

4.1 What textual details reveal about a character

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 13 marks

KEY WORDS agency 主动性

Objective

Build the skills to read **agency** 主动性 and value from character.

You must be able to:

- state how a character’s significance is revealed
- name the three things through which choices reveal values
- explain why inaction counts as a choice
- define agency in this context

1 Worked examples

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

■ Significance

The significance of characters is often revealed through their agency and through nuanced descriptions. Two routes: what a character can do, and how finely they are described.

■ Three revealers of value

Characters’ choices — in speech, action, and inaction — reveal what they value. Three, and the third is the one students miss.

■ Inaction

Choosing not to act is a choice. A character who says nothing when a friend is accused has revealed a value as surely as one who speaks.

■ Agency

Agency is a character’s capacity to act on their situation. A character with little agency may reveal values only through speech and inaction — which is why the CED lists all three.

2 Practice

2.1 State how a character’s significance is revealed. [2]

2.2 Name the three things through which choices reveal values. [3]

2.3 Inaction is a choice.

(a) Explain why. [2]

(b) Define agency. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Significance is revealed through agency and [1]

- A

B

C

D
- A nuanced descriptions

B page length

C publication date

D the title

3.2 The item students most often miss is [1]

- A

B

C

D
- A speech

B inaction

C action

D description

3.3 A character stays silent while a friend is blamed.

(a) State what has been revealed. [1]

(b) Explain how a reader defends that reading. [2]
