As you read the following excerpt from “Morning Rain” by Japanese-American writer Hisaye Yamamoto’s, think about how the author develops the characters.

Consider the following questions as you read:

- How does the author use dialogue (what the characters say) and descriptions of the characters’ thoughts and actions to reveal important details about the characters?
- How does the author’s choices and techniques help create an *epiphany*—a character’s sudden realization of a significant detail or idea?

It was a little past nine.

Sadako, seated across the kitchen table from her father, watched him eat his eggs. He had always eaten them in this particular way, he would probably never change. First, he finished at his leisure everything but the eggs—the two pieces of toast, the tomato juice, the coffee—then, with two expert flips of his fork he tossed the two fried eggs, whole, into his mouth, chewed once or twice, then swallowed, and breakfast was over for him. Well, it could be worse, Sadako thought. She remembered a man in a story who demanded two fried eggs for breakfast every morning, one egg with a deep orange yolk and one egg with a light yellow yolk. Even her husband liked his eggs one way and not another; he could not abide fried eggs with a crusty bottom—the underside, as she had learned from bitter experience, had to be tender. (She liked crisp bottoms herself.) At least, her father didn’t quibble about the manner of eggs served him.

“Well, what are your plans for today, Oto-san?” she asked. She asked it pretty well, too; she only had to resort to English for “plans.”

*Think About:* The opening paragraphs introduce the main characters, Sadako, and her father, Mr. Endo. “Oto-san” is a formal term for father in Japanese. The author uses a 3rd person narrator who is not a character in the story to reveal Sadako’s thoughts. Sadako is pleased that she only has to use the English word for “plans” to show that Sadako is more comfortable speaking English while her father is more comfortable using Japanese.

The next paragraph will add more details to show that as a traditional housewife, Sadako not only prepares breakfast for the men—her husband and father—but also has to take care of the baby.

Mr. Endo gave the question a lot of thought. He gave everything a lot of thought, or he appeared to, but he never said much. Sadako had time to start washing his dishes before his answer came. She had eaten much earlier with her husband, before he left for work, and those dishes were already done. The baby, right on schedule, was already taking her morning nap. Today, because it was raining, she would have to improvise a wash line inside for the diapers. And there would be no forenoon stroll for the baby. Well, it was just as well. It was always such a job getting the Taylor Tot down the steep outside stairs of the garage apartment.  

*Think About:* The little details that the author provides about Sadako’s father, Mr. Endo, are important. The author gives a little hint that Mr. Endo “appeared” to not say much because he was thoughtful. Appearances, of course, can be deceiving and we’ll have to think about whether Mr. Endo is quiet because he is thoughtful or another reason.

“Sa, I think I’ll visit with the Iwanagas this afternoon. I didn’t see them the last time. Then there’s a movie I want to see at the Fuji-kwan. Don’t expect me for supper. I’ll eat something down in Nihon-machi.”

“Okay.” Sadako was rather relieved. Supper times were always uneasy when her father
was visiting from San Francisco, where he worked as a gardener for a well-to-do family (it was the same job he had held before the war). She tried her best to keep a pleasant digestible conversation going, but she always ended up tensely, delivering an overly ebullient monologue. Harry, tongue-tied when it came to Japanese, limited himself to asking her to pass the salt and pepper. And her father had never been one for iridescent chit-chat. Oh, once in a while, Harry tried, he really tried, but he always petered out in helpless English. Once or twice, too, her father had tried a bit of English. But the fact was that these two principal men in her life were, as far as communicating with each other was concerned (and that was what living was, was it not, communicating with each other?), incompatible.

“Is there anything you want from down there?” Mr. Endo asked, setting fire to his first cigarette of the day.

“Well, if it’s not too much trouble, I think some manju would be nice.”

“Okay.” Mr. Endo smiled at himself for saying so, and Sadako smiled into the dishwater. Each remembered privately how freely and blithely Mrs. Endo had used that term when she was alive.

“You’d better take my umbrella. This rain doesn’t look as though it’ll let up soon.”

“Is it raining?” Mr. Endo asked, mildly surprised.

“Certainly, it’s raining.” Sadako turned from the cupboard, where she was stacking dishes. “After all, it’s November already. It’s about time we had some rain, Los Angeles or no Los Angeles.”

Then, sharply, she looked at her father, her mouth agape. “Is it raining? You mean you can’t hear that rain?”

Mr. Endo shook his head, no.

They stared at each other for a moment, father and daughter, he not really seeing her and she as though seeing him for the first time in her life.

Then, while Sadako continued to stare at him, Mr. Endo, stepping suddenly to the misted kitchen window, cleared an egg-sized space on it with the heel of his hand and peered out. Sure enough there was water dribbling steadily from the eaves, and the slender, bare limbs of the thorned stone pear tree down below in the yard stood out black and wetly shining in the whitish air. He closed his eyes, knowing a second’s vertigo as he strained with all his might and even then could not hear the sound of that considerable rain, which, all this time, must have been noisily strumming the roof.

“You like the green ones, don’t you, the green ones with kinako?”

Sadako nodded with unnecessary vigor. She watched him put on his overcoat and then brought him the umbrella. As he was going out the door, she realized she had not said a word to him since she asked him whether he could hear the rain.

“Oh yes,” she said, “get a lot of the green ones, the green ones with kinako!” It was only when the baby cried out a second later that she became aware that she had been shouting at the top of her lungs.

Complete the following questions to analyze the author’s development of the characters and the epiphany at the end of the story.
1. Explain why Sadako is relieved that her father won’t be home for dinner.

2. What is Sadako’s attitude towards her husband’s, Harry’s, relationship with her father?

3. Why do you think the author uses parentheses in the first paragraph at the top of page 2?

4. What details does the author use to show Sadako’s epiphany (What does Sadako do)? What is her epiphany--a sudden realization of a significant idea or detail or insight?

5. What details does the author include to show Sadako’s response to her epiphany?

Part II: Composing a Literary Analysis: Analyze the following prompt to walk through the process of composing an essay based on your analysis of the excerpt from “Morning Rain.”

Prompt: Explain how the communication among Sadako, Mr. Endo, and Harry reveals their complex relationships.

1. What are the keywords that you would have to note and address in order to write an essay in response to the prompt?

2. **Outlines** are excellent tools that can help you organize your ideas and use specific details to support and develop your ideas to make your writing more clear.
Review the bolded A. part of the outline to note how you should use specific details to support and develop claims. Then, fill in the blanks for parts B. and C. of the outline.

A. At the beginning of the story, Sadako’s relationship with her father seems to be strained both by her inability to use Japanese and his thoughtful, reticence.
   1. The omniscient third person point of view reveals Sadako’s pleasure in her ability to almost ask her father a normal question in Japanese.
   
      a. Sadako believes she asked a question “pretty good” because she only has to use one word in English to ask her father a question.

   2. Yamamoto portrays Mr. Endo as a reflective, thoughtful person who often has little to say by describing Sadako’s thoughts to illustrate how much time elapses as Mr. Endo considers a simple question.
   
      a. Sadako is able to slip into a daydream about her chores and taking care of the baby since Mr. Endo “gave everything a lot of thought...but never said much.”

B. Sadako is distressed by the lack of a relationship between her father and her husband because of the language barrier between the two of them.
   1. Sadako “was rather relieved” that her father won’t dine with her family for supper.
   
      a. __________________________________________________________

      __________________________________________________________

   2. Yamamoto’s use of a third person omniscient point of view reveals how important communication is to Sadako.

      a. __________________________________________________________

      __________________________________________________________

C. Yamamoto uses an ordinary event to subtly reveal Sadako’s epiphany that leaves her shocked and forces her to reconsider how she communicates with her father.

   1. __________________________________________________________
Part 3: Introduction and Thesis: Now that you have completed an outline to generate ideas in response to the prompt, compose an introduction and thesis statement for the prompt.

Prompt: Explain how the communication among Sadako, Mr. Endo, and Harry reveals their complex relationships.

Your introduction should capture your reader’s interest and introduce the ideas in your thesis. Consider using an anecdote (a brief story from your own life) to explain the importance of communication.

Your thesis needs to be at the end of the introduction and should identify and summarize all of the important details that are developed in the outline.