

5.9 Developing commentary

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

KEY WORDS commentary on a poem 诗歌评述

Objective

Build the skills to write **commentary on a poem** 诗歌评述.

You must be able to:

- define a line of reasoning
- state how it is communicated
- explain what poetry commentary must do that prose commentary need not
- avoid paraphrase in place of commentary

1 Worked examples

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

■ Line of reasoning

The logical sequence of claims that work together to defend the overarching thesis statement.

■ How communicated

Through commentary that explains the logical relationship between the thesis and the claims and evidence within the body of the essay.

■ Poetry’s extra job

Because a poem’s evidence is a few words, commentary must first establish what the words are doing before it can say what that supports. Prose commentary can often assume the sense of a quoted sentence; poetry commentary usually cannot.

■ Not paraphrase

Restating a line in ordinary words is not commentary. Paraphrase tells the reader what the line says; commentary tells them what it does and why it matters to the claim.

2 Practice

2.1 Define a line of reasoning and state how it is communicated. [2]

2.2 Explain what poetry commentary must do first. [2]

2.3 Paraphrase is not commentary.

(a) State the difference. [2]

(b) State why poetry commentary cannot assume the sense. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Paraphrase tells the reader what the line [1]

A	B
C	D

A says

B does

C proves

D implies about the thesis

3.2 A line of reasoning is a sequence of [1]

A	B
C	D

A claims

B quotations

C paraphrases

D titles

3.3 A student quotes a line and restates it in plain words.

(a) State what is missing. [1]

(b) Explain what should follow the restatement. [2]
