

Vistas: situation, symbol, and what a story leaves unsaid

What a Vistas question tests

- these stories lean on situation and inner conflict more than plot, the question usually tests one of those
- several pieces here work through fantasy or coincidence, read what the device is used to say
- a question on a character's choice wants the reasoning behind it, not just what they decided
- some stories close without stating their point, the ending itself is often what a question asks about

Reading a Vistas story for the answer

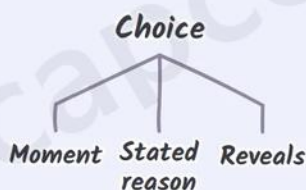


- note the moment reality bends or a coincidence occurs, and ask what it lets the story say
- watch a character's stated reason for a choice against what their actions actually suggest
- an unusual narrative device is chosen for a reason, notice what it allows
- read the final lines twice, an unresolved ending's implication usually sits there

Story	Writer	Built to teach
The Third Level	Jack Finney	fantasy used to argue about the pressure of ordinary life
The Tiger King	Kalki	irony built across an entire life, traced stage by stage
Journey to the End of the Earth	Tishani Doshi	a travel account used to argue about the planet's future
The Enemy	Pearl S. Buck	a conflict of duty and conscience worked through one decision
On the Face of It	Susan Hill	two isolated people read through what each one hides
Memories of Childhood	Zitkala-Sa and Bama	two accounts of the same wound, told from different worlds

Character's choice vs the situation's device

Character's choice



a root box labelled *Choice* branching down to three labelled children: *Moment*, *Stated reason*, *Reveals*

- find the moment of decision and the stated reason for it
- weigh the stated reason against what the action itself suggests
- name what the gap or the match reveals

The situation's device



three stops in order along a dashed path: *Device used*, *What it allows*, *Larger point*, tracing how an unusual device serves a Vistas story's argument

- identify the unusual device the writer uses, fantasy, structure, coincidence
- ask what it lets the writer say that plain narration could not
- tie the device back to the story's larger point

a Vistas question can test the character or the device the story is built on, check which before answering