

Character Understanding Literary Terms

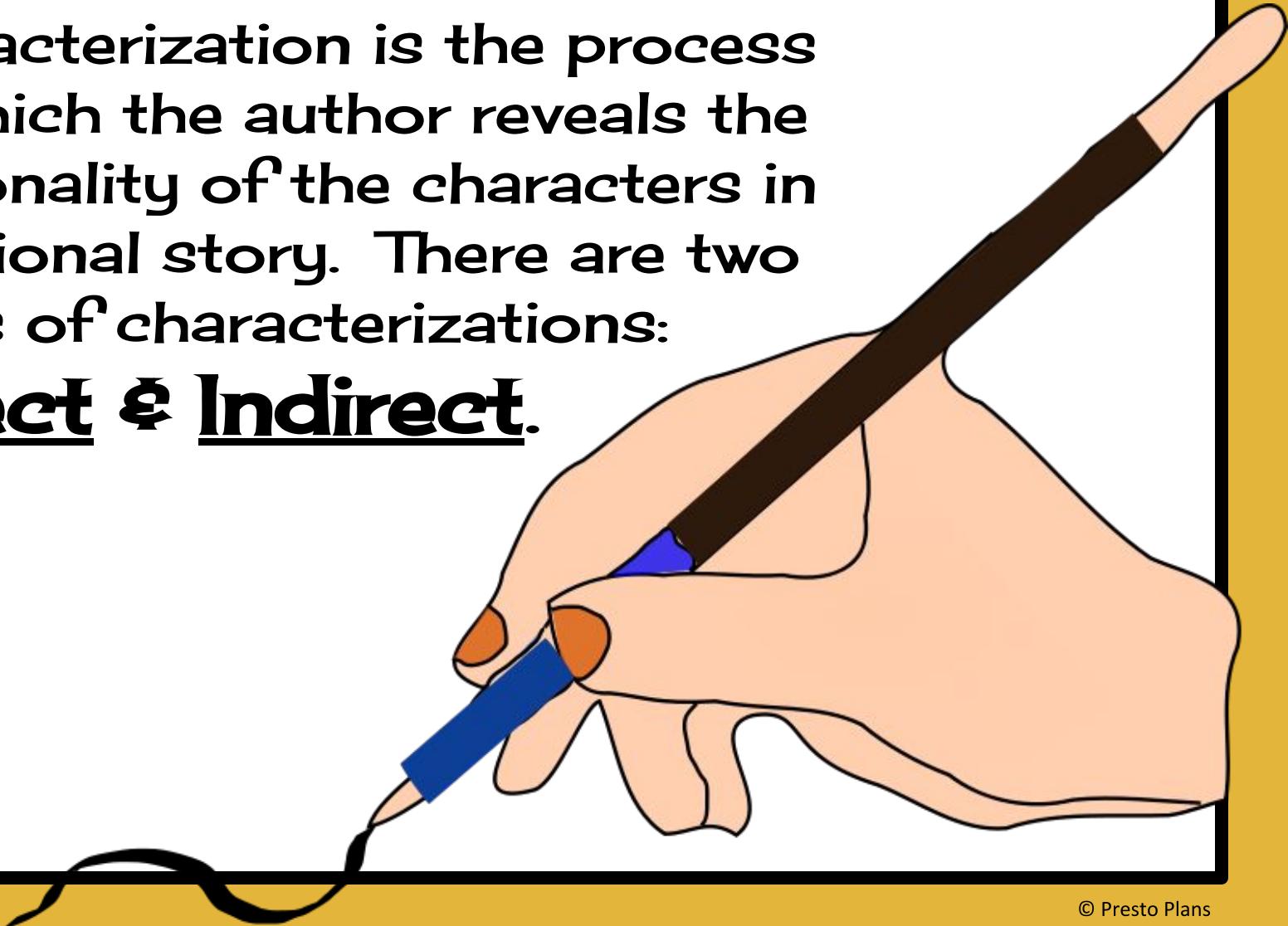
**Antagonist / Protagonist
Dynamic / Static
Direct / Indirect**



Characterization

Characterization is the process by which the author reveals the personality of the characters in a fictional story. There are two types of characterizations:

Direct & Indirect.



Character Traits

Character traits are adjectives used to describe what a character is like – a character's personality or demeanor. You have a list of character traits in your folder.

Character Traits

Character traits are an adjective (describing word) That describes what a person or character is like on the inside.

brave	adventurous
strong	giving
helpful	calm
honest	smart



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Direct

Direct characterization occurs when the writer directly TELLS the audience what the personality of the character is.



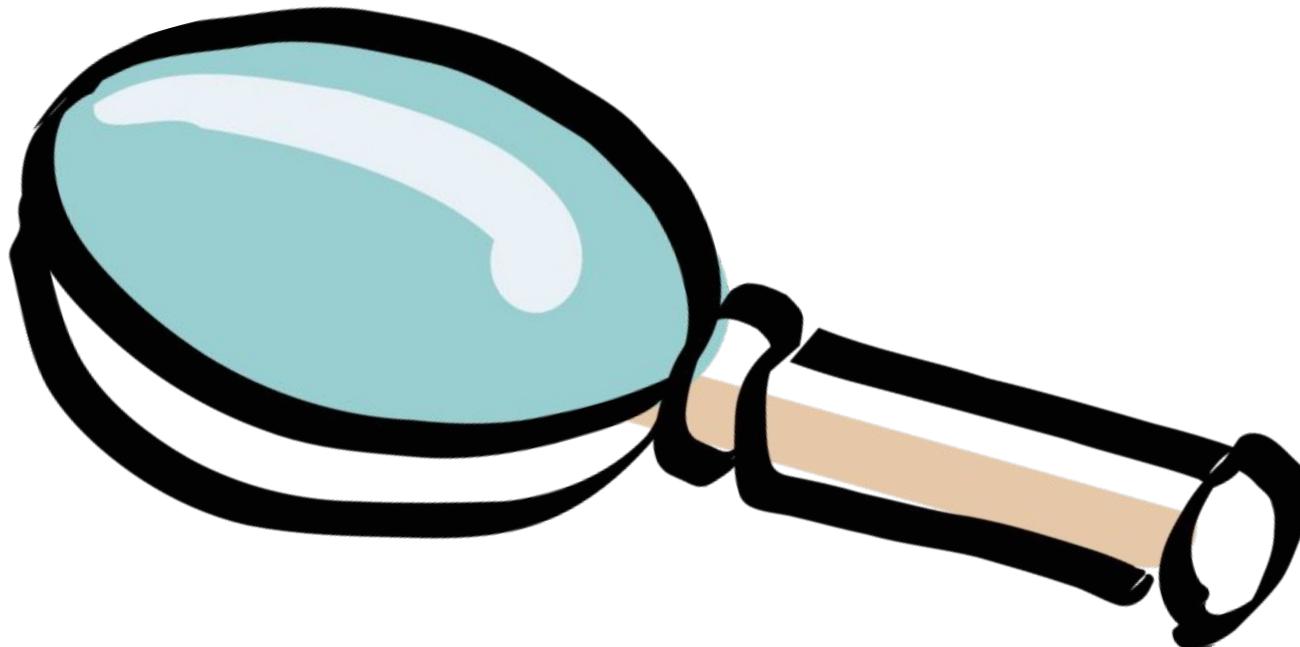
Direct: Example

"Finch was by far the bigger of the pair, handsome and powerfully built, with a neatly trimmed mustache and a little triangle of a beard" (6).

The author directly tells the reader about Finch's physical traits.

Indirect

Indirect characterization occurs when the writer author SHOWS the reader what a character is like through words, thoughts, actions, effects on others, and looks.



Indirect: Example

"Finch roused the rest of the band from their crude tents, kicking the ones who woke too slowly. The men were drowsy and angry, but they feared Finch too much to complain" (10).

The author does not tell the reader anything directly about Finch's personality, but his words show that Finch is mean and scary.

STEAL Method

There are five different ways that an author can indirectly reveal the personality of the characters. Use the STEAL method when analyzing character

STEAL

Speech

Thoughts

Effect on others

Actions

Looks



Speech

What does the character say and how do they speak? What does this reveal about their personality? Consider the following examples:

A person who uses complex language may be intelligent or educated.

A person who calls others names may be a bully

A person who yells a lot may be angry, crude, or hot-tempered.



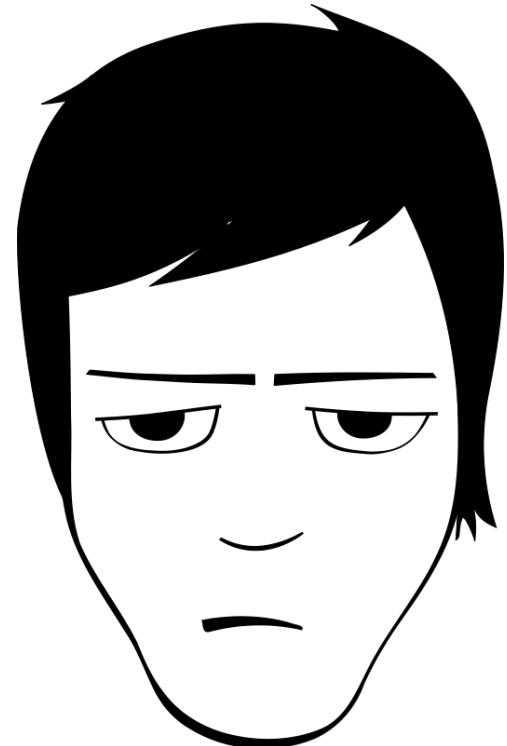
Thoughts

What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings (if the narration provides this information)

For example...

John thought to himself that if he had to sit in class for one more minute he might explode. 'When will this class end?' he wondered.

John's thoughts indirectly reveal he is impatient and has very little interest in school



Effect On Others

How do other characters feel or act in reaction to the character? What does this reveal about their relationships with others?

The girl glared at her brother as she finished her dessert. He looked at her apologetically, but this only made her more angry

This passage reveals that the girl is furious with her brother for something he has done. It also shows she is hot-tempered and perhaps unforgiving.



Actions

**How do they behave and what do they do?
What does this reveal about their personality?
the actions of a character always reveal their
true self.**

She took a deep breath, smiled and let go of the airplane doors. The first 10 seconds were a rush she had never felt before. She pulled the handle and the chute opened.

This passage reveals that the woman is a fearless risk-taker. Her actions and attitude show she gets a thrill from dangerous activities.



Looks

Consider the character's expression, body language, and dress. What does this reveal about their personality? *Sometimes looks can be deceiving, as it may be used to mask their true self.

The little girl's face turned a bright red as she quickly looked away.



The fact that she blushed and her body language shows that she is shy or perhaps embarrassed about something.

1. Jessie was the kind of girl who would deliver the newspaper every day, no matter what the weather was like.

Reveals

dependable, reliable

Method of STEAL?

actions

2. “Janine never studies,” said Mrs. Johnson. “She already knows the answers.”

Reveals

smart, intelligent

Method of STEAL?

effect on others

3. Through the door walked in a woman wearing nothing but named brand items from head to toe. Around her neck was a necklace from Tiffany's. Dangling from her arm was a bag from Michael Kors. On her feet were five-inch red bottom high heels.

Reveals

rich, wealthy

Method of STEAL?

looks

4. 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.

Reveals

clumsy, awkward

Method of STEAL?

actions

5. John looked at the new painting he had done. Bright and colorful, it expressed exactly what he wanted. *I finally got it right*, he thought with a smile.

Reveals

happy, satisfied, determined

Method of STEAL?

thoughts and actions

6. Sally's shoulders were slumped and her head down as she slowly walked off the soccer field. Her face was wet with sweat and her uniform was streaked with dirt. The playoff game was over, and so was her season.

Reveals

sad, dejected

Method of STEAL?

looks and actions

7. When Jack entered the library, the students studying at the tables looked up, saw him, frowned, and quickly returned their eyes to their books. “Don’t look at him and maybe he’ll leave us alone,” Shay said.

Reveals

unpopular, disliked

Method of STEAL?

effect on others

8. “I have to get home,” Pat muttered, walking quickly. “Mom is counting on me, and I can’t let her down. As soon as I get home, she can finally rest while I watch my little brother.”

Reveals

kind, caring, helpful

Method of STEAL?

speech

9. Liz opened the door to her room. “What do you think of my new computer? Isn’t it cool? It is really expensive, but that’s no problem for me. My mom lets me order anything I want,, no matter how much it costs.”

Reveals

conceited, spoiled

Method of STEAL?

speech

10. Seeing old Ms. Cunningham carrying a huge stack of papers to grade, Kaylee rushed over and open the door for her. Helping her into the room, Kaylee took the heavy papers from her arms, neatly arranged them on the desk, and got Ms. Cunningham some chocolate.

Reveals

helpful, considerate

Method of STEAL?

actions

You are going to create a character poster using the STEAL method.

In your folder you will find a packet of information about this project. Each member of the group will have at least one section he/she is responsible for.

1. Read through the directions and assign each group member a section and write the names in the chart at the bottom.
2. On the back is a planning sheet to help your group get organized and be sure everyone is in agreement about the quotes you will use on the poster.
3. You have the rubric so you can see how the poster will be graded. The grade will be shared. Everyone gets the same grade.
4. You may find indirect examples from anywhere in your reading so far.
5. You may draw your character or find and print a picture you think is representative of your character.
6. Your poster is due on **Thursday**. You will have class time on Tue and Wed to work on it.