

Exercise walk-through

4.2

The function of contrasting characters

AP English Literature and Composition

The Function of Contrasting Characters

The word *may* is doing careful work. An antagonist is not necessarily a villain; the strongest antagonists hold a value the reader can also recognise as good, which is why the conflict is a conflict rather than a rout.

- The main character is the **protagonist** ; the **antagonist** opposes them.
- Protagonists and antagonists may represent contrasting values.

What a setting is doing

Mood and atmosphere

A setting may help establish the mood and atmosphere – the feeling a reader carries into what happens there.

Character

A setting can reveal the character who lives in it, or resists it – the room described through the eyes that see it.

Conflict

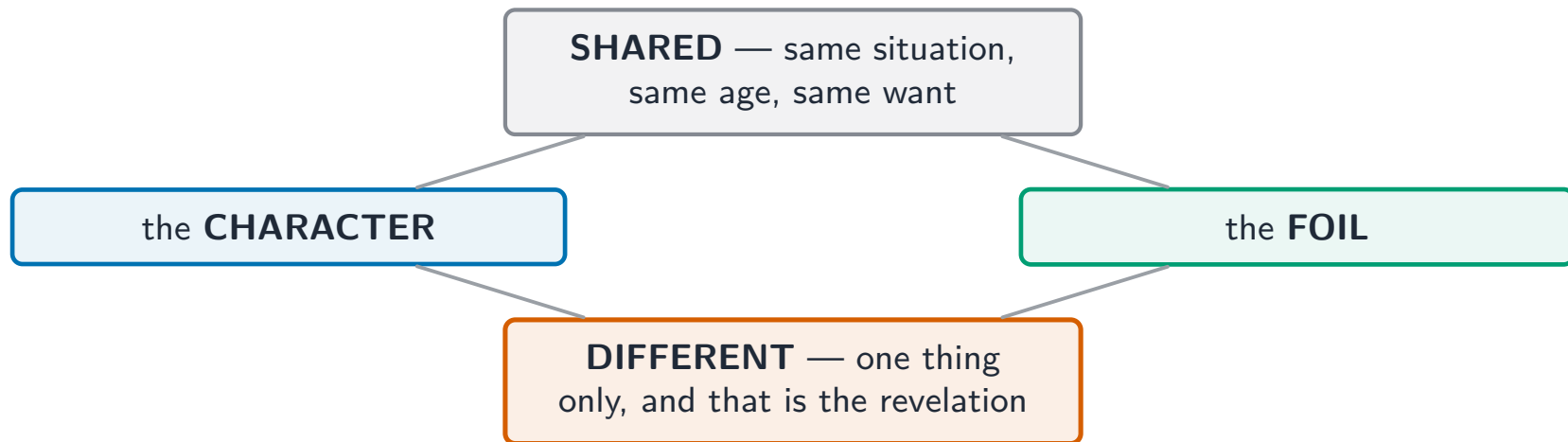
A hostile place makes an antagonist of the world itself, and can stand in for the pressure a character is under.

Change

When the setting shifts, ask whether the character has – and whether the text means the two to be read together.

Setting is a *choice*, not a backdrop. The question is always: what does the story gain by happening *here*?

A foil needs the shared half



The contrast reveals nothing without the **shared** half. Name what the two have in common first, or the difference is just two descriptions

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Define protagonist and antagonist.

[2]

2.2 Name the four things an antagonist may be.

[2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Define protagonist and antagonist.

[2]

2.1

- the protagonist is the main character; the antagonist opposes the protagonist
-

2.2 Name the four things an antagonist may be.

[2]

2.2

- another character; the internal conflicts of the protagonist; a collective such as society; nature

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 An antagonist need not be a villain.

(a) Explain why.

[2]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 An antagonist need not be a villain.

(a) Explain why.

[2]

(a)

- the definition is about opposition rather than morality, and society, nature or the protagonist's own conflicts cannot be villains

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 An antagonist need not be a villain.

(b) State what the two may represent.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 An antagonist need not be a villain.

(b) State what the two may represent.

[1]

(b)

- contrasting values

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 The antagonist may be another character, a collective, nature, or

[1]

☐

A the protagonist's internal conflicts

B the narrator only

C the author

D the reader

3.2 The definition of antagonist is

[1]

☐

A moral

B functional

C biographical

D historical

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 The antagonist may be another character, a collective, nature, or

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A the protagonist's internal conflicts

B the narrator only

C the author

D the reader

3.1 A

- internal conflicts count

3.2 The definition of antagonist is

[1]

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A moral

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3.2 B

- functional

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A story's antagonist is a drought.

(a) State which of the four possibilities this is.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A story's antagonist is a drought.

(a) State which of the four possibilities this is.

[1]

(a)

- nature

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A story's antagonist is a drought.

(b) Explain what values the opposition might represent.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A story's antagonist is a drought.

(b) Explain what values the opposition might represent.

[2]

(b)

- any defensible pair, e.g. human planning against indifference, which the drought embodies by being unresponsive to any argument