

Exercise walk-through

Characters who change or remain unchanged ■ 7.1

eXercise

You must be able to

- define an epiphany in the CED's terms
- state where a change in character often comes from
- state how an epiphany may affect the plot
- distinguish sudden from gradual change

Method — Definition

Characters can change suddenly as the result of a moment of realization, known as an epiphany. An epiphany allows a character to see things in a new light and is often directly related to a central conflict of the narrative.

Method — Where change comes from

Often the change in a character emerges directly from a conflict of values represented in the narrative, and changes in a character's circumstances may lead to changes in that character.

Method — Effect on plot

An epiphany may affect the plot by causing a character to act on his or her sudden realization. The realisation is not the whole event; the action following it is.

Method — Sudden and gradual

Characters can change gradually over the course of a narrative as well. In short fiction, the epiphany is the common form because there is not room for a gradual one — a structural fact worth noticing.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

Define an epiphany in the CED's terms.

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

a sudden change resulting from a moment of realization **B1** that allows a character to see things in a new light, often related to a central conflict **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State where a change in character often emerges from.

Solution 2.2

Method: Where change comes from

Worked steps

a conflict of values represented in the narrative **B1**; or changes in the character's circumstances **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

An epiphany can affect the plot.

(a) State how.

(b) State why the epiphany is common in short fiction.

Solution 2.3

Method: Sudden and gradual

Worked steps

(a) by causing the character to act on the sudden realization **B2**. (b) short fiction lacks room for a gradual change **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

An epiphany is often directly related to

A a central conflict of the narrative

B the title

C the setting only

D the author's life

Solution 3.1

Method: Definition

A a central conflict of the narrative



B the title

C the setting only

D the author's life

Worked steps

A. a central conflict.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

The plot is affected when the character

A acts on the realization

B forgets it

C repeats it

D describes it

Solution 3.2

Method: Effect on plot

A acts on the realization



B forgets it

C repeats it

D describes it

Worked steps

A. acting on it.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A character understands something in the last paragraph and does nothing.

- (a) State whether the plot is affected.
- (b) Explain what the story gains from the inaction.

Solution 3.3

Method: Effect on plot

Worked steps

(a) not by the CED's mechanism, since no action follows **B1**. (b) the reader holds the realisation the character will not act on **B1**, which makes the ending a judgment on the character rather than a resolution **B1**.