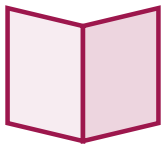


Poetry II

AP English Literature ■ Unit 5

AP English Literature



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



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

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.



Literal and Figurative Meaning

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



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** exaggerates while **understatement** minimises. Exaggerating or minimising an aspect of a thing has an effect on how it is understood.



Sorted by what each device does

- Descriptive words **contribute to sensory imagery** .
- 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.

Sorted by what each device does, in detail

	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 is comment
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	grants a human trait to a nonhuman thing	ask what granting it agency does - a wind that DECIDES is a claim
Allusion	imports meaning the poem never wrote	efficient, and risky: 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.

An **image** can be **literal**, or a form of comparison representing something through another thing.

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.

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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



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** 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**.



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

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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.

What personification is for, in detail

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

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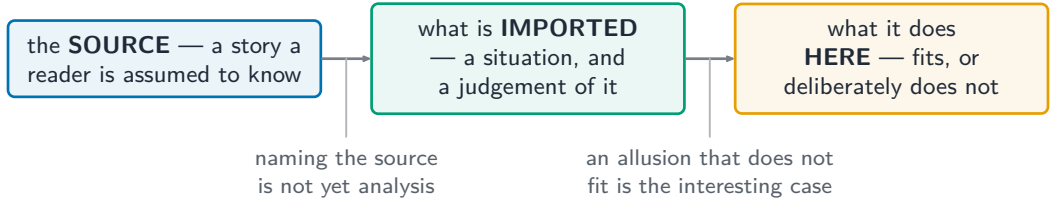


The Function of an Allusion

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.

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

Allusion, and the transitions that hold an essay together

allusions	may reference literary works including myths and sacred texts , other works of art, and historical events
what an allusion does	imports the associations of its source, compressed into a phrase
the reader's part	it works only where the reader recognises it – so it also defines an audience
transitional elements	words, phrases, clauses, sentences <i>or whole paragraphs</i> that assist in creating coherence
the range	a single connective at one end, a linking paragraph at the other
what they signal	the <i>relation</i> between ideas – addition, contrast, consequence, concession

An allusion is evidence, not decoration. Say what the source **brings with it** into this text, or you have only spotted it.



Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

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



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.



Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

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

Worked example – one device, traced

A poetry-analysis prompt asks how figurative language conveys the speaker's attitude.

- **Weak:** *"The poet uses personification, imagery, and a metaphor."*
- **Scoring:** *"The extended comparison of the tide to a creditor runs the length of the poem, but the terms change: in the first stanza it 'asks', by the third it 'takes what was always owed' – so the attitude is not fear of loss but the recognition that the loss was never hers to prevent."*

A catalogue of devices earns nothing. One device *developing* across the poem is the whole answer.



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.



Unit 5 – key takeaways

1

Form

ask what it does, and look for the departure

2

Two meanings

a word often means both

3

Understatement

the more powerful, more often missed half

4

Image pattern

a claim the poem makes without stating it

Check yourself

- 1 Never ask which form – ask what?
- 2 What should you do with two meanings?
- 3 Which half of hyperbole/understatement is missed?
- 4 What is a pattern of images?

Answers: what the form does ▪ keep both ▪ understatement ▪ an unstated claim