

4.4 The function of setting in a narrative

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **mood and atmosphere** 气氛.

You must be able to:

- state what a setting may help establish
- distinguish mood from atmosphere in practice
- explain how a detail produces mood
- avoid asserting mood without evidence

1 Worked examples

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

■ The claim

A setting may help establish the mood and atmosphere of a narrative.

"May help" —a contribution, not a determination.

■ Mood and atmosphere

Atmosphere is what the described place feels like; mood is what the reader is brought to feel. A cheerful character in a decaying house produces atmosphere and mood that pull apart, which is often the point.

■ How details work

Mood comes from selection. A room has a hundred features; the narrator names three. Which three were chosen is the evidence.

■ Not assertion

"The setting creates a sense of dread" proves nothing until the answer names the details doing it and says why those details rather than others.

2 Practice

2.1 State what a setting may help establish and the force of "may help". [2]

2.2 Distinguish mood from atmosphere. [2]

2.3 Mood comes from selection.

(a) Explain what this means. [2]

(b) State what an assertion of mood must add. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 "May help establish" indicates a [1]

- **A** determination
 - **B** contribution
 - **C** contradiction
 - **D** definition
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3.2 Which three features of a room a narrator names is [1]

- **A** the evidence for mood
 - **B** irrelevant
 - **C** decided by genre
 - **D** decided by length
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3.3 A narrator describes a wedding in terms of heat, noise and crowding.

(a) State the mood produced. [1]

(b) Explain how the selection produces it.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.4 The function of setting in a narrative** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Short Fiction II** section of the AP English Literature handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 the mood and atmosphere of a narrative; "may help" makes it a contribution rather than a determination.

2.2 atmosphere is what the described place feels like; mood is what the reader is brought to feel.

2.3 (a) a place has many features and the narrator names only a few, so the choice of which is the evidence. (b) the details doing the work and why those rather than others.

3.1 B. a contribution.

3.2 A. the evidence for mood.

3.3 (a) oppression or discomfort rather than celebration. (b) a wedding offers many describable features, and choosing three unpleasant ones tells the reader how to feel about the occasion.