

Exercise walk-through

The function of specific words and phrases ■ 5.3

eXercise

You must be able to

- state what descriptive words do to a reader's interaction
- define hyperbole and understatement
- state what exaggerating or minimising does
- explain why understatement can be stronger than exaggeration

Method — Descriptive words

Adjectives and adverbs qualify or modify the things they describe and affect readers' interaction with the text.

Method — Two devices

Hyperbole exaggerates while understatement minimises. They are opposite operations on the same scale.

Method — What both do

Exaggerating or minimising an aspect of an object focuses attention on that trait and conveys a perspective about the object. The same two effects from opposite means.

Method — Why understatement can be stronger

Saying less than the case invites the reader to supply the rest, and what a reader supplies is felt more sharply than what they are told. “It was not a good year” after a death does more than an outburst.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

Define hyperbole and understatement.

Solution 2.1

Method: Two devices

Worked steps

hyperbole exaggerates **B1**; understatement minimises **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the two effects that both produce.

Solution 2.2

Method: What both do

Worked steps

they focus attention on the trait **B1** and convey a perspective about the object **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Understatement can be stronger.

(a) Explain why.

(b) State what adjectives and adverbs do to a reader.

Solution 2.3

Method: Why understatement can be stronger

Worked steps

(a) saying less invites the reader to supply the rest **B1**, and what a reader supplies is felt more sharply than what they are told **B1**. (b) they qualify or modify what they describe and affect the reader's interaction with the text **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Hyperbole and understatement are

- A** the same operation
- B** opposite operations on the same scale
- C** unrelated
- D** forms of rhyme

Solution 3.1

Method: Two devices

- A the same operation
- B opposite operations on the same scale 
- C unrelated
- D forms of rhyme

Worked steps

B. opposite operations.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Both focus attention on a trait and convey

A a perspective about the object

B the date

C the genre

D the metre

Solution 3.2

Method: What both do

A a perspective about the object



B the date

C the genre

D the metre

Worked steps

A. a perspective about the object.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A speaker calls a catastrophe “a bit of trouble”.

- (a) Name the device.
- (b) Explain the effect on the reader.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) understatement **B1**. (b) the reader measures the gap between the words and the event **B1**, and the effort of supplying it makes the catastrophe more present than a direct statement would **B1**.