Annotating a text

Colour code and label the following techniques in lines 1 – 61:

- addressing the reader in the second person (as “you”)
- asking questions
- telling the reader what to do and think (imperatives)
- using colloquial (chatty) language
- showing us the central characters through the eyes of the nosy neighbours
- suggesting there are unanswered questions about the couple
- describing the couple using humour (e.g. similes)

These techniques are how the writer “hooks” the reader. It puts us in the role of the nosy neighbour!

Character analysis

The three main characters are: the tailor’s wife, the tall woman and her short husband!

Look at the word list below and:

(a) Decide which ones relate to the tailor’s wife and which ones relate to the married couple.
(b) Write 5 true statements about each character and 5 false ones to quiz the class later!

Nasty
Loving
Loyal
Kind
Clever
Sneaky
Jealous
Hard working
Contemptible
Bully
Suspicious

Dignified
Gossipy
Malicious
Courageous
Shy
Loud
Brave
Lazy
Different
Persecuted
Suspicious

Educated
Uneducated
Grasping
Accepting
Sad
Strong
Admirable
Unconventional
Opinionated
Persecutor
Cynical

Use a dictionary to check any words you aren’t sure of!
The story is set in **Egypt** / **India** / **China** and is set at a time of great political change and upheaval, known as the **Cultural** / **French** / **Industrial** Revolution (1966 – 1976). This is when the Chinese leader, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, attempted to create a **old** / **new Communist** / **Capitalist** society. Mao wanted to break with the **present** / **past** / **future** and create **inequality** / **equality** and encourage community effort, especially **soft** / **hard physical** / **mental** labour.

In practice, this meant that individuality became the subject of **envy** / **suspicion**. Intellectuals, like **artists** / **writers** / **teachers** and professional people like **doctors** / **lawyers** / **managers** were often **celebrated** / **persecuted**. It was feared that many would try to leave the country and go to the west who was viewed as a **friend** / **enemy**.

Over **10** / **50** / **100** million people were persecuted during this time and a **quarter** / **half** a million were killed or committed suicide. Many **schools** / **museums** / **libraries** were closed and there was a lack of intellectual freedom and creativity. The writer is looking at how this **great** / **small** upheaval affected **individuals** / **groups** and **ruined** / **altered** / **improved** their lives. The writer **does** / **doesn’t** think that the Cultural Revolution was a **negative** / **positive** change as he uses words like "disaster", “that period of lunacy” and “cruelly” to suggest that the country was infected by some sort of madness. The writer describes what happens at **Division** / **Unity** / **Singular** Mansions as a “**microcosm**” (a **large** / **small** scale version) of what was happening in the whole country. He uses techniques such as **humour** / **irony** / **sarcasm** to portray this and the whole story is like a fable with a **message** / **moral** at the end to teach a lesson to the reader.

The story focuses on the **divorce** / **relationship** / **engagement** of a physically **mismatched** / **perfect** couple. The woman is **short** / **tall** and the husband is **short** / **tall**, hence the title. We **do** / **never** find out their names but their names are symbolic of their appearance and suggests that the neighbours too never know them as individuals, they are judged on appearances. The couple live in a place called Unity mansions. This **is** / **isn’t** an ironic name for the place. The community **is** / **isn’t** unified in **gossip** / **suspicion**/ **cruelty** against the strange couple. They **are** / **aren’t** a unified community really as they turn on the couple and **improve** / **ruin** their lives.

The main gossip in the story is the **butcher’s** / **tailor’s** / **baker’s** wife. She becomes almost obsessed with the couple wondering exactly what brought them together and she invents many theories. The **political** / **social** / **cultural** events in the country gives the tailor’s wife an excuse to persecute the couple, although they have never harmed her.

Although the couple face a lot of prejudice, trouble and gossip, their love is strong and is a **bad** / **good** example of how **individuals** / **groups** can face great hardship. Their relationship remains strong and defeats the tailor’s wife. The ending has a **sad** / **haunting** / **melancholy** tone that leaves the reader in no doubt that the couple did love each other.
The story is set in China and is set at a time of great political change and upheaval, known as the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976). This is when the Chinese leader, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, attempted to create a new Communist society. Mao wanted to break with the past and create equality and encourage community effort, especially hard physical labour.

In practice, this meant that individuality became the subject of envy / suspicion. Intellectuals, like artists / writers / teachers and professional people like doctors / lawyers / managers were often persecuted. It was feared that many would try to leave the country and go to the west who was viewed as an enemy.

Over 100 million people were persecuted during this time and a half a million were killed or committed suicide. Many schools / museums / libraries were closed and there was a lack of intellectual freedom and creativity. The writer is looking at how this great upheaval affected individuals and ruined their lives. The writer doesn’t think that the Cultural Revolution was a positive change as he uses words like “disaster”, “that period of lunacy” and “cruelly” to suggest that the country was infected by some sort of madness. The writer describes what happens at Unity Mansions as a “microcosm” (a small scale version) of what was happening in the whole country. He uses techniques such as humour / irony / sarcasm to portray this and the whole story is like a fable with a message / moral at the end to teach a lesson to the reader.

The story focuses on the relationship of a physically mismatched couple. The woman is tall and the husband is short, hence the title. We never find out their names but their names are symbolic of their appearance and suggests that the neighbours too never know them as individuals, they are judged on appearances. The community is unified in gossip / suspicion / cruelty against the strange couple. They aren’t a unified community really as they turn on the couple and ruin their lives.

The main gossip in the story is the tailor’s wife. She becomes almost obsessed with the couple wondering exactly what brought them together and she invents many theories. The political / social / cultural events in the country gives the tailor’s wife an excuse to persecute the couple, although they have never harmed her.

Although the couple face a lot of prejudice, trouble and gossip, their love is strong and is a good example of how individuals can face great hardship. Their relationship remains strong and defeats the tailor’s wife. The ending has a sad / haunting / melancholy tone that leaves the reader in no doubt that the couple did love each other.
Background Information

- The story is set in China and is set at a time of great political change and upheaval, known as the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976).
- This is when the Chinese leader, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, attempted to create a new Communist society. Mao wanted to break with the past and create equality and encourage community effort, especially hard physical labour.
- In practice, this meant that individuality became the subject of envy and suspicion. Intellectuals, like artists, writers and teachers and professional people like doctors, lawyers and managers were often persecuted.
- It was feared that many would try to leave the country and go to the west who was viewed as an enemy.
- Over 100 million people were persecuted during this time and a half a million were killed or committed suicide.
- Many schools, museums and libraries were closed and there was a lack of intellectual freedom and creativity.
- The writer is looking at how this great upheaval affected individuals and ruined their lives.