

9.1 Characters who change or remain unchanged

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

KEY WORDS minor characters 次要人物

Objective

Build the skills to explain **minor characters** 次要人物.

You must be able to:

- state why minor characters often remain unchanged
- name the two functions the CED gives them
- state what affects readers’ interpretations
- explain why an unchanged minor character is still analysable

1 Worked examples

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

■ Why unchanged

Minor characters often remain unchanged because the narrative doesn’t focus on them. The explanation is structural, not psychological.

■ Two functions

They may only be part of the narrative to advance the plot or to interact with major characters. “Only” is the CED’s word: some characters exist for the machinery.

■ Interpretation

Readers’ interpretations of a text are often affected by a character changing — or not — and the meaning conveyed by such changes or lack thereof. Absence of change conveys meaning too.

■ Still analysable

A minor character who does not change can measure one who does, or can show what the narrative treats as not worth attending to — which is itself a finding about the text’s priorities.

2 Practice

2.1 State why minor characters often remain unchanged. [2]

2.2 Name the two functions the CED gives them. [2]

2.3 Lack of change conveys meaning.
(a) State the CED’s claim. [2]
(b) State what an unchanged minor character can show about the text. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The CED’s explanation for minor characters’ lack of change is [1]

- **A** structural
- **B** psychological
- **C** moral
- **D** historical

3.2 Minor characters may exist to advance the plot or to [1]

- **A** interact with major characters
- **B** narrate
- **C** set the scene only
- **D** end the book

3.3 A servant appears in six scenes and is identical in each.

(a) State the likely function.

[1]

(b) Explain what the flatness itself may show.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 because the narrative does not focus on them, which is a structural rather than psychological explanation.

2.2 to advance the plot; to interact with major characters.

2.3 (a) readers' interpretations are affected by a character changing or not, and by the meaning conveyed by such changes or their absence. (b) what the narrative treats as not worth attending to.

3.1 A. structural.

3.2 A. interact with major characters.

3.3 (a) to advance the plot or interact with major characters. (b) that the narrative does not extend attention to this character, which is a finding about the text's priorities rather than about the servant.