

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.