

Exercise walk-through

6.3

Choices, actions, and speech reveal complexity

AP English Literature and Composition

Choices, Actions, and Speech Reveal Complexity

This is where AP Literature parts company with simpler reading. Inconsistency is not a flaw in a character; it is the evidence that the character has an interior. A character who always acts on what they think is a position, not a person.

- **Inconsistencies between the private thoughts of characters and their actual behaviour reveal tensions** .
- A character's **competing, conflicting, or inconsistent choices contribute to complexity** .

Complexity, in quotable signs

SAYS ONE THING, DOES ANOTHER

— and the gap is not explained away

WANTS TWO INCOMPATIBLE THINGS — and cannot give up either

PAYS A COST for the choice,
and the text lets you see it

CHANGES THEIR MIND —
and the reader is shown why

Each of these is **quotable**. “The character is complex” asserts what these four demonstrate, and the rubric marks the demonstration

Contrast: between characters, and inside a text

Foil characters

Foil characters serve to **illuminate, through contrast, the traits, attributes, or values** of another character.

Not an antagonist

A foil may be an ally, a sibling, a friend. What makes them a foil is being *similar enough* for the difference to show.

The useful question

What does this character have that the protagonist lacks – and what does the text do with that gap?

Contrast within a text

Contrasts often represent **contradictions or inconsistencies** that introduce **nuance, ambiguity, or contradictory interpretations**.

The CED explicitly allows more than one reading. An essay that names a competing interpretation and shows why its own is better is doing what the sophistication point rewards.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State what inconsistencies between thought and behavior reveal. [2]

2.2 Distinguish private from professed values. [2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State what inconsistencies between thought and behavior reveal. [2]

2.1

- tensions and complexities between private and professed values
-

2.2 Distinguish private from professed values. [2]

2.2

- private values are what a character actually holds; professed values are what they claim

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 Complexity is produced, not accidental.

(a) State what competing choices contribute.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 Complexity is produced, not accidental.

(a) State what competing choices contribute.

[1]

(a)

- complexity in a text

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Complexity is produced, not accidental.

(b) Explain the error of treating inconsistency as a fault.

[2]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Complexity is produced, not accidental.

(b) Explain the error of treating inconsistency as a fault.

[2]

(b)

- the inconsistency is evidence about the character, so treating it as an error discards what the text is showing

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Inconsistencies between private thought and behavior reveal tensions between private and [1]

☐

A professed values

B public events

C narrative structures

D settings

3.2 A character's inconsistent choices contribute to [1]

☐

A complexity in a text

B length

C rhyme

D genre

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Inconsistencies between private thought and behavior reveal tensions between private and [1]

- ☐ **A** professed values
B public events
C narrative structures
D settings

3.1 A

- professed values

3.2 A character's inconsistent choices contribute to [1]

- ☐ **A** complexity in a text
B length
C rhyme
D genre

3.2 A

- complexity

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A character preaches thrift and secretly gambles.

(a) Name the two kinds of value in play.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A character preaches thrift and secretly gambles.

(a) Name the two kinds of value in play.

[1]

(a)

- professed thrift and a private value placed on risk or escape

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A character preaches thrift and secretly gambles.

(b) Explain what the gap gives a reader.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A character preaches thrift and secretly gambles.

(b) Explain what the gap gives a reader.

[2]

(b)

- evidence that the character's public account of themselves is not the whole one, which is what makes them worth analysing