

Unseen Characters by Will Floyd

Many plays, films, and television shows use the storytelling device of the unseen character. As the name implies, this trope involves a character the audience never directly encounters, but instead only hears about through the words of other characters. A common assumption is that a character that never speaks or is visible to the viewers of a play or film would only be a minor element, left to be the butt of jokes or as a simple way to add depth to a major character. In fact, unseen characters are frequently quite important, and further the plot because of their absence. The most notable instance of such a character is “Godot,” in Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot.” The two main characters in the play, Vladimir and Estragon, sit patiently by a tree, expecting Godot to come by at any moment. Three other characters, Lucky, Pozzo, and a boy, all speak to Vladimir and Estragon, with Godot never alighting on the stage. Nonetheless, Godot’s machinations in making the men wait—along with his supposed intentions—drive the play’s narrative. Godot, never seen or heard from directly, becomes the largest force in the created world of the play. This use of an unseen character creates an added mystery and increases the tension between the two main characters. Beckett uses the unseen character not as a gimmick or cheap ploy, but instead as the central focus of his play.

1. It can be inferred from the passage that Samuel Beckett _____.

was an author who primarily wrote in French

made Godot famous

was a playwright who used interesting literary devices

was a literary nobody with no appreciable skill

did not use unseen characters well

The Chemistry of Cooking by Will Floyd

Molecular gastronomy is a new take on cooking that has spread like wildfire through the culinary world in the last few decades. At its core, molecular

gastronomy seeks to redefine and reimagine how food is cooked in restaurant kitchens, using technology, chemistry, and physics to transform pedestrian dishes into surprising forms and textures. These techniques create mystifying dining experiences, while using intimately familiar flavors. Chefs who use molecular gastronomy do not wish merely to be chemists or engineers, but are chefs above all else. To create a special dining experience, the chef begins first and foremost with the dish they wish to serve. Tools like an anti-griddle, a flat top that instantly freezes anything that touches it, or maltodextrin, an additive that can turn liquids into powder, are not there simply to play with the food. A molecular gastronomist will first think of the dish they want to serve, like fried chicken and mashed potatoes. Next, they will find a way to get the same flavors and textures in a unique way. The chicken might not be fried, but go through a process that will give it a crispy skin and juicy meat while never broaching hot oil. The mashed potatoes could become a light sauce, and then be put on an anti-griddle to give a new look, texture, and temperature. While the diner will have something that might look like a dessert or a soup, in actuality what they are having is a homestyle dish that they remember from childhood. This sense of familiarity is the ultimate goal of any chef utilizing molecular gastronomy.

2. The author discusses the specific dish of fried chicken and mashed potatoes in order to _____.

show that molecular gastronomy is really nothing new.

demonstrate people do not enjoy eating anything like fried chicken and mashed potatoes at a restaurant.

demonstrate that chefs using molecular gastronomy are ruining classic dishes.

show how molecular gastronomy techniques can be specifically applied.

show most people do not enjoy eating food made with molecular gastronomy techniques.

Technology of the Future by Will Floyd

Technological revolutions rarely come in expected forms. Predictions of the future are usually found to be humorous in retrospect, as the theories put forward usually involve too much of the present. Typically, an author who imagines the future sees some small developments in the technology already in use, without countenancing a possible sudden change in how gadgets are made. Science fiction from before the personal computer's rise tended to show computers as large machines only run by specialists. Before the development of tablets, small reading devices belonging to each person were hardly imagined. None of these now strange conjectures on the future should be ridiculed. Even those researchers and scientists who are trying to create new breakthroughs in technology often have no idea of what their work will produce. The personal computer was initially divided into office models and home models, which were supposed to have different graphics, power, and performance specifics. In reality, people desired the office model in their home. Such adoptions happen all the time in the world of technology, with such disparate examples as the personal computer and the Model-T automobile both changing future technology by becoming the most popular forms in the marketplace.

3. The author mentions the success in the marketplace of the personal computer and the Model-T automobile because _____.

it demonstrates a guide to making better speculations about future technology

the success was undeserved considering their technological limitations

they looked nothing like previous forms of technology

they were exactly predicted as they existed in science fiction

they were hugely popular forms of their respective technologies

Science-fiction and Society by Will Floyd

Science-fiction and fantasy novels are often seen as pure escapism; however, many authors use the fantasy or futuristic aspects of their work to comment on contemporary problems. Normally this is done by having things that seem quite familiar to a reader, but giving them small twists rooted in the author's

fabricated world. Subjects like racism are often hard for certain writers to analyze without causing an uproar among certain readers. By subverting the prejudice to being directed against a space alien, a completely unfamiliar being, a science fiction author can reinterpret why humans possess hatred for other groups. This can take the form of prejudice against things that people in reality are not normally prejudiced against. These analyses show the erratic and arbitrary nature of racism.

Fantasy books can offer a similar level of surprise for readers who think they know what the usual course of events would be in the regular world. By making the fantasy the focus of what's occurring in the narrative, love stories, war stories, and simple tales of overcoming obstacles can become pleasantly mystifying. Fantasy authors can create interesting takes on basic morality by simply injecting a small amount of magic into an old tale. Black-and-white approaches to good and evil seem much less trite and hackneyed when set in a fantastical, magical world. The ability for an audience to get lost in a magical world changes the expectations of the reader. Often, the threat of destruction in a beloved fantasy world will seem a darker occurrence than the threat to the world in which they live. This attachment to a created world allows science fiction and fantasy authors to discuss serious issues in a different manner to authors in other genres.

4. The author would NOT agree with the statement that _____.

an author's fabricated world is key to both science fiction and fantasy as genres

science fiction and fantasy readers appreciate the created worlds the authors establish more than the real world

science fiction and fantasy authors are most succesful when they somewhat relate to the real world

science fiction and fantasy can tackle weighty subjects

science fiction and fantasy genres are light reading that are pure pleasure

"Developments in Understanding Ancient Greek Art" by Will Floyd

Most people imagine stark white temples and plain marble statues as the ideal of ancient Greek art. Nothing could be further from the truth, as the ancient Greeks lavished their statues, sculptures, and buildings with bright colors. The common misconception of plainly adorned Hellenic art can be blamed on the ancient Greeks' biggest proponents in history. Enlightenment-era classicists eagerly visited ancient ruins in the eighteenth century and saw artifacts that had been weathered to plain white stone through decades of neglect. By the time nineteenth-century archaeologists found proof that the Parthenon and images of the Gods were meant to be in vivid hues, eminent scholars in Europe refused to countenance that pure white marble was not antiquity's aesthetic paradigm. Widespread acknowledgement of the ancient Greeks' adoration of bright colors only came in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as scientific tests proved ancient statuary and buildings had once been covered in polychrome paint.

5. The author would agree with the statement that _____.

the ancient Greeks had a particular aesthetic sense

ancient Greek art has no value to the modern world

polychrome paint is an unnecessary element of Greek art

the ancient Greeks were derivative artists

ancient Greek art was not popular in its own time

A Short History of Recent Zoos, by Will Floyd

Throughout the twentieth century, zoos underwent large-scale transformations. Before World War I, zoos were small parts of larger municipal parks, and featured sparse cages with little room for their inhabitants. This model held sway until mid-century, with many zoos struggling to remain open during the Great Depression and World War II. The successful zoos survived through making themselves cheap family entertainment. In the 1960s, zoos began to change in drastic ways. With the growing strength of environmental- and animal-rights movements, the public clamored for more naturalistic and spacious environments in which the animals could live.

The most emblematic of these transformations was the development of the Los Angeles Zoo. In 1966, the cramped and antiquated zoo used grants from the city government to move to a brand-new facility. Although the zoo moved just two miles away, the new location was exponentially bigger, and it featured fresh landscapes that resembled the animals' natural habitats, instead of dilapidated cages. As the Los Angeles Zoo developed, it was able to work on preservation and conservation efforts for endangered species. New educational programs also became key elements of the Zoo's mission. Now the old Zoo's cages stand as ruins and reminders of what past generations saw when they visited years ago.

6. The author's argument is best summarized as _____.

all zoos treat their animals inhumanely

zoos changed for the better through a variety of factors

zoos are great reminders of past generations' entertainment options

no contemporary zoo is as good as the old zoos

zoos are horrible entertainment for families

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wait—along with his supposed intentions—drive the play’s narrative. Godot, never seen or heard from directly, becomes the largest force in the created world of the play. This use of an unseen character creates an added mystery and increases the tension between the two main characters. Beckett uses the unseen character not as a gimmick or cheap ploy, but instead as the central focus of his play.

7. The author's argument is best summarized as _____.

Vladimir and Estragon in "Waiting for Godot" are excellent examples of unseen characters in literature

unseen characters can be a successful literary device when used well

unseen characters can not successfully play a major role in a great work of literature

unseen characters only work best as the butt of jokes

"Waiting for Godot" is an overrated piece of literature

Fact and Representation by Will Floyd

Professional wrestling is frequently criticized because of its unreality. For the wrestlers, promoters, and fans who love professional wrestling, the very fact that professional wrestling is “fake” is central to their love of wrestling. This love finds its home in the concept of “kayfabe.” Kayfabe is the fabricated world of wrestling, covering every element of its storytelling, from the outlandish characters to bitter feuds, even to the specific politics about which wrestler will become champion.

Throughout the twentieth century, kayfabe was a closely guarded secret held only by those who were in the know about a wrestling company. Wrestlers could not appear out of character at any moment they were in public, for fear this revelation would give away the secrets of the wrestling promotion. A good guy wrestler could never even socialize with a bad guy wrestler, for fear that fans would see enemies together. While still quite fake, this strict adherence to the created world issued an air of believability for wrestling’s biggest fans.

In recent years, wrestling's curtain of believability has been torn apart, as the internet has allowed many personal details about wrestlers to come to light. Nonetheless, many wrestling fans still only refer to their heroes by their created names, understanding them through their invented personalities.

8. The author's argument is best summarized as _____

to understand professional wrestling, one has to understand the role of "kayfabe."

"kayfabe" has been a destructive force in the history of professional wrestling.

the best professional wrestling promotions have never relied too much on "kayfabe."

the existence of "kayfabe" is highly disputed among wrestling fans and enthusiasts.

professional wrestling is unimportant because of its use of "kayfabe."

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preservation and conservation efforts for endangered species. New educational programs also became key elements of the Zoo's mission. Now the old Zoo's cages stand as ruins and reminders of what past generations saw when they visited years ago.

9. The phrase "this model" in the passage refers to _____.

the method of operation of the Los Angeles Zoo

zoos featuring sparse cages with little room

zoos changing dramatically throughout the twentieth century

zoos being cheap family entertainment

zoos failing during the Great Depression

Developments in Understanding Ancient Greek Art by Will Floyd

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10. "The common misconception" mentioned in the passage refers to _____.

antiquity's aesthetic paradigm

lavishing statues, sculptures, and buildings with bright colors

the ancient Greeks' biggest proponents in history

artifacts that had been weathered

plainly-adorned Hellenic art

Adapted from *Seven Discourses on Art*, by Joshua Reynolds

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms—and which, by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, that alone can acquire the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter who aims at the greatest style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original—and what may seem a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object. This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the artist calls the ideal beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted. By this, Phidias acquired his fame. He wrought upon a sober principle what has so much excited the enthusiasm of the world—and by this method you, who have courage to tread the same path, may acquire equal reputation.

11. The word "paradox" in the passage means _____.

a flaw in nature

the leading principle of art

an artist's rendering of an object

a painter's tool

seemingly contradictory ideas held at the same time

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12. The word "broaching" in the passage means _____.

confusing or befuddling.

negotiating or dealmaking.

stepping away.

avoiding or sidestepping.

approaching or penetrating.

13. The weather at the camp was generally brutal, with pleasant spells being a _____ phenomenon.

gratuitous

transient

congenital

mundane

persistent

14. The boys did a particularly _____ job painting, leaving walls uneven and dripping paint everywhere.

nebulous

laudatory

salacious

condonable

execrable

15. The two nations' _____ rhetoric was seen as a chief reason for their fighting.

select

ambiguous

select

bellicose

select

benign

select

jaunty

select

phlegmatic