

# Characterization

A character can be characterized by his:

## ◆ outward appearance

- physique / body / build: well-built / slim / overweight
- hair: length (shoulder-length), style (short, spiky), colour
- facial features: lips, eyes ...
- posture: awkward / dignified / erect
- clothing
- movement
- voice
- age etc.
- general appearance: stylish / casual / neat

## ◆ behaviour

- actions
- gestures
- manners etc.

## ◆ psychological nature

- feelings
- thoughts
- emotions
- ideas
- values
- attitudes
- relationship to protagonists etc.

## ◆ social and cultural background

- environment
- status
- education
- upbringing and childhood
- language etc.

## Methods of characterization:

- **direct characterization:** Characteristics are presented to the reader in the mouth of the narrator, the author or any person in the story.  
(The narrator tells the reader what sort of person the character is.)
- **indirect characterization:** by the (external) action, behaviour and speech (choice of words or way of talking) or (internal) thoughts of a character which have to be interpreted by the reader.  
⇒ The reader is expected to draw his own conclusion.

X describes/depicts/characterizes/presents Y as ...

His main characteristics/the dominant traits, features are...

His outward appearance/behaviour/speech shows/reveals/betrays that ...

It reflects/mirrors/underlines his social position/upbringing/living conditions ...

## Characterization: A-Z

- Go through the alphabet from A-Z and write down one adjective that characterizes a person for every letter.
- Now underline those adjective that you think characterise XY and her/his situation best.

- A.** aggressive, altruistic, ambitious, attentive, assertive
- B.** biased, busy
- C.** careful, careless, charming, child-like, cold, compassionate, considerate, courageous, cowardly, cultivated, curious, courteous
- D.** demanding, determined, diligent, dishonest, disobedient, disorganized, dominant, domineering
- E.** egoistic, energetic, eccentric, emotional, extrovert
- F.** friendly, fanatic, foolish
- G.** gentle, grown-up
- H.** hateful, heartless, honest, happy
- I.** ill-mannered, ill-mannered, impatient, impulsive, impolite, inattentive, incommunicative, indolent, industrious, insolent, insulting, intelligent, intolerant, introvert, irrational, irresponsible
- J.** joyless, just
- K.** kind, kind-hearted
- L.** lazy, likeable, lively, logic, loving, loyal
- M.** mean, modest, moderate
- N.** nasty, narrow-minded, neat , not liked
- O.** obedient, open, open-minded, obstinate, open-minded, outgoing
- P.** patient, peaceful, pensive, polite, practical, prejudiced
- Q.** quiet
- R.** reasonable, reflective, reliable, responsible, rude, ruthless
- S.** self-centred, selfish, sensitive, serious, shallow, shy, sincere, strong, stupid, subservient, superficial, strange
- T.** timid, thoughtless, tolerant
- U.** unbiased, uncouth, unfriendly, unlikeable, unprejudiced, unselfish, untidy, unpleasant, unreliable
- V.** vivid
- W.** warm-hearted, well-behaved, well-liked, well-known, war, wise
- X.** xenophobic
- Y.** yellow, young
- Z.** zealous