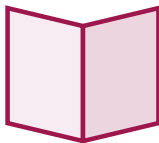


Longer Fiction or Drama I

AP English Literature ■ Unit 3

AP English Literature



What we will cover

- 1 What Textual Details Reveal About a Character
- 2 Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged
- 3 Textual Details That Convey Setting
- 4 Significant Events in a Plot
- 5 The Function of Conflict in a Text
- 6 Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence



What Textual Details Reveal About a Character

Unit 3 is the first longer-fiction-or-drama unit, and the length changes what is analysable: characters can now **change**, conflicts can **intersect**, and setting acquires a **social and historical** dimension.

- The **description of a character creates expectations** for that character's behaviour, and **how a character meets or fails those expectations** is meaningful.
- Details associated with a character **contribute to a reader's interpretation** of them.
- A reader's understanding of a character's perspective **may depend on the perspective of the narrator**.
- **A character's perspective may shift** during the narrative.
- When narrators or characters **compare another character to something else**, they reveal their own perspective as much as the compared character's.

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character, continued

That last word – *inactions* – is the one worth keeping.

What a character declines to do is evidence, and it is usually more revealing than what they do.

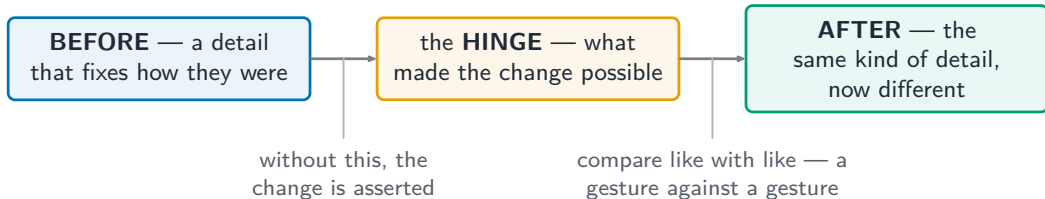


Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

The unchanged character is not a failure of characterisation; it is often the measure by which the change in others is visible.

- A **dynamic character** develops over the narrative and often makes choices that directly or indirectly cause change.
- Character change can be **visible and external** – health, wealth, circumstance – or **internal**, in belief, value, or understanding.
- **Some characters remain unchanged** or are largely unaffected by events.

Proving a change in three quotations



Three quotations, and the **middle** one is the one students omit. A change with no hinge reads as two unrelated descriptions



Textual Details That Convey Setting

Setting now includes the **social, cultural, and historical situation** in which the events occur – not only time and place.

A social setting supplies the constraints a character must act within, and constraint is what turns a choice into a revealing one.



Significant Events in a Plot

That third statement is the test for essay selection: an event matters to your argument only if you can say what it does to the conflict or to a character. Retelling a striking scene that does neither is plot summary, which earns nothing.

- A narrative is delivered through a **series of events that relate to a conflict**.
- Events include **episodes, encounters, and scenes** that introduce and develop plot.
- The **significance of an event depends on its relationship to the narrative, the conflict, and character development**.

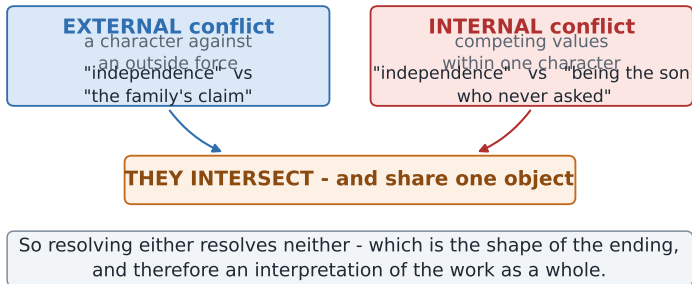


Conflict has two locations, and they compound

- **Conflict is tension between competing values**, either **within a character** - internal or psychological conflict - or **between a character and an external force**.
- **A text may contain multiple conflicts**, and often two or more **intersect** .
- **A primary conflict can be heightened by additional conflicts that intersect with it**.
- **Inconsistencies in a text may create contrasts** that represent conflicts of values or perspectives.

Conflict has two locations, and they compound, in detail

Conflict is between competing VALUES - name them on both sides



A primary conflict heightened by an intersecting one is the standard shape of a novel or play

The Function of Conflict in a Text

Note the definition: conflict is between **competing values**, not merely between people. Two characters who want the same object are in a dispute; two characters who want *incompatible goods* are in a conflict, and only the second produces meaning.

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Developing a Paragraph with Claim and Evidence

Unchanged from Units 1 and 2: a **claim** requiring textual defence, **textual evidence**, and details identified **in combination**.



Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

The key word is *interpretation*. A thesis that states what happens in the text is not a thesis; it is a summary. A thesis must say what the text **means** or **does**, which is by definition arguable.

- A **thesis statement expresses an interpretation** of a literary text and **requires defence** through textual evidence.
- It **may preview the development or line of reasoning** of that interpretation – but is **not required** to list the reasons.

Summary against a literary thesis

SUMMARY

The narrator remembers her childhood home and then learns that it has been sold.

reports what happens; every paragraph can only report more

A LITERARY THESIS

By giving the memory more space than the loss, the narrator makes the reader feel the house as present before it is taken away.

names a **choice** and its effect, so the evidence is the text's own shape

A literary thesis is about what the text **does**, not what it contains. That is also what stops an essay drifting back into summary



Developing Commentary

- A **line of reasoning** is the **logical sequence of claims** that together defend the overarching thesis.
- It is communicated through **commentary explaining the logical relationship** between evidence and claim.



Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

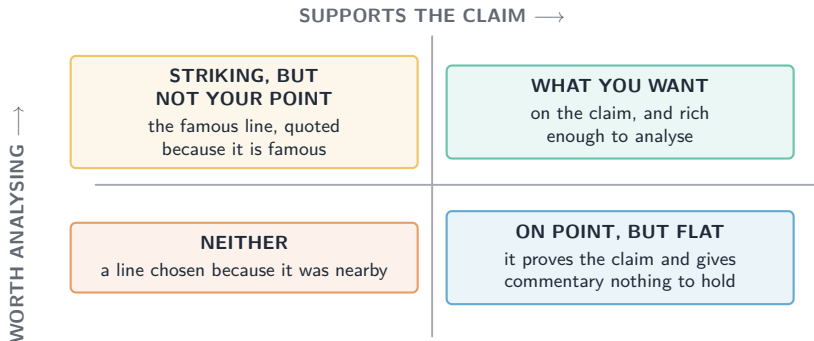
That last point is permission worth taking. If your reading changes while you draft, revise the thesis to match it.

- Writers use evidence **strategically** – to illustrate, clarify, exemplify, associate, or amplify.
- Evidence is **effective** when commentary explains its logical relationship to the claim.
- Evidence is **sufficient** when its **quantity and quality** provide apt support.
- **Developing an interpretation is a recursive process** : an interpretation can emerge, and change, as you read and write.

Striking, or on the claim?

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Striking, or on the claim?, in detail



Evidence is **effective** when commentary explains its logical relationship to the claim.

Worked example – competing values

A Question 3 prompt asks how a character's conflict contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole.

- **Weak:** “[a narration of the plot around the conflict]”
- **Scoring:** “The external conflict with his family over the inheritance is heightened by an internal one: he wants the independence the money would buy, and he wants to remain the son who never asked for it. Because the two conflicts share a single object, resolving either resolves neither.”

Name the two values and let them *intersect*. A conflict that is only external produces narration, not interpretation.



Exam tips

- **Inactions reveal motive.** What a character declines to do is often the strongest evidence available.
- The **unchanged character** is the measure by which change in others becomes visible.
- Setting now includes the **social and historical** situation – it supplies the constraint that makes choices meaningful.
- Conflict is between **competing values**, not merely between people. Name the values.
- An event matters only if you can say **what it does to the conflict or to a character**. Otherwise it is plot summary.
- A thesis must state an **interpretation**, not what happens. Summary cannot be defended.



Unit 3 – key takeaways

1

Inaction

what a character declines is often the strongest evidence

2

Unchanged

the measure by which others' change is visible

3

Conflict

competing values, not merely people

4

Event

matters only if it does something to conflict or character

Check yourself

- 1 What do inactions reveal?
- 2 What is an unchanged character for?
- 3 Conflict is between what?
- 4 When is an event only plot summary?

Answers: motive ■ measuring change in others ■ competing values ■ when you cannot say what it does