

3.5 The function of conflict in a text

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **conflict** 冲突.

You must be able to:

- define conflict and name its two kinds
- state what happens when conflicts intersect
- explain what a primary conflict gains from additional ones
- state what inconsistencies may create

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

Conflict is tension between competing values either **within a character** —internal or psychological conflict —or **with outside forces that obstruct a character in some way** —external conflict. The definition is about *values*, not merely obstacles.

■ Intersection

A text may contain multiple conflicts. Often two or more conflicts in a text intersect.

■ Heightening

A primary conflict can be heightened by the presence of additional conflicts that intersect with it. A second conflict raises the cost of resolving the first.

■ Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies in a text may create contrasts that represent conflicts of values or perspectives. An inconsistency is a clue, not necessarily an error.

2 Practice

2.1 Define conflict and name its two kinds.

[3]

2.2 Explain what a primary conflict gains from an intersecting one. [2]

2.3 The definition is about values.

(a) State why this matters. [2]

(b) State what inconsistencies may create. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Conflict is tension between competing [1]

- **A** values
 - **B** page lengths
 - **C** genres
 - **D** publishers
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3.2 An inconsistency in a text may be [1]

- **A** always an error
 - **B** a clue to a conflict of values
 - **C** irrelevant
 - **D** a printing fault only
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3.3 A character must choose between loyalty and honesty.

(a) State the kind of conflict. [1]

(b) Explain what makes it a conflict rather than a difficulty. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **3.5 The function of conflict in a text** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Longer Fiction or Drama I** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 tension between competing values; internal or psychological within a character; external, with outside forces that obstruct a character.

2.2 the additional conflict heightens it by raising the cost of resolving the first.

2.3 (a) an obstacle alone is not a conflict; the tension must be between things the character values. (b) contrasts that represent conflicts of values or perspectives.

3.1 A. values.

3.2 B. a clue.

3.3 (a) internal or psychological. (b) both loyalty and honesty are values the character holds, so choosing either costs something the character wants to keep.