Setting Plot Characterisation

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

What does the first paragraph tell us about the setting?

Step 1 · Place and time

An island, Skerra, reached by ferry; winter; evening ('the light was already going').

Step 2 · Isolation

The ferry runs only 'twice a week in winter': the island is cut off.

Step 3 · Mood

'black hump' and 'wet slate' make it dark, cold and unwelcoming.

Answer: Skerra is a remote, cut-off island seen on a dark winter evening; 'black hump' and 'wet slate' create a cold, unwelcoming mood.

Check: Place, time and mood are all covered with evidence.

2. Now try one with the steps

How does the writer present Amara's grandfather?

Step 1 · Appearance

Step 2 · Actions

Step 3 · Speech

Step 4 · Sum up

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. How many times a week does the ferry run in winter? Write the number. [1]

2. By how many minutes did Amara miss the first ferry? Write the number. [1]

3. For how many years had the lighthouse not been lit? Write the number. [1]

4. What is a protagonist? [1]

5. Name the three parts of setting described in the Learn tab. [1]

6. What is an inciting incident? [1]

7. What is the difference between a round and a flat character? [2]

8. Which phrase in paragraph 1 creates a gloomy mood? [1]

9. What does 'He did not hug her' suggest about the grandfather? [1]

10. Why is the short sentence 'Everyone on the mainland knew that.' effective? [2]

11. How does Amara's counting show her feelings without stating them? [2]

12. Explain how the setting of an isolated island could link to the novel's themes. [2]

13. Predict one way the grandfather might change by the end of the novel. Use evidence for why. [2]

14. Why do writers usually show character through actions rather than telling us directly? [2]

4. Before you hand it in

Describing setting 'where it happens'.
Ask what the setting makes the reader feel and what ideas it suggests.

Retelling the plot instead of analysing it.
Write about how the writer orders events to create mystery, tension or surprise.

Treating characters people: 'Amara should have caught the first ferry.'
Write 'the writer presents Amara as...' and explain the methods used.

Judging a character from one detail.
Collect several pieces of evidence, and notice when they conflict (cold welcome, but practical care).