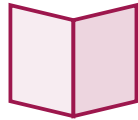


Short Fiction II

AP English Literature ■ Unit 4

AP English Literature



Short Fiction II

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

1

What Textual Details Reveal About a Character

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.

2

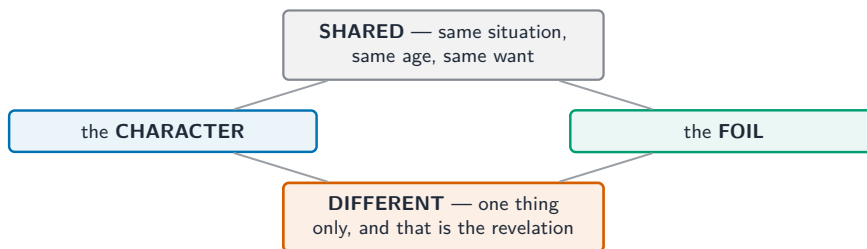
The Function of Contrasting Characters

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.

A foil needs the shared half



The contrast reveals nothing without the **shared** half. Name what the two have in common first, or the difference is just two descriptions

3

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

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.

4

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

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.

Setting does four jobs

CONTEXT — it tells you what is normal here, so a departure can register

MIRROR — it carries the feeling the character will not state

CONSTRAINT — it limits what this character is able to do

ANTAGONIST — it is the thing being struggled against

The bottom row does **plot** work. A setting that constrains or opposes is not scenery, and saying so is a claim rather than a description

5

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

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.

6

How Plot Orders Events

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└ How Plot Orders Events

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.

7

The Function of Contrasts Within a Text

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.

8

Identifying the Narrator or Speaker

Identifying the Narrator or Speaker

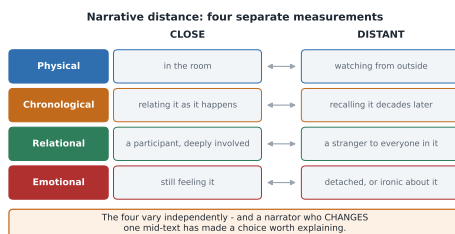
That distinction – recalling versus relating as they occur – is the first axis of narrative distance below.

9

The Function of Point of View

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└ The Function of Point of View

Four distances between narrator and events



■ **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.

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└ The Function of Point of View

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10 Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective

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└ Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective

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.

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└ Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective

Perspective, from three observables

DETAILS — what is noticed, and what is passed over

DICTION — the register a speaker reaches for

SYNTAX — whether thought arrives ordered or in pieces

PERSPECTIVE

What is **not** noticed is evidence too. A narrator who never describes a face has told you something about the narrator

11 Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

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↳ Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

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

12 Developing Commentary

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.

13

Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

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.

14 Control Over the Elements of Composition

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└ Control Over the Elements of Composition

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.