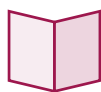


Short Fiction III

AP English Literature ■ Unit 7

AP English Literature



Short Fiction III

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

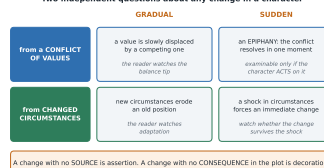
Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Short Fiction III

└ Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Where a change comes from, and how fast it arrives

Two independent questions about any change in a character



- 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**

Short Fiction III

└ Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

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**.

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└ Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

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.

2

Nuances in Characters' Relationships

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↳ Nuances in Characters' Relationships

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.

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↳ Nuances in Characters' Relationships

Measuring the same thing twice

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

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3

The Function of Setting in a Narrative

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↳ The Function of Setting in a Narrative

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.

4

The Relationship Between Character and Setting

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.

5

How Plot Orders Events

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.

6

The Function of a Sequence of Events

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.

7

How a Narrator's Reliability Affects a Narrative

8

The Function of a Symbol

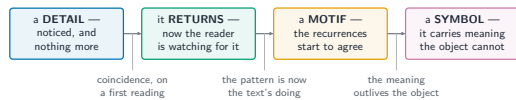
Short Fiction III
└ The Function of a Symbol

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.

Short Fiction III
└ The Function of a Symbol

Repetition builds a symbol



Nothing is a symbol on its **first** appearance. Quote the recurrences, and the claim is evidenced by the structure of the text itself

9

The Function of an Image or Imagery

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└ The Function of an Image or Imagery

The Function of an Image or Imagery

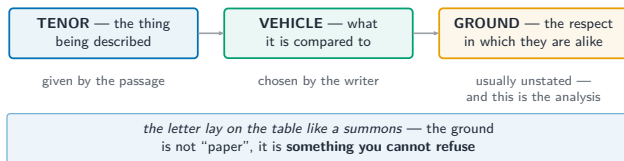
A **motif** 母題 is a unified pattern of recurring objects or images used to emphasise a significant idea.

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.

10

The Function of a Simile

Name the ground



Name the **ground**. A vehicle carries many possible likenesses, and saying which one is operating is the whole of the commentary

11 The Function of Personification

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.

12 Developing a Literary Thesis, Commentary, and Evidence

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.