

Exercise walk-through

What textual details reveal about a character ■ 4.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- state how a character's significance is revealed
- name the three things through which choices reveal values
- explain why inaction counts as a choice
- define agency in this context

Method — Significance

The significance of characters is often revealed through their agency and through nuanced descriptions. Two routes: what a character can do, and how finely they are described.

Method — Three revealers of value

Characters' choices — in speech, action, and inaction — reveal what they value. Three, and the third is the one students miss.

Method — Inaction

Choosing not to act is a choice. A character who says nothing when a friend is accused has revealed a value as surely as one who speaks.

Method — Agency

Agency is a character's capacity to act on their situation. A character with little agency may reveal values only through speech and inaction — which is why the CED lists all three.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State how a character's significance is revealed.

Solution 2.1

Method: Significance

Worked steps

through their agency **B1** and through nuanced descriptions **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 3 marks

Name the three things through which choices reveal values.

Solution 2.2

Method: Agency

Worked steps

speech **B1**; action **B1**; inaction **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Inaction is a choice.

- (a) Explain why.
- (b) Define agency.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) declining to act selects one outcome over another **B1**, which is what a choice is **B1**. (b) a character's capacity to act on their situation **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Significance is revealed through agency and

A nuanced descriptions

B page length

C publication date

D the title

Solution 3.1

Method: Significance

A nuanced descriptions



B page length

C publication date

D the title

Worked steps

A. nuanced descriptions.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

The item students most often miss is

A speech

B inaction

C action

D description

Solution 3.2

Method: Three revealers of value

A speech

B inaction



C action

D description

Worked steps

B. inaction.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A character stays silent while a friend is blamed.

- (a) State what has been revealed.
- (b) Explain how a reader defends that reading.

Solution 3.3

Method: Inaction

Worked steps

(a) something the character values more than the friend's defence **B1**. (b) show the character could have spoken **B1** and that the text marks the silence rather than passing over it **B1**.