

1.1 What textual details reveal about a character

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to read **character** 人物 from textual detail.

You must be able to:

- name the three things that reveal characters
- name the four possible sources of a description
- define perspective and what informs it
- explain the two-way relationship between perspective and relationships

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Three revealers

Description, dialogue and behavior reveal characters to readers. Three channels, and a strong answer uses more than one.

■ Four sources

Descriptions may come from **a speaker, a narrator, other characters, or the characters themselves**. Who is describing matters: a rival's description is evidence about the rival too.

■ Perspective

Perspective is how narrators, characters or speakers understand their circumstances, informed by **background, personality traits, biases and relationships**.

■ Two-way

A character's perspective is **both shaped and revealed** by relationships, the environment, plot events and the ideas expressed in the text. The same relationship that forms a view is the evidence for it.

2 Practice

2.1 Name the three things that reveal characters. [3]

2.2 Define perspective and name what informs it. [2]

2.3 A character is described by a rival.

(a) State what this reveals besides the character described. [1]

(b) Explain why the source of a description matters. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Perspective is informed by background, personality traits, relationships and [1]

- **A** biases
- **B** page count
- **C** publication date
- **D** genre

3.2 A character's perspective is described as [1]

- **A** only shaped by relationships
- **B** both shaped and revealed by them
- **C** only revealed by them
- **D** independent of them

3.3 A story shows a character speaking kindly and acting cruelly.

(a) State which two channels are in play. [1]

(b) Explain what the contradiction gives a reader.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **1.1 What textual details reveal about a character** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 description; dialogue; behavior.

2.2 how narrators, characters or speakers understand their circumstances; informed by background, personality traits, biases and relationships.

2.3 (a) the rival's own perspective and biases. (b) a description is a character's view of another, so it is evidence about the describer as well as the described.

3.1 A. biases are the CED's fourth item.

3.2 B. both, in the CED's own wording.

3.3 (a) dialogue and behavior. (b) evidence that the character's words and actions diverge, which is more informative than either channel alone.