

Exercise walk-through

How plot orders events ■ 6.4

eXercise

You must be able to

- name the four structures that interrupt chronology
- define flashback and in medias res
- distinguish foreshadowing from the others
- explain what an interruption implies about the telling

Method — Four structures

Flashback, foreshadowing, in medias res, and stream of consciousness.

Method — Two definitions

A **flashback** moves back to an earlier moment; **in medias res** begins the narrative in the middle of the action rather than at the start.

Method — Foreshadowing

The odd one out: it does not move the narrative in time but plants something whose significance appears later. It interrupts the reader's chronology of understanding rather than the plot's order.

Method — What it implies

A story told out of order has a teller who chose the order. Interrupted chronology therefore always raises the question of who is arranging this and why.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

Name the four structures that interrupt chronology.

Solution 2.1

Method: Four structures

Worked steps

flashback; foreshadowing; in medias res; stream of consciousness **B2**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Define flashback and in medias res.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

a flashback moves back to an earlier moment **B1**; in medias res begins in the middle of the action **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Foreshadowing is the odd one out.

- (a) Explain why.
- (b) State what an interruption implies about the telling.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) it does not move the narrative in time **B1** but plants something whose significance appears later **B1**. (b) that a teller chose the order **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Beginning a narrative in the middle of the action is

- A** in medias res
- B** flashback
- C** foreshadowing
- D** stream of consciousness

Solution 3.1

Method: Two definitions

A in medias res



B flashback

C foreshadowing

D stream of consciousness

Worked steps

A. in medias res.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Interrupted chronology raises the question of

- A** who is arranging the telling and why
- B** the page count
- C** the publisher
- D** the genre

Solution 3.2

Method: What it implies

A who is arranging the telling and why



B the page count

C the publisher

D the genre

Worked steps

A. who is arranging it and why.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A novel opens with a funeral and returns to it two hundred pages later.

- (a) Name the structure.
- (b) Explain the effect of the arrangement.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) in medias res **B1**. (b) the reader knows the outcome from the start **B1**, so attention shifts from what happens to how and why it came about **B1**.