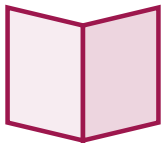


Short Fiction III

AP English Literature ■ Unit 7

AP English Literature



What we will cover

- 1 Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged
- 2 Nuances in Characters' Relationships
- 3 The Function of Setting in a Narrative
- 4 The Relationship Between Character and Setting
- 5 How Plot Orders Events
- 6 The Function of a Sequence of Events

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Two independent questions about any change in a character

GRADUAL

SUDDEN

from a **CONFLICT**
OF VALUES

a value is slowly displaced
by a competing one

*the reader watches the
balance tip*

an **EPIPHANY**: the conflict
resolves in one moment

*examinable only if the
character **ACTS** on it*

from **CHANGED**
CIRCUMSTANCES

new circumstances erode
an old position

*the reader watches
adaptation*

a shock in circumstances
forces an immediate change

*watch whether the change
survives the shock*

A change with no **SOURCE** is assertion. A change with no **CONSEQUENCE** in the plot is decoration.

the distinction this unit turns on

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Unit 7 is the last short-fiction unit, and it sharpens two things: **how change happens** in a character, and **pacing** as a deliberate manipulation of time.

- Often the change in a character **emerges directly from a conflict of values** represented in the narrative.
- **Changes in a character's circumstances may lead to changes in that character.**
- Characters can change **gradually**, but they can also change **suddenly** 骤然.
- An **epiphany** 顿悟 may affect the plot by causing a character to **act on a sudden realisation**.

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged, continued

The two axes are independent, which is what makes them useful.

A change caused by a conflict of values can arrive gradually or in an instant, and an epiphany is only examinable when the character **acts** on it – a realisation that changes nothing has not affected the plot.

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

The group-as-character idea is worth taking literally. A town, a family, an institution can hold values, exert pressure, and oppose a protagonist exactly as an individual antagonist would, and reading it that way often unlocks a story with no obvious opponent.

- **A group or force can function as a character** 群体作为人物.
- Readers should examine **how a character interacts with other characters**.
- The relationship between a character and a group – including their inclusion in or exclusion from it – is significant.

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

Two settings placed against each other are rarely just two places. They usually carry the competing value systems the plot is testing.

- When a setting changes, it may suggest other movements, changes, or shifts in the narrative.
- Settings may be contrasted to establish a conflict of values or ideas associated with them.

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

- The way characters **interact with their surroundings** provides insights about them.
- The way characters **behave in or describe** their surroundings **reveals an attitude** toward those surroundings.

The Function of a Sequence of Events

Pacing is measurable and therefore very usable as evidence.

Count the pages a text gives to an afternoon and to the following decade, and the disproportion is a claim about what mattered.

How a Narrator's Reliability Affects a Narrative

Compare narrators where a text offers more than one.

What one can say and another cannot is the clearest possible evidence of how the text is constructed.

The Function of a Symbol

- A setting may become symbolic when it is associated with abstractions – emotions, ideas, times of life.
- Over time, some settings have developed associations so strong that they almost universally symbolise something.

The Function of an Image or Imagery

A **motif** 母题 is a unified pattern of recurring objects or images used to emphasise a significant idea.

It accumulates: each recurrence adds to what the pattern means, which is why noting the *first* and *last* appearance is usually more productive than listing them all.

The Function of Personification

The CED adds the reverse move here:
assigning the qualities of a nonhuman object, entity, or idea to a person or character 反向拟人 – describing a person as mechanical, as weather, as an animal.

A character described in the vocabulary of machinery has been characterised, and by someone.

Developing a Literary Thesis, Commentary, and Evidence

- Unchanged: a thesis expresses an **interpretation** requiring textual defence.
- New: **more sophisticated literary arguments may explain the significance or relevance of an interpretation** 阐释的意义 – why this reading matters, not only that it is supportable. This is the sophistication point stated directly.
- New: **textual evidence may require revision to an interpretation** if the evidence does not support it.

Exam tips

- A change needs a **source** (a conflict of values, or changed circumstances) and a **consequence** in the plot.
- An **epiphany** is examinable when the character **acts** on it. A realisation that changes nothing is decoration.
- **A group can function as a character.** Try it on any story with no obvious antagonist.
- **Two contrasted settings** usually carry the competing values the plot is testing.
- **Pacing is measurable.** Count what gets space and what gets a clause; the disproportion is a claim.
- For a **motif**, compare the **first and last** appearance rather than listing every one.