

1 Worked examples

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

■ Three moves

Explain the significance or relevance of an interpretation within a broader context, discuss alternative interpretations, or use relevant analogies.

■ Broader context

For a poem this usually means what the interpretation shows about how the poem works, or about a problem the poem shares with others—not biography or period background dropped in for its own sake.

■ Alternative readings

8.3 established that ambiguity allows different readings. Poetry therefore supplies alternatives constantly, and acknowledging one is often the most natural sophistication move available.

■ Not a claim

Writing "this is significant because it reflects the human condition" claims significance without establishing it. The move must actually connect the reading to something outside it.

2 Practice

2.1 State the three sophisticated moves. [3]

2.2 Explain what "broader context" usually means for a poem. [2]

2.3 Sophistication must be done, not claimed.

(a) State the failure mode. [2]

(b) State why alternatives are especially apt in poetry. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Claiming an interpretation "reflects the human condition" [1]

- **A** claims significance without establishing it
- **B** is a strong move
- **C** is required
- **D** is an analogy

3.2 Alternatives are especially available in poetry because of [1]

- **A** ambiguity
- **B** rhyme
- **C** brevity
- **D** metre

3.3 An essay ends by naming a rival reading and saying why its own explains more.

(a) State which move this is. [1]

(b) Explain why it belongs at the end.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **8.8 Developing commentary** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Poetry III** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 explain significance within a broader context; discuss alternative interpretations; use relevant analogies.

2.2 what the interpretation shows about how the poem works, or about a problem it shares with other texts.

2.3 (a) claiming significance without connecting the reading to anything outside it. (b) ambiguity allows different readings, so alternatives are constantly available.

3.1 A. claimed, not established.

3.2 A. ambiguity.

3.3 (a) discussing an alternative interpretation. (b) the essay's own reading must be established first so the comparison has something to weigh the rival against.