

## 4.9 The function of point of view

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: 13 marks

**KEY WORDS** narrative distance 叙述距离 • stream of consciousness 意识流

### Objective

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Build the skills to explain **narrative distance** 叙述距离.

**You must be able to:**

- define narrative distance and name its four components
- define stream of consciousness
- explain what a change in distance does
- use distance as an analytic term

### 1 Worked examples

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Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

#### ■ Narrative distance

**Narrative distance refers to the physical distance, chronological distance, relationships, or emotional investment of the narrator to the events or characters of the narrative.** Four components, and they can vary independently.

#### ■ Stream of consciousness

**A type of narration in which a character's thoughts are related through a continuous dialogue or description.** The distance is at its smallest: the reader is inside the thinking.

#### ■ Changes in distance

A narrator may stand close to one character and far from another, or close early and far later. Each change is a choice the analysis can name.

#### ■ As a term

“The narrator is distant” is vague. “The narrator is chronologically distant but emotionally invested” is precise and immediately suggests what the account will and will not contain.

## 2 Practice

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**2.1** Define narrative distance and name its four components. [3]

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**2.2** Define stream of consciousness. [2]

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**2.3** Distance can vary.

(a) Name two ways it may vary within one text. [2]

(b) State why the four components should be named separately. [1]

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## 3 Exam-style questions

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**3.1** In stream of consciousness the narrative distance is [1]

- **A** at its smallest
- **B** at its greatest
- **C** fixed
- **D** irrelevant

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**3.2** Narrative distance includes physical, chronological, relational and [1]

- **A** emotional investment
- **B** typographical
- **C** commercial
- **D** grammatical

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**3.3** A narrator writes fifty years later about a brother she loved.

(a) Describe the distance precisely. [1]

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(b) Explain what this predicts about the account.

[2]

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## Solutions

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**2.1** the narrator's relation to the events or characters; physical distance, chronological distance, relationships and emotional investment.

**2.2** narration in which a character's thoughts are related through a continuous dialogue or description.

**2.3** (a) any two of: close to one character and far from another; close early and far later; physically near but emotionally detached. (b) they vary independently, so a single word for distance is imprecise.

**3.1 A.** the reader is inside the thinking.

**3.2 A.** emotional investment.

**3.3** (a) chronologically distant, emotionally invested. (b) it will have hindsight the events themselves did not and a warmth of judgment that a detached narrator would not supply.