

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Lexical Architecture: Designing 11th Grade Descriptive Prose

Students construct nuanced narratives by manipulating cumulative adjectives, absolute phrases, and register-specific diction to influence reader perception.

1. In Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse', the use of 'incorporeal' to describe a reflection shifts the tone toward which of the following?

Answer: B) An ephemeral, metaphysical atmosphere

Modernist writers like Woolf use abstract descriptive adjectives like 'incorporeal' (lacking physical substance) to evoke internal consciousness and spiritual themes.

2. When an author places multiple adjectives in a specific sequence without commas, such as 'The expensive French silk tie,' they are utilizing _____ adjectives.

Answer: C) Cumulative

Cumulative adjectives follow a specific order (opinion, size, age, color, etc.) and do not require commas because they build upon one another to modify the noun.

3. True or False: In the sentence 'The candidate, weary and defeated, left the stage,' the adjectives are in the postpositive position, which often adds a formal or dramatic emphasis.

Answer: A) True

Postpositive adjectives follow the noun they modify, a syntactical choice often used in literature to create a stylistic pause or heightened gravitas.

4. Which sentence demonstrates the most precise use of a participial adjective to convey a sense of 'existential dread'?

Answer: B) The looming shadow encroached upon the silent room.

The participial adjective 'looming' functions as a powerful descriptor that implies an imminent threat, elevating the mood through precise diction.

5. Identify the type of adjective used for rhetorical effect in this political speech excerpt: 'This _____ moment in our history demands a collective resolve.'

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Answer: C) Demonstrative

The word 'this' is a demonstrative adjective that creates immediate proximity and urgency, focusing the audience's attention on the specific present context.

6. True or False: Adjectival phrases in a 'sentence composition' exercise can function as appositives if they provide non-essential, descriptive information about a noun.

Answer: A) True

Adjectival units can act as appositives (renaming or adding depth to a noun), a technique used in advanced composition to vary sentence structure and density.

7. Analyze the descriptor 'Sisyphean' in the context of a labor-focused essay. This is an example of an eponymous adjective that implies:

Answer: B) A task that is endless and futile

Advanced writing often employs eponymous adjectives (derived from names) like 'Sisyphean' to create intertextual connections to mythology or history.

8. In the phrase 'the _____-laden atmosphere of the courtroom,' which compound adjective best suggests a feeling of heavy suspense?

Answer: C) anxiety

Compound adjectives (noun + participle) allow writers to condense complex emotions into single descriptive units, essential for sophisticated ELA synthesis.

9. True or False: Using the superlative 'most unique' is considered a redundancy in formal academic writing because 'unique' is an absolute adjective.

Answer: A) True

Absolute adjectives (like unique, dead, or infinite) cannot logically be compared; therefore, modifying them with superlatives is a common stylistic error.

10. Identify the adjectival strategy in this sentence: 'Brutal, cold, and unforgiving, the winter wind sliced through the city.'

Answer: B) The use of an adjectival triple for rhythmic cadence

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Grouping three adjectives at the start of a sentence (a 'tricolon') creates a rhythmic, impactful opening that establishes a strong sensory setting in narrative writing.