

1.3 How plot orders events

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **plot** 情节 as ordered events.

You must be able to:

- state the CED's definition of plot
- explain what 'each event building on the others' claims
- define the dramatic situation
- explain why plot is not the same as the story's incidents

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

Plot is the sequence of events in a narrative; events throughout a narrative are connected, with each event building on the others, often with a cause-and-effect relationship.

■ Building

Events are not merely consecutive. "Building on the others" claims a dependence: a later event means what it means because of an earlier one.

■ Dramatic situation

It includes the setting and action of the plot and how that narrative develops to place characters in conflict(s), and often involves the rising or falling fortunes of a main character or set of characters.

■ Plot and incidents

A list of incidents is not a plot. The plot is the incidents plus their connection, which is what makes the sequence mean something.

2 Practice

2.1 State the CED's definition of plot.

[2]

2.2 Explain what "each event building on the others" claims. [2]

2.3 Define the dramatic situation.

(a) State what it includes. [2]

(b) State what it often involves. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The relationship between events is often [1]

- **A** cause-and-effect
 - **B** alphabetical
 - **C** random
 - **D** metrical
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3.2 A list of incidents is not a plot because it lacks [1]

- **A** their connection
 - **B** characters
 - **C** a setting
 - **D** dialogue
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3.3 A second event would be meaningless without the first.

(a) State what this shows. [1]

(b) Explain why order carries meaning. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **1.3 How plot orders events** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the sequence of events in a narrative, connected, with each building on the others, often causally.

2.2 that events depend on one another, so a later event means what it means because of an earlier one.

2.3 (a) the setting and action of the plot, and how the narrative develops to place characters in conflict. (b) the rising or falling fortunes of a main character or set of characters.

3.1 A. the CED's own phrase.

3.2 A. connection is what makes it a plot.

3.3 (a) that the events are connected rather than consecutive. (b) the same incidents in a different order would mean something else, so the arrangement is part of what the text says.