

Defining Characterization

Characterization is the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character. Characterization is revealed through **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization**.

Direct Characterization tells the audience what the personality of the character is.

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.”

Indirect Characterization shows things that reveal the personality of a character. There are five different methods of indirect characterization:

S peech	What does the character say? How does the character speak?
T houghts	What is revealed through the character’s private thoughts and feelings?
E ffect on others toward the character	What is revealed through the character’s effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?
A ctions	What does the character do? How does the character behave?
L ooks	What does the character look like? How does the character dress?

TIP #1: Use the mnemonic device of STEAL to remember the five types of indirect characterization

TIP #2: Use indirect characterization to analyze visual media:

Film: Look at how the character dresses and moves. Note the facial expressions when the director moves in for a close-up shot.

Drama: Pay attention to the way that the characters reveal their thoughts during a soliloquy.

Indirect Characterization

Character's Name _____

Types of Indirect Characterization	Examples	Explanation
S peech		
T houghts		
E ffect on others		
A ctions		
L ooks		