

7.5 How plot orders events

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 18 marks**

KEY WORDS pacing 节奏

Objective

Build the skills to explain **pacing** 节奏.

You must be able to:

- define pacing in the CED’s terms
- name four factors that contribute to pace
- explain how syntax affects pace
- distinguish pace from length

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

Pacing is the manipulation of time in a text. Manipulation — the writer decides how much text a given amount of story time occupies.

■ Factors

Arrangement of details, frequency of events, narrative structures, syntax, the tempo or speed at which events occur, or shifts in tense and chronology.

■ Syntax

Short sentences read fast and long ones read slow, so a paragraph of clipped clauses accelerates a scene regardless of what happens in it. Pace is partly a property of the prose.

■ Pace and length

A slow passage is not a long one. Ten pages covering a decade move fast; two pages covering a minute move slowly. Pace is the ratio of text to time.

2 Practice

2.1 Define pacing in the CED’s terms. [2]

2.2 Name four factors that contribute to pace. [2]

2.3 Pace is not length.

(a) Explain the difference. [2]

(b) State how syntax affects pace. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Pacing is the manipulation of [1]

- **A** time in a text
- **B** page size
- **C** the reader’s age
- **D** genre

3.2 Two pages covering one minute move [1]

- **A** slowly
- **B** quickly
- **C** at average pace
- **D** backwards

- State the effect on pace. [1]
- Explain why this holds regardless of the events. [2]

Marked on the AP 6-point rubric: **Row A** — Thesis (1), **Row B** — Evidence and Commentary (4), **Row C** — Sophistication (1).

[2]

[6]

Solutions

2.1 the manipulation of time in a text, so the writer decides how much text a given amount of story time occupies.

2.2 any four of: arrangement of details; frequency of events; narrative structures; syntax; tempo or speed of events; shifts in tense and chronology.

2.3 (a) pace is the ratio of text to story time, so a long passage covering years is fast and a short one covering a minute is slow. (b) short sentences read fast and long ones read slow.

3.1 A. time.

3.2 A. slowly.

3.3 (a) it accelerates. (b) syntax is a property of the prose rather than of the events, so the reading speed changes even where the story time does not.

3.4 Row A — Thesis (1). A defensible claim connecting **duration to significance**. **Earns it:** “By spending ninety pages on one evening and four on two decades, the novel argues that a life is decided in the hours it cannot be summarised, and endured in the years it can.” **Does not:** “The pacing is slow at first and then fast.”

Row B — Evidence and Commentary (0–4). Pacing must be read as a **choice about attention**. The minute-by-minute dinner grants the evening the weight of an event still undecided; the reader is held inside it at the speed of the people living it. The summary of the twenty years is not neglect but verdict — the phrase “*as such things do*” denies those years their particularity, which is exactly what happens to a life after its decisive night. A 4-point response also handles the **ratio** as evidence in itself, and notes that the reader is made to experience the disproportion rather than be told about it. Describing the two sections separately without connecting them caps at 2.

Row C — Sophistication (1). Earned by holding the discomfort of the choice: the novel’s compression of twenty years is also a refusal to test whether the dinner really mattered that much, and the strongest responses ask whether the form is making the argument or merely asserting it.