

Exercise walk-through

The function of a simile ■ 7.10

eXercise

You must be able to

- state what a simile's function relies on
- explain why the choice of comparison subject matters
- compare two similes for the same main subject
- analyse a simile by its selection

Method — The claim

The function of a simile relies on the selection of the objects being compared as well as the traits of the objects. Selection is added here to unit 2's account.

Method — Why choice matters

A face like marble and a face like paper both mean pale, and they mean nothing else in common. The writer chose one, and the discarded alternatives are the measure of what the chosen one does.

Method — Comparing similes

Test a simile by substituting another comparison subject with the same core trait.
What changes is what the original was for.

Method — Analysing by selection

“The comparison could have been X; it is Y instead, which adds Z.” That sentence is an analysis of selection, and it is more precise than naming the shared trait alone.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State what a simile's function relies on.

Solution 2.1

Method: The claim

Worked steps

the selection of the objects being compared **B1** as well as the traits of the objects **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain why the choice of comparison subject matters.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

two comparison subjects can share the core trait and differ in everything else **B1**, so the discarded alternatives measure what the chosen one does **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

A simile can be tested by substitution.

- (a) State the method.
- (b) Give the form of an analysis of selection.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) substitute another comparison subject with the same core trait and see what changes **B2**. (b) “the comparison could have been X; it is Y instead, which adds Z” **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

A simile's function relies on selection of the objects and

A the traits of the objects

B the page number

C the poem's date

D the reader's age

Solution 3.1

Method: The claim

A the traits of the objects



B the page number

C the poem's date

D the reader's age

Worked steps

A. the traits.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

“Like marble” and “like paper” share

A paleness and little else

B everything

C nothing

D their sound

Solution 3.2

Method: Why choice matters

A paleness and little else



B everything

C nothing

D their sound

Worked steps

A. paleness and little else.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A writer describes grief as “like a debt”.

- (a) State the trait transferred.
- (b) Explain what “like a wound” would have done instead.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) something owed that must eventually be paid **B1**. (b) a wound would make grief an injury that heals with time **B1**, where a debt makes it an obligation that persists until discharged **B1**.