

TYPES OF CHARACTERS & CHARACTERIZATION

Main & Minor Characters

- The most important characters in a story are called **main characters**. Events in the story center on the lives of these characters. Therefore, the writer usually includes many **details** about their **circumstances, appearance, actions, and feelings**.
- The less important characters are called **minor characters**. These characters exist to **interact** with the main characters and help move the story along.

Protagonist and Antagonist

- **PROTAGONIST**- Is the **central character**. Always the **main** character with whom the story is **about**.
- **ANTAGONIST**- Opposes the protagonist and creates **conflict** for our main character.

Round & Flat Characters

- Characters that are **complex** and **fully** developed are said to be *round characters*.
- **Round characters** tend to display **strengths, weaknesses,** and a **full** range of **emotions**.
- The writer provides **enough detail** for the reader to **understand their feelings** and **motives**.

- **Flat characters** are not **complex**. They have few **emotions**.
- Has one kind of **personality**, often referred to as “**two-dimensional**” because they lack dimension.
- They show a little bit of character through reactions and emotions, but everything they reveal is of a one-track nature that's undeveloped

Static & Dynamic Characters

- A character who **grows** emotionally, **learns** a lesson, or **alters** his or her behavior is called **DYNAMIC CHARACTER**.

Read the following:

The sniper looked at his enemy falling and he shuddered. The lust of battle died in him. He became bitter by remorse. The sweat stood out in beads on his forehead...His teeth chattered. He began to gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody.

- A **static character** is the opposite of a dynamic character.
- The personality of that character when he is **introduced** is **the same** personality when the story comes to a **close**. And all his actions in-between stay **true** to that personality.

Characterization

- **Characterization** is the process by which the writer reveals the **image** and **personality** of a character.

Which words create characterization to clarify your image of Tommy?

Tommy McSweeney really hated being the tallest boy in the eighth grade. Everyone assumed he was a good basketball player, but he had no athletic interest or skill.

Instead, his talent emerged far from a court or ball field. No one beyond Tommy's family knew that the pale, muscular kid with curly hair and freckles was a classical pianist—and Tommy intended to keep it that way.

Characterization: Creating Characters

- There are two types of characterization: **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization.**

Direct Characterization

- If a writer tells you what a character is like the method is direct characterization
- When a writer uses direct characterization, you don't have to do any detective work to figure out the character.
- Example: "The patient boy and quiet girl were both well mannered and did not disobey their mother."
- Explanation: The author is directly telling the audience the personality of these two children. The boy is "patient" and the girl is "quiet."

- Which words directly show you Amaya's qualities?
- When Amaya brought home a pet rabbit, her mother did not object. She knew Amaya was a caring, responsible girl who would take excellent care of the animal.

Dr. Chang was the best dentist in the practice. He had a charming smile, a gentle manner, and a warm personality. He made a trip to the dentist a pleasant experience—despite the discomfort.

What words give you direct information about Dr. Chang's character?

Indirect Characterization

- **Indirect characterization** *shows* things that **reveal** the **personality** of a character.
- When writers use indirect characterization, *they give* **readers** the chance to **decide** for themselves what a character is **like**.
- There are **five methods** of indirect characterization.

Indirect Characterization

STEAL

Speech

What does the character **say**? How does the character **speak**?

Thoughts

What is **revealed** through the character's **private** thoughts and **feelings**?

Effect on others

What is **revealed** through the character's **effect** on others? How do other characters **feel** or **behave** in reaction to the character? How does the character make other characters feel?

Actions

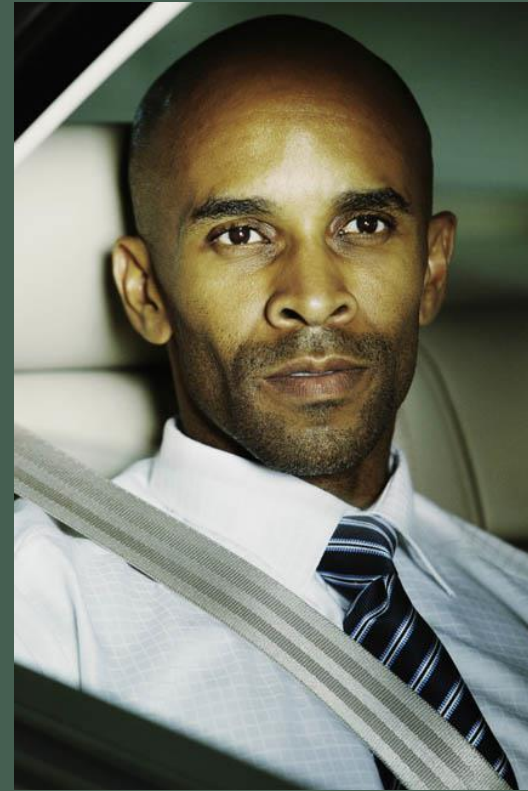
What does the character **do**? How does the character **behave**? What is her/his **attitude**?

Looks

What does the character **look** like? How does the character **dress**? **We might be told the color of hair, or something about the clothing of the character. How the character dresses might reveal something about the character. Does the character wear old, dirty clothing, or stylish, expensive clothing?**

Read the following text. What might this character's **appearance** say about his personality?

- The man seated in the parked limousine had short hair, piercing eyes, and a serious gaze. He was dressed neatly in a starched white shirt and striped tie.



Read the following passage, paying attention to the character's appearance.

- The girl in the fancy dress and high-heeled shoes squirmed uncomfortably on the hard wooden bench. Her eyes, lips, and hands were clenched. Her head drooped and her chin hung low. A tear slid down her face.

How does this girl feel? What details suggest this feeling?

- She feels sad.

What do Karisti's actions imply about her character?

- It was a cold October day when Karisti's alarm buzzed at 6:00 a.m. She pulled on her clothes and headed for the door. She carefully adjusted her headphones; then she pulled the sleeves of her turtleneck over her hands to keep out the cold. *Here goes 10 miles, she thought as she began her run. I have to be ready for the spring marathon.*

- **What actions does Karisti take?**
- Karisti is getting up early to run on a cold morning as she prepares for a marathon. She's probably a dedicated athlete.

What **indirect character** trait is shown?

After class, Deija asked Dana a question, "I'm sorry, Dana, but my little brother was sick and my parents made me stay home and watch him yesterday. Can I see your reading notes?" Dana huffed and rolled her eyes. She replied to Deija, "Uh, I don't know where they are right now."

- Dana is rude, uncaring, and unhelpful.
- Explanation:
- **Deija asks Dana for something reasonable. Rather than politely declining, Dana does a bunch of rude stuff.**

What **indirect character** trait is shown?

Tim was walking around the store when he bumped into a display of soup cans, knocking them all over. Tim bought two cartons of eggs then got hit by the automatic door on the way out. It almost broke the eggs. Tim let out a sigh of relief. While walking through the parking lot, Tim tripped over the curb and landed on the eggs, getting them all over his shirt.

- Tim is clumsy or accident-prone.
- Explanation:
- **Tim can't even go to the grocery store without getting into several accidents. He is either clumsy or unlucky.**

Indirect Characterization

- I'm tired of being ignored, Maura thought. When I walk into a room, it's like no one sees me. No more—I'm going to get noticed at the dance.
- When the big night came, though, nothing went right. Maura's dress didn't fit correctly, and her shawl had a hole in it. Worst of all, as she walked into the gym, the heel broke on her right shoe, sending her sprawling across the floor.

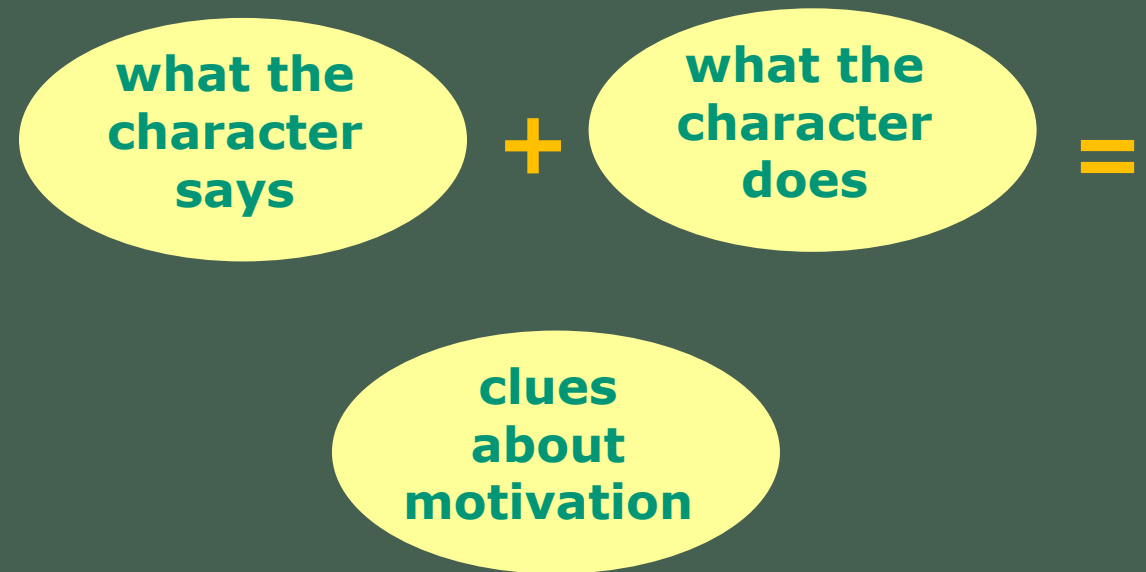
- Which three methods of indirect characterization appear in this passage?

1. Thoughts & feelings
2. Appearance
3. Actions

Motivation

- **Motivation** is the reason why people do the things they do. In real life, we may never know why some people act in certain ways—
- In literature, you will find plenty of **clues** to characters' motivations. Use the clues to find out what makes a character tick.

- Uncover a character's motivations by paying attention to



Motivation

- “Hey Sheila,” said Jesuka. “I haven’t seen you at the mall all week. Where have you been?”
- Sheila shrugged. “I’m babysitting for Mrs. Davies.”
- “Babysitting? Why are wasting your time with some crying kid? You should be with your friends.”
- “My parents said that if I want to take ballet lessons, I have to pay for them myself.”

- Which words reveal Sheila’s motivation for working after school?
- Sheila’s words show that she wants to earn money to pay for ballet lessons.