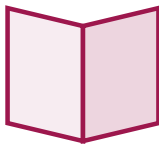


# Longer Fiction or Drama III

AP English Literature ■ Unit 9

AP English Literature



## What we will cover

- 1 Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged
- 2 Choices, Actions, and Speech Reveal Complexity
- 3 Significant Events in a Plot
- 4 The Function of Conflict in a Text
- 5 Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective
- 6 Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

## Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged

Unit 9 is the final unit, and its subject is **how texts end** – and what an ending lets a reader conclude about the whole work.

- **Minor characters often remain unchanged** because the narrative does not focus on them; they may serve other functions.
- **Readers' interpretations are often affected by a character changing – or not – and by the nature of that change.**

## Characters Who Change or Remain Unchanged, continued

The second is the interpretive move the whole course has been building toward.

Whether a character changes is not a fact to report; it is the ground on which a reading of the work stands.

## Choices, Actions, and Speech Reveal Complexity

How a character behaves *after* the crisis is resolved is often the most compressed evidence in a text, and it is almost always overlooked, because by then the reader is finishing.

- A character's responses to the resolution of the narrative – in words or in actions – are revealing.
- Inconsistencies and unexpected developments in a character affect readers' interpretations.

## Significant Events in a Plot

Note *accumulate*. Suspense is not produced by a single event but by a series that narrows what can still happen.

- Significant events often illustrate competing value systems related to a conflict in the text.
- Events collide and accumulate to create anticipation and suspense 期待与悬念.

# The Function of Conflict in a Text

## Three things to establish about any ending

### 1. The denouement

the resolution of the anticipation,  
suspense, or central conflicts

*what was settled - and  
for whom*

### 2. What is never shown

an unseen character, an action that  
preceded the first page

*the least-used evidence in the  
course, and often the strongest*

### 3. Whether it resolves at all

some plots have unresolved endings

*an unresolved ending is a  
CHOICE, not a failure to finish*

Question 3 asks for "an interpretation of the work as a WHOLE" - and an ending is how the parts add up.

*the distinction this unit turns on*

# The Function of Conflict in a Text

The middle point is the least used and often the most powerful. What a text keeps offstage – a death that happened before the first page, a character who is discussed and never appears – shapes everything the reader is shown, and is textual evidence like any other.

- The resolution of the anticipation, suspense, or central conflicts of a plot may be called the **denouement** 结局.
- Sometimes things not actually shown in a narrative – an **unseen character**, a **preceding action** – affect the interpretation of what is shown.
- **Although most plots end in resolution, some have unresolved endings** 开放式结局, and those affect interpretation too.

## Details, Diction, and Syntax Reveal Perspective

A narrator who changes is doubly analysable: as a character who developed, and as a lens that altered. When the lens changes, everything seen through it before is retrospectively re-lit.

- Multiple, and even contrasting, perspectives can occur within a single text and contribute to its complexity.
- A narrator or speaker may change over the course of a text as a result of actions and interactions.
- Changes and inconsistencies in a narrator's or speaker's perspective may contribute to irony or to a reader's judgement of reliability.

## Developing a Literary Thesis Statement

Unchanged: an **interpretation** requiring textual defence, which **may** preview the line of reasoning.

At this stage, the thesis you are aiming for is one that could not be written before reading the whole work – a claim about how the parts add up.

## Developing Commentary

For the Question 3 literary argument in particular, the phrase in the prompt is almost always "*an interpretation of the work as a whole*". That phrase is a requirement: your claim must be about the whole, and the passage or character you analyse must be shown to bear on it.

- A **line of reasoning** is the sequence of claims defending the thesis, communicated through **commentary**.
- More sophisticated literary arguments explain the significance or relevance of an interpretation.

## Selecting Relevant and Sufficient Evidence

Evidence used **strategically**; **effective** with commentary; **sufficient** in quantity and quality; and interpretation developed **recursively**, revised when the evidence does not support it.

## Exam tips

- Whether a character changes is **the ground of a reading**, not a fact to report.
- **How a character behaves after the crisis** is compressed evidence, and almost always overlooked.
- Suspense **accumulates**. It comes from a series that narrows what can still happen, not from one event.
- **What is never shown** – an unseen character, a prior action – is textual evidence. Use it.
- An **unresolved ending** is a choice with meaning, not a failure to finish.
- Question 3 asks for **"the work as a whole"**. That is a requirement, and it is where most answers fall short.