

5.5 Word choice, comparisons, and syntax

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks**KEY WORDS** syntax 句法 • diction 用词 • parallel structure 平行结构 • repetition 重复 • style 文体

Objective

Build the skills to analyse **diction** 用词, **comparison** and **syntax** 句法.

You must be able to:

- describe the connotation of a word choice, not only its meaning
- explain what a metaphor or analogy asks the reader to accept
- describe a syntactic pattern and its effect
- link any of these to purpose

1 Worked examples

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

■ Connotation

“Firm” and “stubborn” describe the same behaviour and evaluate it oppositely. Naming the connotation, and what it does for the writer’s purpose, is the analysis; naming the word is not.

■ What a comparison claims

Every metaphor imports a structure. Calling a debate a “battle” makes opponents enemies and compromise a defeat. Ask what the comparison licenses the reader to think.

■ Syntax

Short sentences after long ones create emphasis. A long periodic sentence that delays its main verb builds suspense. Repetition of a structure — parallelism — makes items feel equivalent and complete.

2 Practice

2.1 State the difference between a word’s meaning and its connotation. [2]

2.2 Explain what calling a debate a “battle” asks the reader to accept. [2]

2.3 A paragraph of long sentences ends with a three-word sentence.

(a) State the effect. [1]

(b) State how you would link it to purpose. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Choosing “stubborn” rather than “firm” mainly changes [1]

- **A** the denotation
- **B** the evaluation carried by the word
- **C** the sentence length
- **D** the audience

3.2 Parallel structure across three clauses tends to make the items feel [1]

- **A** unrelated
- **B** equivalent and complete
- **C** contradictory
- **D** hypothetical

3.3 A writer describes a policy as “a lifeline”.

(a) State what the metaphor imports. [1]

(b) Explain what it forecloses.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 meaning is what the word refers to; connotation is the evaluation or association it carries.

2.2 that the parties are enemies rather than participants, and that compromise would be a defeat rather than an outcome.

2.3 (a) emphasis — the short sentence lands hard after the long ones. (b) state what is emphasised and why the writer wants that point to land.

3.1 B. the denotation is the same; the evaluation is not.

3.2 B. parallelism suggests equivalence and closure.

3.3 (a) rescue from drowning — urgency and the absence of alternatives. (b) it forecloses debate about whether the policy is the right remedy, since refusing a lifeline is not a position anyone can defend.