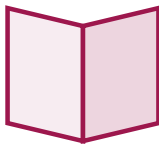


Poetry I

AP English Literature ■ Unit 2

AP English Literature



What we will cover

- 1 What Textual Details Reveal About a Character
- 2 The Function of Structure in a Text
- 3 The Function of Contrasts Within a Text
- 4 The Function of Specific Words and Phrases
- 5 The Function of a Simile
- 6 The Function of a Metaphor

1

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character

Unit 2 is the course's first poetry unit, and it adds two things to Unit 1's toolkit: **structure** as an object of analysis, and **figurative language** 比喻性语言 handled precisely rather than by name-dropping.

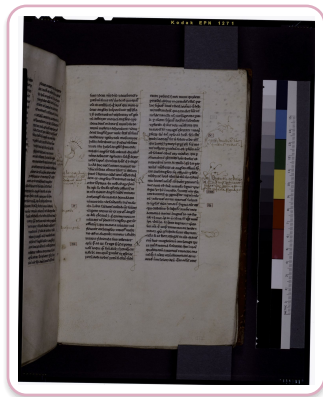
One addition on character first: **characters reveal their perspectives and biases** 视角与偏见 through **the words they use, the details they provide, and the details they omit** 略去的细节.

2

The Function of Structure in a Text

The Function of Structure in a Text

- **Line and stanza breaks** 行与诗节的断开 contribute to the development and relationship of ideas in a poem.
- **The arrangement of lines and stanzas** contributes to that development.
- A text's structure **affects readers' reactions and expectations** by presenting the relationships among ideas.



a page with its own marginal commentary

Structure, by what it does to a reader

Original teaching poem — not an exam extract

Memory is a house.

I polish the key each morning,
but pass the locked rooms
without a sound.

At dusk I leave the door ajar.

Structure, by what it does to a reader, in detail

THE CHOICE	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO LOOK
a break — stanza, chapter, section	can separate stages or ideas; test the syntax	the line either side of the gap
a turn	can change how an earlier section is read	a conjunction, a shift of tense or address
a frame — a story inside a story	puts a teller between you and the events	the return to the outer voice
repetition with a difference	makes the difference the meaning	the second and third occurrences

A text's structure **affects readers' reactions and expectations** by presenting the relationships among ideas.

3

The Function of Contrasts Within a Text

The Function of Contrasts Within a Text

Detail	Interpretation and limit
"each morning	Repeated polishing suggests continuing attachment to memory.
"but	The conjunction shifts from maintaining access to passing the rooms without entering.
"At dusk / "ajar	A new time and partial opening complicate the avoidance. The ending suggests possibility, not completed recovery.

Four places contrast lives

BETWEEN CHARACTERS — a foil,
showing what the other is by not being it

INSIDE ONE CHARACTER —
what they say against what they do

BETWEEN SETTING AND FEELING
— a cheerful room and a grief in it

BETWEEN PARTS OF THE TEXT
— a scene that answers an earlier one

Four places to look, not one. The contrast **inside** a character is usually the one that carries a complexity question

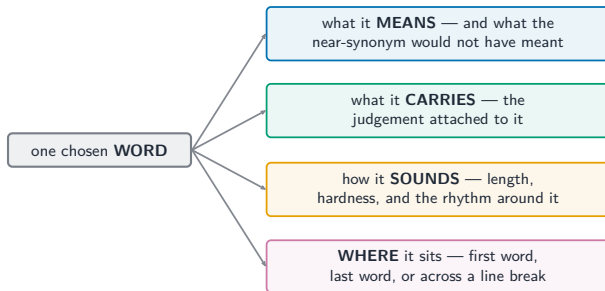
4

The Function of Specific Words and Phrases

The Function of Specific Words and Phrases

- 1 **Actual word** “Locked suggests restricted access; “ajar suggests a partial opening. Compare them in this poem.
- 2 **Sound** Alliteration repeats initial sounds. A term alone does not establish its effect; identify the words and their context.
- 3 **Reference** An antecedent is an earlier word, phrase or clause. For an ambiguous pronoun, test both plausible antecedents against context.
- 4 **Omission** The poem does not name a past event. Do not invent one; explain the attitude supported by the words present.

One word, four jobs



“Locked” suggests restricted access.

Association: memory can be kept at a distance.

Position: the next line completes what the speaker does near the rooms.

Support any sound effect with the actual words.

5

The Function of a Simile

The transfer only runs one way

Practice sentence — a simile

“My memory is like a house with rooms I avoid.

- 1 **Main subject** Memory: the thing being described.
- 2 **Comparison subject** A house: the source of the transferred qualities.
- 3 **Transferred quality** The added rooms and avoidance suggest restricted access to the past. “Like alone does not supply that interpretation.

The transfer only runs one way, in detail

Simile and metaphor have the same parts



WHICH quality? The text decides - not the dictionary.

shelter? · confinement? · something one must live inside?
the practice poem has "locked rooms" - so: restricted access

Build the interpretation: main subject + comparison
subject + the quality transferred.

A **simile** 明喻 likens two different things with **like** or **as**, to transfer the qualities of one onto the other.

The Function of a Simile

Your turn — compare the wording

Compare “My memory is like a house with rooms I avoid with “My memory is like a house whose windows welcome the sun. Name the two subjects, then explain how the surrounding words change the transferred quality.

6

The Function of a Metaphor

The Function of a Metaphor

- 1 **Identify** “Memory is a house states the comparison without “like or “as.
- 2 **Use context** The key is polished, the rooms are locked, and the door is later left ajar.
- 3 **Interpret** The speaker maintains a connection to the past while avoiding full entry, then permits a tentative opening.
- 4 **Limit** Do not automatically transfer warmth, safety or every other association of a house.

Metaphor: the limits of the transfer

Detail	Interpretation and limit
Supported	"Polish the key each morning: ongoing attention or attachment.
Supported	"Locked rooms and passing silently: restricted access and avoidance.
Qualified	"Door ajar: a tentative possibility of renewed access.
Unsupported	The poem does not identify a particular bereavement or prove complete emotional recovery.

7

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

- 1 **Claim** The speaker combines attachment to the past with avoidance.
- 2 **Evidence together** Use the daily polishing of the key and the contrasting “but before locked rooms.
- 3 **Commentary** Maintaining the key preserves a connection, while passing the rooms resists fuller contact.
- 4 **Complication** The final partial opening changes the attitude without resolving every difficulty.

Worked example – reading a comparison

Model paragraph on the original practice poem

The house metaphor presents memory as a place the speaker maintains but hesitates to revisit. Polishing the key “each morning suggests continuing attachment, yet “but turns towards passing “locked rooms in silence. The final door left “ajar complicates that avoidance: it permits a tentative opening without claiming a full return. The comparison therefore develops through the poem, rather than carrying one fixed meaning.

Exam tips

- Interpret a meaningful omission only where the surrounding text supports the inference.
- Find the shift first. A *but*, a stanza break, a change of tense – the poem divides there.
- Test line endings in context. Connect the chosen words with syntax and emphasis.
- Test each plausible reading of an ambiguous referent against the wording.
- Always name main subject and comparison subject, then the quality transferred. That quality is the claim.
- Context decides which quality a metaphor imports. Do not list every association the word has.

8

Recap

Unit 2 – key takeaways

1

Omit

support an omission from context

2

Shift

find it first – but, stanza break,
tense

3

Line endings

test the words against syntax and
emphasis

4

Metaphor

main subject, comparison subject,
quality transferred

Retrieval practice

- 1 Which words establish attachment and avoidance in the practice poem?
- 2 How does “but” change the relationship between the ideas?
- 3 What can the final door “ajar” suggest, and what does it not establish?
- 4 Name the main subject, comparison subject and transferred quality.

Write your answers before advancing.

Check your reasoning

- 1 Polishing the key suggests attachment; passing locked rooms suggests avoidance.
- 2 “But” turns from maintaining a connection towards resisting entry.
- 3 “Ajar” suggests a tentative opening; it does not prove complete recovery.
- 4 Main subject: memory. Comparison: a house. Context transfers restricted access and maintained attachment.

Check yourself

- 1 Use the practice poem to explain how a comparison develops across several lines.
- 2 Which detail makes the ending tentative?
- 3 How would a different word in place of “ajar” change your interpretation?