

6.2 The function of contrasting characters

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

KEY WORDS foil 衬托人物 • foil characters 陪衬人物

Objective

Build the skills to explain a **foil** 衬托人物.

You must be able to:

- define a foil in the CED’s terms
- state the mechanism by which a foil works
- distinguish a foil from an antagonist
- identify what a foil is illuminating

1 Worked examples

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

■ Definition

Foil characters (foils) serve to illuminate, through contrast, the traits, attributes, or values of another character.

■ The mechanism

Through contrast. A foil does not oppose; it stands beside, and the difference makes something in the other character visible.

■ Foil and antagonist

An antagonist **opposes** the protagonist (4.2); a foil **illuminates** another character. A character can be both, but the two functions are different and the analysis should name which is in play.

■ What is illuminated

The useful question is: what would we not see in the main character if this foil were absent? The answer is the foil’s function.

2 Practice

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

2.2 Distinguish a foil from an antagonist. [2]

2.3 A foil illuminates something.

(a) State the question that finds it. [2]

(b) State the mechanism a foil uses. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A foil works through [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A contrast
B opposition
C repetition
D rhyme

3.2 An antagonist’s function is to [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A oppose the protagonist
B illuminate another character
C narrate
D describe the setting

3.3 A cautious friend accompanies a reckless protagonist throughout a novel.

(a) State the friend's function. [1]

(b) Explain what would be lost without the friend. [2]
