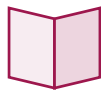


Poetry II

AP English Literature • Unit 5

AP English Literature



Poetry II

What we will cover

- 1 The Function of Structure in a Text
- 2 Literal and Figurative Meaning
- 3 The Function of Specific Words and Phrases
- 4 The Function of an Image or Imagery
- 5 The Function of a Metaphor
- 6 The Function of Personification

1

The Function of Structure in a Text

Poetry II

↳ The Function of Structure in a Text

The Function of Structure in a Text

Unit 5 is the second poetry unit, and it does two things: it names the **forms** a poem can take, and it completes the figurative toolkit.

- **Closed forms** 格律诗体 include **predictable patterns** in lines, stanzas, metre, and rhyme.
- **Open forms** 自由诗体 may not follow expected or predictable patterns.
- Structures combine in texts to emphasise certain ideas.

Poetry II

↳ The Function of Structure in a Text

The Function of Structure in a Text, continued

The examinable question is never "which form is this?" but **what the form does**. In a closed form, the interesting moment is the departure – the line that runs long, the rhyme that fails to arrive.

In an open form, the interesting moment is the imposition – the sudden regularity in a poem that has refused it.

2

Literal and Figurative Meaning

Literal and Figurative Meaning

In poetry, a word that could mean two things frequently means both. Resist choosing.

3

The Function of Specific Words and Phrases

The Function of Specific Words and Phrases

Understatement is the more powerful of the pair and the more often missed by second-language readers. A poem that describes a catastrophe as *inconvenient* is not being calm; the gap between the event and the word is the poem's whole comment on it.

- Descriptive words qualify or modify what they describe and affect how the reader perceives it.
- **Hyperbole** 夸张 exaggerates while **understatement** 低调陈述 minimises. Exaggerating or minimising an aspect of a thing has an effect on how it is understood.

4

The Function of an Image or Imagery

Sorted by what each device does

	What it is	What it DOES to the reader
Hyperbole	exaggerates	the gap between the thing and the word is the speaker's judgement of it
Understatement	minimises	calling a catastrophe "inconvenient" is not calm - it's contempt
Imagery	a PATTERN of sensory images	a claim the poem makes without ever stating it
Extended metaphor	one comparison, sustained	if its terms CHANGE as it runs, that change is the argument
Personification	gives a human trait to a nonhuman thing	ask what granting it agency does - a word that DECIDES to a claim
Allusion	imports meaning the poem never states	efficient, and only it works only for readers who recognise it

One device traced through a poem beats four devices named. The right-hand column is the half that scores.

- Descriptive words **contribute to sensory imagery** 感官意象.
- An **image** can be **literal**, or a form of comparison representing something through another thing.
- A **collection of images - imagery** - may **emphasise ideas** in parts of, or throughout, a text.

The Function of an Image or Imagery

The plural matters. A single image is a detail; a *pattern* of images running through a poem is a claim the poem is making without stating it.

- Descriptive words **contribute to sensory imagery** 感官意象.
- An **image** can be **literal**, or a form of comparison representing something through another thing.
- A **collection of images - imagery** - may **emphasise ideas** in parts of, or throughout, a text.

Image, or symbol?

does the text **return** to it, and give it weight it does not need?

YES — treat it as a **SYMBOL**

the repetition is the text asking
you to read it as more than itself

NO — it is an **IMAGE**

which is not a lesser thing — an image
works on the senses, and once is enough

A symbol is made by the **text**, not by the reader. If it appears once and carries
its own weight, calling it a symbol is a claim you cannot evidence

5

The Function of a Metaphor

The Function of a Metaphor

An extended metaphor is the most rewarding thing to find in an unseen poem, because
it gives you structure and meaning at once: you can trace how the comparison
develops, and a comparison that *changes* as it extends is the poem's argument in
motion.

- Metaphorical comparisons **do not focus solely on the objects compared**; they focus
on the **particular qualities** the comparison brings out.
- Comparisons communicate **literal meaning** and may also convey **figurative
meaning**.
- An **extended metaphor** 延伸隐喻 is created when the comparison of a main
subject and comparison subject **persists across a passage or a whole text**.
- Interpretation of an extended metaphor **may depend on the context of its use**.

6

The Function of Personification

The Function of Personification

Treat it as a comparison with the same parts
as any other: the main subject is the
nonhuman thing, the comparison subject is a
person, and the transferred quality is the
human trait.

Then ask the useful question —
**what does granting this thing
agency do?** A wind that *de-
cides* is not the same claim as
a wind that blows.

What personification is for

WHAT IT DOES	HOW IT DOES IT	WHAT TO SAY ABOUT IT
gives a thing INTENTION	it now acts, rather than merely happening	who or what is being blamed
makes a setting FEEL	the landscape carries the mood a character withholds	whose feeling this actually is
makes an abstraction ACT	time, death or fear becomes something you could meet	what the abstraction is made to want
sets the scale	a small thing given a will can dominate a passage	what has been made large, and what small

Treat it as a comparison with the
same parts as any other: the main
subject is the nonhuman thing, the
comparison subject is a person, and
the transferred quality is the human
trait.

Then ask the useful question
- **what does granting this
thing agency do?** A wind
that *decides* is not the same
claim as a wind that blows.

7

The Function of an Allusion

Poetry II
└ The Function of an Allusion

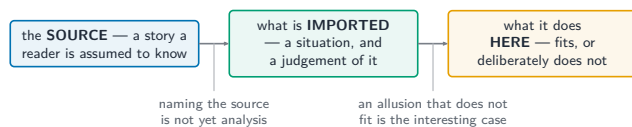
The Function of an Allusion

An allusion imports meaning the poem has not written. That is its efficiency and its risk: it works only for readers who recognise it.

When you meet one you do not know, say what the poem does with it structurally – where it is placed, what it interrupts – rather than pretending to a recognition you lack.

Poetry II
└ The Function of an Allusion

What an allusion imports, and costs



An allusion also **costs** something: it only works on a reader who knows the source, and choosing it says who the text expects to be read by

8

Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Poetry II
└ Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Unchanged: an **interpretation** requiring textual defence, which **may** preview the line of reasoning.

9

Developing Commentary

Developing Commentary

A **line of reasoning** is the logical sequence of claims defending the thesis, communicated through **commentary** explaining the relationship between evidence and claim.

10 Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

Evidence used **strategically**, **effective** with commentary, **sufficient** in quantity and quality, and interpretation as a **recursive** process.

11 Control Over the Elements of Composition

Exam tips

- Never ask "which form is this?" Ask **what the form does** – and look for the departure or the imposition.
- A word with **two meanings often means both**. Do not choose prematurely.
- **Understatement** is the more powerful half of the pair, and the more often missed. The gap is the comment.
- A **pattern of images** is a claim the poem makes without stating it. A single image is only a detail.
- An **extended metaphor** that changes as it extends is the poem's argument in motion. Trace it.
- Cataloguing devices earns nothing. **One device traced** beats four devices named.