

4.9 The function of point of view

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 13 marks

Objective

Build the skills to explain **narrative distance** 叙述距离.

You must be able to:

- define narrative distance and name its four components
- define stream of consciousness
- explain what a change in distance does
- use distance as an analytic term

1 Worked examples

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

■ Narrative distance

Narrative distance refers to the physical distance, chronological distance, relationships, or emotional investment of the narrator to the events or characters of the narrative. Four components, and they can vary independently.

■ Stream of consciousness

A type of narration in which a character's thoughts are related through a continuous dialogue or description. The distance is at its smallest: the reader is inside the thinking.

■ Changes in distance

A narrator may stand close to one character and far from another, or close early and far later. Each change is a choice the analysis can name.

■ As a term

"The narrator is distant" is vague. "The narrator is chronologically distant but emotionally invested" is precise and immediately suggests what the account will and will not contain.

2 Practice

2.1 Define narrative distance and name its four components. [3]

2.2 Define stream of consciousness. [2]

2.3 Distance can vary.

(a) Name two ways it may vary within one text. [2]

(b) State why the four components should be named separately. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 In stream of consciousness the narrative distance is [1]

- **A** at its smallest
- **B** at its greatest
- **C** fixed
- **D** irrelevant

3.2 Narrative distance includes physical, chronological, relational and [1]

- **A** emotional investment
- **B** typographical
- **C** commercial
- **D** grammatical

3.3 A narrator writes fifty years later about a brother she loved.

(a) Describe the distance precisely. [1]

(b) Explain what this predicts about the account.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.9 The function of point of view** 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 narrator's relation to the events or characters; physical distance, chronological distance, relationships and emotional investment.

2.2 narration in which a character's thoughts are related through a continuous dialogue or description.

2.3 (a) any two of: close to one character and far from another; close early and far later; physically near but emotionally detached. (b) they vary independently, so a single word for distance is imprecise.

3.1 A. the reader is inside the thinking.

3.2 A. emotional investment.

3.3 (a) chronologically distant, emotionally invested. (b) it will have hindsight the events themselves did not and a warmth of judgment that a detached narrator would not supply.