

6 Complexity: contradiction as evidence – Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English

Write it 3 times (English)

Inconsistencies

foil

nuance

Recall

- You have known someone who said one thing and did another.
- You know a character can be sympathetic and wrong.
- You have found a novel's ending impossible to settle.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 Inconsistency reveals

Inconsistencies between a character's private thoughts and their behaviour reveal tensions between private and professed values. The gap is evidence, not a writing fault.

Worked example. A character who preaches thrift and gambles privately has told you what they actually value.

■ 2 Foils

A **foil** illuminates another character through contrast. A foil does not oppose - it stands beside, and the difference makes something visible.

Worked example. A cautious friend beside a reckless protagonist gives the recklessness a scale.

■ 3 Ambiguity and complexity

Contrasts introduce **nuance**, ambiguity or contradiction, and the CED says this makes texts more complex. Ambiguity is two definite readings; vagueness is none.

Worked example. An ending supporting two grounded readings is ambiguous; one supporting neither is vague.

Watch out: Do not tidy a text. An inconsistency you explain away is evidence you have discarded.

Practice

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

2.2 Define a foil and state how it works. [2]

2.3 Distinguish a foil from an antagonist. [2]

2.4 Name the three things contrasts introduce. [3]

2.5 Distinguish ambiguity from vagueness. [2]
