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Figurative Language (FIG) — Skills 5.A–5.D and 6.A–6.D

A complete study guide to the Figurative Language big idea in AP English Literature and Composition: word choice, imagery, symbol (Skill Category 5) and simile, metaphor, personification, allusion (Skill Category 6). Both categories share one enduring understanding, so this guide treats them together. Work through the concepts and the five worked readings, then complete the practice set. Keys are at the end.

Why Figurative Language Matters on This Exam

Skill Category 5 (word choice, imagery, symbols) accounts for 10–13% of multiple-choice questions, and Skill Category 6 (comparison) accounts for another 10–13%. Together that is about 11–14 of the 55 questions. Both categories belong to the same big idea, FIG. Poetry passages in particular are packed with figures, and in prose the most common stems ask what a single word or image *does*. On the free-response section, figurative language is the evidence you will quote most often. Chief Reader Reports for 2025 describe a recurring error: students “named” decay imagery without examining specific word choice, and noticed punctuation without saying what it reveals.

The Enduring Understanding

FIG-1 (official, paraphrased): Comparisons, representations, and associations shift meaning from the literal to the figurative and invite readers to interpret a text.

In plain English: Writers often mean more than they literally say. A rose can be a rose and a woman, a worm can be an insect and a destroyer. Figurative language is the toolkit for saying one thing and meaning another, and it is the reader's job to decode the second meaning. When you analyze a figure, you are always answering three questions: *What is being compared (or represented)? What qualities carry over? Why does that comparison matter here?*

The Eight Skills, Translated

SKILL	OFFICIAL WORDING (PARAPHRASED)	PLAIN ENGLISH	UNITS EMPHASIZED
5.A	Distinguish between the literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases.	Decide when words mean what they say and when they mean something else.	5
5.B	Explain the function of specific words and phrases in a text.	Say what a particular word choice contributes.	2, 5, 8
5.C	Identify and explain the function of a symbol.	Find a concrete thing that stands for an idea and explain what it adds.	6, 7, 8
5.D	Identify and explain the function of an image or imagery.	Find sensory language and explain what it makes you feel or understand.	5, 7
6.A	Identify and explain the function of a simile.	Spot a comparison with <i>like/as</i> and explain why it fits.	2, 7
6.B	Identify and explain the function of a metaphor.	Spot a comparison without <i>like/as</i> and explain the transfer of qualities.	2, 5, 6, 8
6.C	Identify and explain the function of personification.	Spot human qualities given to non-human things and explain the effect.	5, 7
6.D	Identify and explain the function of an allusion.	Spot a reference to another work, myth, or event and explain what it brings in.	5, 8

The verb that unites all eight is **explain the function**. Naming a simile earns almost nothing. Explaining what the simile makes the reader see, and why that matters to the speaker's or narrator's meaning, is the skill.

Key Concepts and Definitions

Literal and Figurative

TERM	DEFINITION
Literal meaning	The dictionary meaning; the words mean exactly what they say.
Figurative meaning	Meaning beyond the literal, created by comparison or association.

TERM	DEFINITION
Denotation	The dictionary definition of a word.
Connotation	The emotional and cultural associations a word carries.

Connotation is the heart of Skill 5.B. “Thin,” “slender,” and “gaunt” share a denotation but differ in connotation: slender is admiring, gaunt is ominous.

Diction

Diction is word choice. When you analyze diction, examine:

1. **Connotation** (what feelings the word carries).
2. **Register** (formal, colloquial, archaic, technical).
3. **Specificity** (a *maple* versus a *tree*).
4. **Sound** (harsh or smooth).
5. **Patterns** (a cluster of words from the same field, such as legal or religious or military words).

Words that are repeated, unexpected, or strangely precise are the best candidates for analysis.

Imagery

Imagery is language that appeals to the senses.

SENSE	NAME
Sight	Visual
Hearing	Auditory
Touch	Tactile
Smell	Olfactory
Taste	Gustatory
Movement/body	Kinesthetic

Do not stop at labeling. Ask: what does this imagery make me *feel*, what does it *associate* with, and how does it change across the text (a pattern of images moving from warm to cold, from bright to dim, from natural to mechanical)?

Symbol and Motif

A **symbol** is a concrete thing (an object, person, place, or action) that stands for something beyond itself, usually an abstract idea. A **motif** is a recurring element (image, object, phrase) that accumulates meaning across a work. An image becomes a symbol when it repeatedly carries a meaning beyond its literal one.

Symbol warnings: a symbol must be supported by textual context, not by what you have been told “usually” symbolizes. A white flower does not always mean purity. Use the *work’s own* system.

The Comparison Family

FIGURE	DEFINITION	SIGNAL	EXAMPLE
Simile	Explicit comparison using <i>like, as, as if, than</i>	Comparison word	"My Luve is like a red, red rose"
Metaphor	Implicit comparison stating one thing <i>is</i> another	"is," or the figure is built into a verb or noun	"Hope is the thing with feathers"
Extended metaphor	A metaphor sustained across several lines or the whole work	Repeated vocabulary from the same field	A poem about love that is entirely about a ship
Conceit	An elaborate, often surprising extended comparison	Intellectual ingenuity	Donne's compass
Personification	Giving human qualities to non-human things or abstractions	Human verbs/adjectives on non-humans	"Death... kindly stopped for me"
Allusion	Reference to another text, myth, person, or event	A name or phrase from elsewhere	"I am not Prince Hamlet"
Apostrophe	Direct address to an absent person, abstraction, or object	"O," a name, then a command or question	"O Rose, thou art sick"

A comparison has two parts. The **tenor** (or subject) is what is being described; the **vehicle** is what it is compared to. In "my Luve is like a red, red rose," the tenor is the beloved, the vehicle is the rose. When you analyze, say which qualities of the vehicle *transfer*, and which do not. Strong analysis can also explain what the comparison leaves out.

Other Figures You Will See

- **Hyperbole** (exaggeration), **understatement/litotes**, **oxymoron** (contradictory pair, "sweet unrest"), **paradox**, **metonymy** (substituting an associated term, "the crown"), **synecdoche** (part for whole, "hands" for workers), **synesthesia** (blending senses).

Worked Close Reading 1: Literal versus Figurative, and Word Choice (Skills 5.A, 5.B)

Robert Frost, "Fire and Ice" (1920, public domain):

Some say the world will end in fire, Some say in ice. From what I've tasted of desire I hold with those who favor fire. But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate To say that for destruction ice Is also great And would suffice.

Step 1 — Distinguish literal and figurative (5.A). The literal question is how the physical world will end, a debate between scientific or religious accounts of fire and cold. But the speaker quickly crosses to the figurative: “desire” is fire and “hate” is ice. The word “tasted” is a clue: no one tastes the end of the world, but one can taste desire. The metaphor appears by implication; the speaker does not announce it. At the turn in line 4, the poem has become an argument about human emotion.

Step 2 — Examine word choice (5.B). - “tasted”: a gustatory verb for emotional experience. It makes desire something consumed, with a hint of appetite and of the Fall (tasting forbidden fruit). - “favor”: a mild, courteous verb used for something catastrophic. The social register of “favor” is understatement. - “perish”: biological and moral death; chosen over “end” or “stop.” - “great” and “suffice”: the final lines use calmly evaluative language (“is also great,” “would suffice”) about annihilation. The words come from the vocabulary of approval and sufficiency, not terror.

Step 3 — The function. The speaker’s deadpan, conversational diction, “I hold with,” “I think I know enough,” makes apocalypse sound like a debating point. That mismatch between the scale of the subject and the casualness of the words creates the poem’s chill. The reader hears someone who has experienced both hatred and desire and who can estimate, from experience, their destructive power.

A model commentary sentence: Frost’s verb “tasted” slides the poem from physics to appetite, and his deadpan closing words, “great” and “suffice,” evaluate annihilation in the vocabulary of a polite verdict, so that the speaker’s calm becomes the evidence that he has lived long enough with both desire and hatred to be unafraid of the comparison.

Worked Close Reading 2: Simile and Metaphor (Skills 6.A, 6.B)

Robert Burns, “A Red, Red Rose” (1794, public domain), first stanza:

O my Luve is like a red, red rose That’s newly sprung in June; O my Luve is like the melodie That’s sweetly play’d in tune.

Simile (6.A). There are two parallel similes in the stanza: the beloved is like a rose, and like a melody. Each vehicle brings different qualities.

VEHICLE	QUALITIES THAT TRANSFER	QUALITIES THAT DO NOT
A red, red rose “newly sprung in June”	Beauty, color, freshness, early bloom, fragility	Thorns, decay (not mentioned, though the reader may feel them)
A melody “sweetly play’d in tune”	Harmony, pleasure, an experience in time	Visual beauty; permanence

Function. The two similes do different work: the rose is a thing seen and fresh; the melody is a thing heard and sustained. Together they make the beloved both a presence and a harmony. The repetition of “red, red” intensifies the color, and “newly sprung” insists on freshness, which matters because the later stanzas promise that this love will last “till a’ the seas gang dry,” a claim that gains force because the first image is the most perishable of things. The tension between the *fragile* vehicle and the *eternal* promise is where the poem’s complexity lives.

Metaphor (6.B). Emily Dickinson, “Hope is the thing with feathers” (published 1891, public domain), opens:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers — That perches in the soul — And sings the tune without the words —
And never stops — at all —

The sentence states an identity: Hope *is* a bird. The metaphor is extended across the stanza by verbs belonging to birds ("perches," "sings"). Notice what the metaphor chooses: not a powerful bird but "the thing with feathers," which is vague and small. Hope is something that comes to rest on the soul, lightly, and it sings "without the words," meaning it communicates without argument or explanation. "And never stops — at all —" slows with dashes, so the persistence is dramatized by the line's own stubborn pauses.

A model commentary sentence: Dickinson never names the bird, calling it only "the thing with feathers," so that hope appears less as a heroic force than as a small, unexplained presence that perches rather than conquers, and the dashes in "never stops — at all —" make its persistence audible as a series of refusals to end.

Worked Close Reading 3: Personification (Skill 6.C)

Emily Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death" (published 1890, public domain), opening stanza:

Because I could not stop for Death — He kindly stopped for me — The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
And Immortality.

Identify (6.C). Death is a "He" who "kindly stopped" and drove a carriage. A human quality (courtesy) and a human action (driving a suitor's carriage) are given to an abstraction.

Function. The personification changes death from a terror into a suitor. The word "kindly" is the key: courtesy is a social virtue, and the speaker uses it to describe an event she did not choose ("I could not stop"). The speaker's busyness ("I could not stop") is contrasted with Death's politeness, which implies that the speaker's life was a hurry and Death's arrival is a gentle interruption. "Immortality" shares the carriage, a second personified or abstract passenger, so that the carriage is a small chaperoned social space. The effect is eerie composure: the reader recognizes that the speaker's calm is part of the poem's argument about how a person can accept the unacceptable by treating it as manners.

Why this matters on the exam. A common MCQ stem asks, "The personification in line 2 primarily serves to..." and the correct answer will describe the *effect on the reader's understanding of death* (gentle, courteous, familiar) rather than the label.

Worked Close Reading 4: Imagery and Symbol (Skills 5.C, 5.D)

William Blake, "The Sick Rose" (1794, public domain):

O Rose thou art sick! The invisible worm, That flies in the night In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed Of crimson joy: And his dark secret love Does thy life destroy.

Imagery (5.D). - *Visual*: "crimson," "invisible" (an image of absence), "night." - *Auditory*: "howling storm." - *Tactile/domestic*: "bed," which suggests both a flower bed and a bed of intimacy. - *Kinesthetic*: "flies," a surprising verb for a worm.

The imagery moves from the rose (color, life) to the worm (darkness, secrecy) and ends with “destroy.” The sensory field shifts from bright to dark within eight lines. Notice that the image of the worm that “flies” is deliberately impossible: Blake combines the crawling and the flying to produce something nightmarish.

Symbol (5.C). The poem is an extended case where concrete things carry abstract meaning, but the poem does not tell us exactly what. The rose can be read as beauty, innocence, a woman, or the English nation; the worm as corruption, disease, destructive desire, or secret sin. The connotative field supports a reading in which “crimson joy” (passion and pleasure) is invaded by “dark secret love” (a hidden, destructive attachment). The phrase “dark secret love” sets love against secrecy, so the symbol system suggests that a hidden love can destroy the life it feeds on.

Function. Blake withholds the key to the symbols, which forces the reader to consider multiple meanings and to notice that the poem has no explanation beyond its images. In an exam essay, this means you can offer a defensible reading *and* acknowledge the ambiguity, which is one route to the sophistication point (accounting for alternative interpretations).

A model commentary sentence: Blake builds the worm out of contradictory attributes, invisible yet flying, “dark” yet loving, so that the symbol refuses to settle into a single allegory and the reader is forced to feel the rose’s destruction as an intimacy rather than an attack.

Worked Close Reading 5: Allusion (Skill 6.D)

T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915, public domain), lines near the end of the poem:

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; Am an attendant lord, one that will do To swell a progress, start a scene or two, Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool...

Identify (6.D). The speaker alludes to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, naming Prince Hamlet and then identifying with minor figures (an “attendant lord,” an advisor like Polonius).

What the allusion brings in. Hamlet is the archetype of the thinker who cannot act. By saying “I am not Prince Hamlet,” Prufrock claims not to be even that grand a figure of indecision. He positions himself among the minor characters who “swell a progress,” meaning they pad a royal procession. The allusion thus carries a cultural memory of paralysis and then deflates it: Prufrock’s problem is not tragedy but insignificance.

Function. The allusion allows Prufrock to measure himself against a literary standard and find himself small. It also provides a way for the poem to be self-aware: the speaker knows the model of the paralyzed hero and uses it to mock himself. The key to analyzing any allusion is a three-step habit: (1) What is the source? (2) What does the source usually stand for? (3) How does the speaker use, twist, or reject that meaning here?

A model commentary sentence: By denying that he is Hamlet and then settling for the role of a courtier who “swell[s] a progress,” Prufrock invokes the great figure of paralysis only to demote himself from tragedy to stage furniture, converting the allusion into a self-diagnosis.

How Figurative Language Shows Up on the Multiple-Choice Section

Stems for Skill Categories 5 and 6:

- “In context, ‘X’ (line 14) most nearly means...”

- "The word 'X' in line 5 is used figuratively to suggest..."
- "The imagery in lines 20–24 primarily appeals to the sense of ___ in order to..."
- "The repetition of 'X' emphasizes..."
- "The X in the poem functions as a symbol of..."
- "The simile in line 8 compares X to Y in order to emphasize..."
- "The extended metaphor of lines 1–10 presents X as..."
- "The personification in line 12 has the effect of..."
- "The allusion to X (line 17) serves to..."

Common traps: **naming the device correctly but misstating the function**; **literal reading of a figurative phrase** (and the reverse); **picking the familiar meaning of a word** when context demands a less common one; and **overreaching symbolism** (a leap from "storm" to "the fall of civilization" with no textual support).

Sample Questions

1. In "Fire and Ice," the verb "tasted" (line 3) is used to suggest that the speaker

- A. has literally sampled a substance that causes destruction
- B. has experienced desire intimately enough to judge its power
- C. regards desire as a form of nourishment
- D. is uncertain about which of the two forces is stronger

Key: B. "Tasted" is figurative: the speaker has direct experience. (A) takes the verb literally. (C) over-reads the metaphor. (D) is contradicted by "I hold with those who favor fire."

2. The two similes in the first stanza of "A Red, Red Rose" together serve to present the beloved as

- A. distant and difficult to know
- B. both a fresh presence and a harmonious experience
- C. delicate and likely to fade
- D. a being who combines sorrow and joy

Key: B. The rose is vivid and newly sprung; the melody is sweetly in tune. (C) draws on the rose's fragility, a quality the poem does not emphasize here; it is a plausible inference but not what the pair of similes *together* establish. (A) and (D) are unsupported.

3. In "Because I could not stop for Death," the personification of Death as someone who "kindly stopped" primarily creates a sense that death is

- A. a violent interruption of the speaker's plans
- B. a courteous and unthreatening companion
- C. the speaker's most trusted friend
- D. a punishment for the speaker's haste

Key: B. "Kindly" and the carriage image make Death a courteous caller. (A) reverses the tone. (C) overreaches; the poem does not claim friendship. (D) invents a moral judgment.

4. The allusion to Prince Hamlet in Prufrock's monologue serves primarily to

- A. show that the speaker admires Shakespeare's plays

- B. suggest that the speaker sees himself as a lesser, more peripheral figure than a tragic hero
- C. introduce a new character into the poem
- D. imply that the speaker is planning an act of revenge

Key: B. He denies being Hamlet and claims the role of attendant lord. (A) is irrelevant. (C) and (D) misread the allusion.

How Figurative Language Shows Up on the Free-Response Section —

Question 1 (Poetry)

Figurative language is your main evidence. The rubric's Row B 4-point descriptor requires explaining how *multiple* literary elements or techniques contribute to meaning. Note the warning in the rubric decision rules: repeated instances of a single technique (several images, say) count as multiple elements only if each is shown to add to meaning differently. So vary: pair an image with a word-choice analysis and a structural observation.

A model thesis (for “Because I could not stop for Death” with a prompt on the speaker’s complex attitude toward death):

Dickinson’s speaker meets death with a composure so complete that it becomes unsettling: by personifying Death as a courteous suitor and letting the carriage pass the school, the grain, and the sun with the same unhurried grammar, she makes acceptance into a social performance whose politeness conceals how little choice she has.

A model body paragraph:

The speaker’s calm is manufactured by the poem’s diction. Death does not seize her; he “kindly stopped,” a courtesy that depends on the reversal in the first line, where it is she who “could not stop.” The verb makes her the busy one and Death the patient one, and the word “kindly” enlists the vocabulary of manners to describe an event no one declines. The carriage is similarly domestic: it “held but just Ourselves,” a phrase that sounds like a chaperoned outing, with “Immortality” as a third passenger who is mentioned almost as an afterthought. Because the grammar never rises above courteous understatement, the reader feels the pressure beneath it. The speaker’s tone is that of a woman accepting an invitation, but the dashes that separate each clause have the effect of small silences, as if the composure must be held up line by line.

Question 2 (Prose)

In prose, the same skills apply to the passage’s imagery, diction, and any figures. A frequent weakness is analyzing only the “pretty” figures. Strong essays also analyze plain words that carry weight (the verb “prodded,” as in the 2024 Chief Reader Report, which students read “one-dimensionally”).

Question 3 (Literary Argument)

Figurative language appears in Q3 whenever a prompt asks about symbols (2009 and 2021), recurring images (motifs), names (2015), or allusion (1981). Prepare for each of your works: one symbol or motif with three concrete appearances, and one allusion or title that frames the work.

A model Q3 thesis (2021 prompt on a house as a symbol; text: *Jane Eyre*):

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë makes each house a stage in Jane's moral education, so that Gateshead stands for exile, Lowood for discipline without love, Thornfield for passion that threatens integrity, and Ferndean for an equality that Jane can enter only after she has left every house that would own her.

Practice Exercises

Answers are in the Answer Key.

Exercise 1 (Skill 5.A). In "Fire and Ice," identify one literal and one figurative reading of the word "fire." Explain which reading the poem ultimately supports and why.

Exercise 2 (Skill 5.B). Compare the connotations of three words for a "thin" person: *slender*, *skinny*, *gaunt*. Then write a sentence in which the choice of one of them changes the narrator's attitude.

Exercise 3 (Skill 5.C). Explain in four to five sentences two possible symbolic readings of the worm in "The Sick Rose." What textual evidence supports each? Which is better supported, and why?

Exercise 4 (Skill 5.D). Identify three images in the Blake poem. Label each by sense and explain the shift in the image pattern from the first stanza to the second.

Exercise 5 (Skills 6.A and 6.B). Write one original simile and one original metaphor describing the same subject (for instance, a classroom at the end of the day). For each, identify tenor and vehicle and state two qualities that transfer.

Exercise 6 (Skill 6.C). Write a three-sentence commentary on the personification of Death in Dickinson's opening stanza. The first sentence must identify the figure; the second must explain the effect; the third must connect the effect to the speaker's attitude.

Exercise 7 (Skill 6.D). Choose a famous allusion you know from any text (for example, a reference to Eden, Icarus, or Pandora). Write a paragraph following the three-step habit: source, usual meaning, how this text uses or twists it.

Exercise 8 (Thesis building). Write a thesis for a Q1 prompt on "A Red, Red Rose" that makes a claim about what the poem's figures reveal about the speaker's attitude toward love and time. Use "although" or "yet."

Common Misconceptions

"Spotting devices earns points." It does not. The rubric's lowest Row B levels describe "names devices with little or no explanation." Always continue to *how* and *why*.

"Every comparison is a metaphor." Similes, metaphors, personification, and allusion are different figures with different signals. Naming them correctly matters, but the function matters more. If a question offers "metaphor" and "figurative language" as options, read the stem carefully; sometimes the broader term is the correct one.

"A symbol has one meaning." Strong symbols are multivalent. Offer the reading best supported by the text and acknowledge the ambiguity if the text invites it.

"The first thing I think of when I see a symbol is correct." Standard associations (white = purity, red = passion) are starting points, not answers. Test them against the work's own context.

"Imagery means pretty descriptions." Imagery includes ugly, clinical, and flat images. The question is what the images collectively make the reader feel and understand.

"Word choice means unusual words." Often the most analyzable words are plain: "kindly," "tasted," "prodded." Look for repeated, positioned, or mismatched words.

"An allusion is only a name-drop." An allusion imports a whole set of associations. The skill is to say which associations the text activates and which it rejects.

Quick Reference: Figurative Language Questions to Ask Every Text —

1. What is literal here, and what is figurative? How do I know?
2. Which words have strong connotations, and what do they imply?
3. What senses do the images appeal to? Do they change across the text?
4. What is compared to what (tenor and vehicle)? What carries over? What does not?
5. What non-human thing is given human traits? Why this trait?
6. What does the allusion bring from its source, and how is it used here?
7. Does a repeated image or object acquire symbolic weight? What is the evidence?

Answer Key

Exercise 1 (model). Literal: fire as a physical force that could end the world (a cataclysm). Figurative: fire as desire (introduced by "From what I've tasted of desire"). The poem ultimately supports the figurative reading, because the speaker's evidence is personal experience ("what I've tasted," "I know enough of hate"), not scientific, and because ice is likewise assigned to an emotion (hate). The literal reading remains as a ground that gives the figurative argument its scale.

Exercise 2 (model). *Slender*: admiring; suggests grace. *Skinny*: neutral to mildly derogatory; colloquial. *Gaunt*: ominous; suggests illness, hunger, or haunting. Sample sentence: "She was gaunt" changes a narrator's attitude from appreciation to alarm; "She was slender" would suggest approval, "she was gaunt" suggests that the narrator sees suffering in her body.

Exercise 3 (model). Reading 1: the worm is corruption or disease that destroys beauty from within, supported by "sick," "invisible," and "destroy." Reading 2: the worm is a secret, possessive love or sexual desire, supported by "bed of crimson joy" and "dark secret love." Reading 2 is better supported because the poem uses the language of intimacy ("bed," "love," "joy") that disease alone does not explain, and because the adjective "secret" implies concealment of a relationship. Reading 1 remains compatible, which is why the poem's ambiguity is productive.

Exercise 4 (model). Visual: "crimson" (stanza 2). Auditory: "howling storm" (stanza 1). Kinesthetic: "flies" (stanza 1). Also acceptable: "bed" (tactile/domestic). The pattern shifts from the outer world (night, storm) in stanza 1 to an intimate interior (bed, joy, love) in stanza 2, and the intimacy is where the destruction occurs. The movement from public darkness to private space suggests that the threat enters where the rose is most vulnerable.

Exercise 5. Open response. Full credit: a simile that uses *like/as*; a metaphor stating identity; correct tenor and vehicle for each; two transferred qualities each. Example: Simile: "The classroom at four o'clock was like a stage after the play" (tenor: classroom; vehicle: stage; transferred qualities: emptiness, leftover props). Metaphor: "The

classroom at four o'clock was a held breath" (tenor: classroom; vehicle: breath; transferred qualities: stillness, suspended time).

Exercise 6 (model). Dickinson personifies Death as a "He" who "kindly stopped" and who drives a carriage. The courtesy of the verb turns a terrifying abstraction into a polite suitor, making the end of life feel like an invitation that cannot be refused. The speaker's composure in accepting the ride suggests that she copes with mortality by treating it as manners, an attitude that is calm on its surface and uneasy underneath.

Exercise 7. Open response. Full credit requires a named source, a clear statement of its usual association, and a specific explanation of how the alluding text uses it. Example: An allusion to Icarus (source: Greek myth of the boy whose wings melt) usually stands for overreaching ambition and its consequence. A text that describes a young entrepreneur as "an Icarus" uses the allusion to predict a fall but may twist it by emphasizing the beauty of the flight, suggesting that the failure was worth the ascent.

Exercise 8 (model). Although Burns's speaker promises a love that will outlast the sea, his figures are the most perishable he could choose, a rose "newly sprung in June" and a melody that exists only while it is played, suggesting that the vow of permanence is made with full awareness of how brief the things he loves are.

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