

Reading Skill

ANALYZE CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

Many stories, like “The Distant Past,” focus on changing relationships between characters. Two characters who loathe each other might fall in love. Or two friends might become sworn enemies after an unfortunate misunderstanding. The narrator might describe the changes directly. More often, you have to infer how a relationship changes based on key plot events, as well as on characters’ reactions and thoughts.

Directions: Complete this chart to analyze the changing relationship between the Middletons and the townspeople. Describe the relationship during each time period listed in the first column. Note the evidence that suggests this relationship. Then describe the reasons the relationship existed or changed.

Relationship	Evidence	Reasons
Before 1949		
From 1949 to the 1960s		
From the 1960s onward		