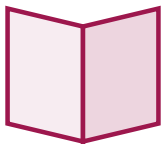


Short Fiction II

AP English Literature ■ Unit 4

AP English Literature



What we will cover

- 1 What Textual Details Reveal About a Character
- 2 The Function of Contrasting Characters
- 3 Nuances in Characters' Relationships
- 4 The Function of Setting in a Narrative
- 5 The Relationship Between Character and Setting
- 6 How Plot Orders Events

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character

Unit 4 returns to short fiction with a much larger toolkit. Its two most valuable additions are **narrative distance** and the idea that **choices reveal values**.

- The significance of characters is often revealed through their **agency** 能动性 and through **nuanced descriptions**.
- **Characters' choices – in speech, action, and inaction – reveal what they value** 揭示其所看重之物.

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character, continued

That second statement is the most practical sentence in the whole course for essay-writing.

Whenever you need a claim about a character, look at a choice and ask what it must be true for that choice to have made sense to them.

The Function of Contrasting Characters

The word *may* is doing careful work. An antagonist is not necessarily a villain; the strongest antagonists hold a value the reader can also recognise as good, which is why the conflict is a conflict rather than a rout.

- The main character is the **protagonist** 主人公; the **antagonist** 对立者 opposes them.
- Protagonists and antagonists may represent contrasting values.

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

This is Unit 3's definition applied to relationships.

Two characters in a long-running disagreement usually disagree about something prior to the argument they are having.

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

Mood is the reader's feeling; atmosphere is the quality the text creates around events.

Both are produced by selection – which details of a place the text mentions, and which it does not.

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

This is a second route into character that avoids the trap of psychologising.

A room described through its neglect, its order, or its borrowed furniture tells you about the person who lives there, and it is textual evidence rather than speculation.

How Plot Orders Events

Some patterns in dramatic situations are so common that they are considered **archetypes** 原型, and these archetypes carry associations readers bring with them.

Use archetypes carefully: recognising one is a starting point, and the interesting analysis is almost always where a text **departs** from the pattern it invoked.

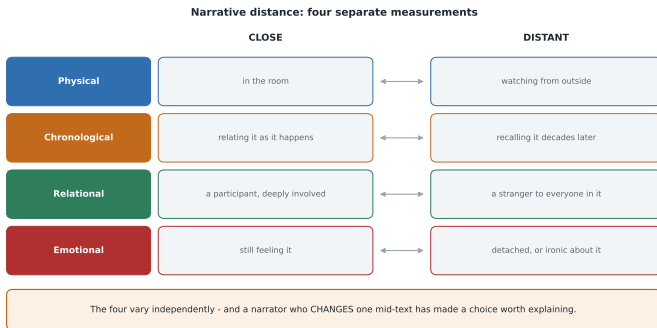
The Function of Contrasts Within a Text

- The differences highlighted by a **contrast emphasise particular traits or characteristics** in the things contrasted.
- **Contrasts often represent conflicts in values** related to character, narrator, or speaker perspectives.

Identifying the Narrator or Speaker

That distinction – recalling versus relating as they occur – is the first axis of narrative distance below.

The Function of Point of View



the distinction this unit turns on

The Function of Point of View

- **Narrative distance** 叙述距离 refers to the physical distance, chronological distance, relationships, or emotional distance between the narrator and the events or characters.
- **Stream of consciousness** 意识流 is narration in which a character's thoughts are related through a continuous flow, often with little conventional ordering.

Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective

Narrators' and characters' **backgrounds and perspectives** shape the **tone** they convey.

Descriptive words

not only qualify what they describe but **convey a perspective** toward it.

The attitude of a narrator or speaker toward an idea, character, or situation emerges from these choices.

Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Unchanged: a thesis **expresses an interpretation** and requires textual defence; it **may** preview the line of reasoning.

Developing Commentary

- A **line of reasoning** is the logical sequence of claims defending the thesis, communicated through **commentary**.
- **Body paragraphs develop the reasoning and justify claims** using evidence.
- Effective paragraphs are **cohesive** and often use **topic sentences** 主题句 to state a claim and explain the reasoning.

Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

Same four points as Unit 3: evidence used **strategically**; **effective** when commentary explains the relationship; **sufficient** in quantity and quality; and interpretation as a **recursive** process.

Exam tips

- **Choices reveal values.** Ask what must have been true for the choice to make sense to that character.
- An **antagonist is not a villain.** The strongest hold a value the reader can also recognise as good.
- **The environment tells you about the character** – and it is textual evidence, not speculation.
- Archetypes are a **starting point.** The analysis is where the text departs from the pattern.
- **Narrative distance** has four kinds – physical, chronological, relational, emotional. It is the most underused tool here.
- A narrator who **closes or opens the distance** mid-text has made a choice. Say what it produces.