

Characterization

Definitions

Characterization is the process by which the author reveals the personality of the characters.

There are two types of characterization: direct and indirect.

Direct Characterization

Direct characterization is when the author TELLS the audience what the personality of the character is.

Example: “The patient boy and quiet girl were both at the game.”

The author is telling us that the boy is patient and the girl is kind.

Indirect Characterization

Indirect characterization is when the author SHOWS things that reveal the personality of the character.

There are FIVE different methods of indirect characterization: speech, thoughts, effect on other characters, actions, and looks. (STEAL)

Indirect Characterization

Speech- What does the character say? How does the character speak?

Example: “Hey, we can have lots of fun at camp this summer! I love being outside!”

This shows us the character is upbeat and happy.



Indirect Characterization

Thoughts- What is revealed through the character's thoughts and feelings?

Example: I wish it would stop raining. I am tired of sitting inside!

This shows us the character is not happy about the situation.



Indirect Characterization

Effect on Others- What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?

Example: The boy glared at his sister as she ate his dessert.

This shows us that the character is upset about his sister's behavior and inability to think of others.



Indirect Characterization

Actions- What does the character do? How does the character behave?

Example: The girl rode the lawn mower through the house and into the garage.

This shows us the girl is not concerned with rules or safety.



Indirect Characterization

Looks- What does the character look like? How does the character dress?

Example: The little girl left the game with slumped shoulders and a frown on her face.

This shows us the little girl is not enjoying herself and is upset.



The Difference

Remember, the difference between direct characterization and indirect characterization is TELLING v. SHOWING!

Indirect characterizations are like clues about the characters. There is no mystery with direct characterization because the author gives us the information we need to know!

Now We Do

You are going to select someone in class and you are going to characterize them using STEAL.

Guess the Student

Occasionally, she walks without tripping on the sidewalk and on a bad day she might hit a table tipping over a glass of water. Her strides shortens when she is around those she knows revealing her “eh uh well...” – indecision and hesitation. Yet, her posture elongates and her feet lift avoiding any obstacles in her path as she walks with an administrator. The assistant principal all of a sudden confused if she should be talking in a tone reserved for a student or one fit for a peer. “Student” is what most adults would call her, but she really is a “student-politician” or possibly just a “politician.” After A.P. Literature she stays behind and observes from behind her clear glasses, “We need to have a workshop for administrators,” she continues giving her State of the Union, setting the agenda and priorities of the year.