

5.2 Literal and figurative meaning

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS multiple meanings 多重含义

Objective

Build the skills to read **multiple meanings** 多重含义.

You must be able to:

- state what words with multiple meanings add
- distinguish a meaning from a connotation
- explain why ambiguity can be an asset
- defend a reading that keeps two senses

1 Worked examples

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

■ The claim

Words with multiple meanings or connotations add nuance or complexity that can contribute to interpretations of a text.

■ Meaning and connotation

A **meaning** is what a word denotes; a **connotation** is what it carries with it. “Slender” and “scrawny” can denote the same thing and connote opposite judgments.

■ Ambiguity as asset

If a word can mean two things and both fit the poem, the poem may be holding both. Choosing one and discarding the other can lose what the line is doing.

■ Defending a double reading

Show that each sense is supported by something in the text, and then say what the poem gains by not resolving between them.

2 Practice

2.1 State what words with multiple meanings add. [2]

2.2 Distinguish a meaning from a connotation. [2]

2.3 Ambiguity can be an asset.

(a) Explain when. [2]

(b) State how a double reading is defended. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A connotation is what a word [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** denotes
 - B** carries with it
 - C** rhymes with
 - D** replaces

3.2 “Slender” and “scrawny” differ mainly in [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** denotation
 - B** connotation
 - C** length
 - D** origin

3.3 A poem's key word can mean two things and both fit.

(a) State what an analysis should do. [1]

(b) Explain why choosing one might lose something. [2]
