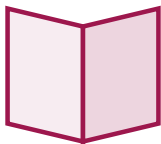


Short Fiction III

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

1

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Where a change comes from, and how fast it arrives

Original practice passage — the ferry vote

At the council table, Nora laid the ferry petition beside the clock. The chair called her “our practical girl”, as he had before she began collecting signatures. “The bridge is the sensible choice,” he said. Nora looked through the window at the landing where her mother still waited each morning. For the first time, she heard “practical” as a request to be silent. “Practical for whom?” she asked.

Read before analysing. This passage is authored for teaching, not an AP exam extract.

Where a change comes from, and how fast it arrives, in detail

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**: a sudden
change in understanding

*check whether action
follows the realisation*

from **CHANGED
CIRCUMSTANCES**

new circumstances erode
an old position

*the reader watches
adaptation*

a shock in circumstances
may prompt sudden change

*watch whether the change
survives the shock*

Trace evidence for the change and its possible source.
Distinguish changed understanding from changed action.

An **epiphany** 顿悟 changes understanding; check separately whether action follows.

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Continue the same passage

The chair covered the petition with his agenda. Outside, Nora unfolded it again; the paper shook like a small sail. Three years passed before the ferry returned. Nora kept the chair's agenda, its edges soft from handling.

Attempt before the next slide

Identify the moment of changed understanding, an action that follows and a limit on what the outcome proves. Use the actual words.

Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged, continued

- 1 **Realisation** “For the first time marks Nora hearing “practical as pressure to remain silent.
- 2 **Action** “Practical for whom? challenges the chair; she also unfolds the petition outside.
- 3 **Resistance** The chair covers the petition. His gesture does not establish that she has persuaded him.
- 4 **Limit** The ferry returns three years later, but the account does not identify the cause of that outcome.

2

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

Before

“Our practical girl claims familiarity while narrowing Nora to an approved role.

Challenge

“Practical for whom? contests whose interests count.

Response

The chair covers her petition with his agenda: an institutional document physically displaces her request.

The council may function as a collective force, but this passage directly shows the chair's actions; do not invent every member's opinion.

Measuring the same thing twice

Compare matching evidence

Compare how Nora handles the petition with how the chair handles it. She places it beside the clock and later unfolds it; he covers it with his agenda.

- 1 **Observation** Both gestures concern the same document.
- 2 **Interpretation** She keeps the request visible; he suppresses it in this meeting.
- 3 **Boundary** This supports conflict over whose claim receives attention, not a complete account of their past relationship.

Measuring the same thing twice, in detail

WHAT TO WATCH	EARLY IN THE TEXT	LATER
who speaks first	one of them always begins	the initiative has moved, or nobody begins
how they are addressed	a name, a title, an endearment	the same person, named differently
what is said aloud	the disagreement is spoken	it is understood and not mentioned
physical distance	where each is placed in a room	the same room, arranged differently

Readers should examine **how a character interacts with other characters.**

3

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

Council table	Clock and agenda associate the meeting with formal control and an approved order.
Ferry landing	Nora's mother waits there each morning: the route is connected to a continuing personal need.
Contrast	The view through the window links an institutional decision to lives outside the room.

These details support competing priorities. A change of place alone would not prove a conflict of values.

4

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

- 1 **Look** Nora looks from the meeting to the landing where her mother waits.
- 2 **Connect** The glance makes the policy question personal before her challenge.
- 3 **Act** She unfolds the petition outside rather than leaving it covered.
- 4 **Interpret / limit** These actions support continued commitment. They do not establish that every council participant lacks concern for ferry users.

5

How Plot Orders Events

Map the narrated sequence

Meeting	Detailed speech, glance, realisation and challenge.
Immediately after	The petition is covered, then unfolded outside.
Three-year gap	A single sentence reports the ferry's return; intervening events are not narrated.
Final image	Nora keeps the softened agenda, linking a lasting memory to the earlier meeting.

The passage is chronological but unevenly paced. An omitted interval is not evidence that nothing happened.

6

The Function of a Sequence of Events

The Function of a Sequence of Events

Your turn: interpret the three-year gap

Compare the detailed meeting with “Three years passed before the ferry returned. What is made immediate? What is left unknown? Explain why the gap limits a simple claim that Nora’s speech saved the ferry.

Attempt before advancing. Distinguish the duration of an event from the space the narration gives it.

Pacing is the manipulation of time

- 1 **Describe the choice** The meeting unfolds through dialogue and gestures; three years are compressed into one sentence.
- 2 **Explain its effect** The challenge becomes immediate while the delay and intervening campaign receive little detail.
- 3 **Use the last image** The handled agenda connects the earlier exclusion with Nora's later life.
- 4 **Qualify** Pacing directs attention; sentence count alone cannot establish the only important event or its cause.

Pacing, reliability, and how a simile works

Pacing	Which moments receive scene, summary or a gap? Explain the contrast in context.
Reliability	What can this narrator know? Distinguish limited access from contradiction or deception.
Simile	What selected quality transfers between the things compared? Explain its contribution to this situation.

Use the actual wording for each question. Naming the device alone leaves the interpretation unexplained.

7

Narrator access and reliability

How a Narrator's Reliability Affects a Narrative

What this passage gives us

The narrator reports Nora's new understanding, but not the chair's private thoughts. His covering gesture is visible; his motive must be inferred.

- 1 Supported** The agenda physically covers the petition after Nora's challenge.
- 2 Possible reading** He resists giving her request attention.
- 3 Not established** Every council member agrees with him, or the narrator is dishonest because some motives remain unreported.

8

The Function of a Symbol

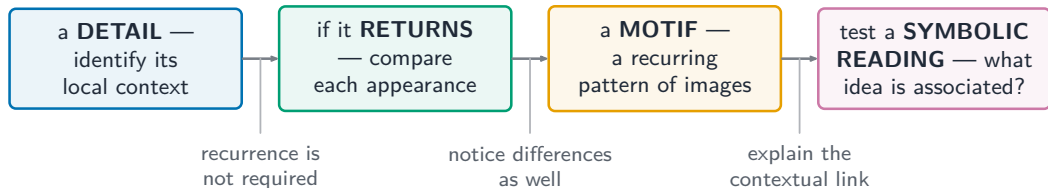
The Function of a Symbol

A possible symbolic reading

Nora keeps the chair's agenda until its edges are soft from handling. The retained object may embody the memory of being excluded from the official order.

Explain both retention and handling. Context can support symbolism on a first appearance; repeated mention is useful evidence, not an entry requirement.

Test a symbolic reading



Test the contextual association. A recurring motif does not automatically become a symbol.

9

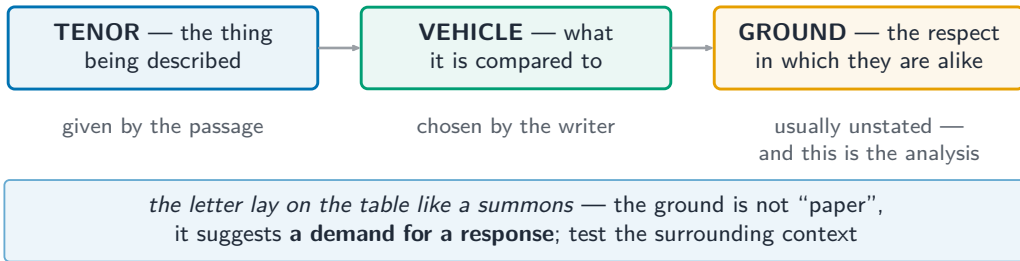
The Function of an Image or Imagery

The Function of an Image or Imagery

Repeated document	Petition beside clock → covered by agenda → unfolded outside.
Pattern	Visibility is repeatedly contested; the request is not abandoned in the scene.
Developed idea	Nora's continuing effort meets formal resistance.
Limit	The recurrence supports a motif; it does not establish that every paper object carries one fixed symbolic meaning.

10 The Function of a Simile

Name the ground



In Nora’s passage, the petition shakes “like a small sail: fragility and possible movement fit the scene; a literal voyage is not implied.

11 The Function of Personification

The Function of Personification

An illustrative comparison — not part of Nora's passage

"The clerk was a clock, each answer arriving on the minute.

- 1 **Identify** A person is described through a nonhuman object's qualities.
- 2 **Select the quality** Regular timing and mechanical routine fit the following clause.
- 3 **Explain attitude** The description may make the clerk seem impersonal. Test the surrounding voice before calling it praise or criticism.

12 Literary argument and evidence

Developing a Literary Thesis, Commentary, and Evidence

- 1 **Initial claim** Nora's speech wins the ferry campaign.
- 2 **Counterevidence** The narrator skips three years and does not explain what caused the return.
- 3 **Revised thesis** The passage presents Nora's challenge as an assertion of excluded needs, while withholding a simple account of its eventual success.
- 4 **Line of reasoning** Connect the chair's language and gesture to Nora's response, then explain how the time gap limits the victory claim.

Worked example – writing about pacing

Model commentary on the authored passage

The meeting is developed through Nora's question and the chair's covering gesture, making her challenge to the official order immediate. By contrast, "Three years passed" compresses the delay before the ferry returns and leaves the intervening struggle unexplained. The softened agenda connects that earlier resistance to Nora's later life. Together these choices complicate a simple victory story: the outcome changes, but the memory of exclusion remains.

Specific details → a relationship between them → interpretation with a limit.
This model carries no guaranteed score.

Exam tips

- 1 **Character change** Trace changed understanding and check separately whether action follows.
- 2 **Setting and relationships** Connect a detail or gesture to an interpretation; test contrary evidence.
- 3 **Pacing** Consider scene, summary, syntax and chronology rather than counting alone.
- 4 **Symbol and motif** Establish an association in context; distinguish recurring pattern from symbolic meaning.

13 **Recap**

Unit 7 – key takeaways

1

Change

trace the source, evidence and limits of change

2

Epiphany

a new understanding; action may follow

3

Group

can function as a character

4

Pacing

compare scene, summary and chronology

Check yourself

- 1 **Change** Identify Nora's realisation and one action that follows it.
- 2 **Relationship** Use two gestures involving the petition to explain the conflict.
- 3 **Pacing** Why does the three-year summary weaken a simple causal victory claim?
- 4 **Interpretation** Defend one reading of the retained agenda and name a limit.