Literary Terms/Elements

Flashback

~ a scene, or an incident that happened before the beginning of a story, or at an earlier point in the narrative

Imagery

~ words and phrases that create vivid experiences or a picture for the reader

~the use of descriptive language to appeal to one of the reader's senses (sound, touch, smell or sight)

EX: "The fudge melted in his mouth, swirling around his tongue with a rich, buttery flavor.

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Point of View/Narrator

~the vantage point, or stance from which a story is told,

the eye and mind through which the action is perceived

~How the narrator related the events described in a piece

of writing.

Point of View/Narrator

Three types:

- **first person**
- **second person**
- **third person**
  - omniscient
  - limited
  - objective

Three points-of-view
- First person
- Second person
- Third person

Setting

The time and place in which the action of a story occurs.

It was a dark and stormy night.

Style

The way in which a piece of literature is written.

- style refers not to what is said, but HOW it is said

" ...OLD FOSSIL. "

ALEXANDER TROCCHI OF HUGH MACDIARMID

" ...COSMOPOLITAN SCUM! "

MACDIARMID IN RESPONSE - EDINBURGH WORLD WRITERS CONFERENCE 1962

Symbol

A person, object, idea or action that stands for something else. It is usually something literal that stands for something figurative.

- symbolism: the use of an object to represent an abstract idea

Symbol

EX: Roads can stand for choices

EX: Hearts often symbolize love, the color white

often symbolizes innocence

SYMBOL

what does *it* really mean?

Stereotype

- A character with generalized traits (characteristics that make the character a group representative rather than an individual)

- A character who is so ordinary or unoriginal that the character seems like an oversimplified representation of a type, gender, class, religious group, or occupation

Stereotype
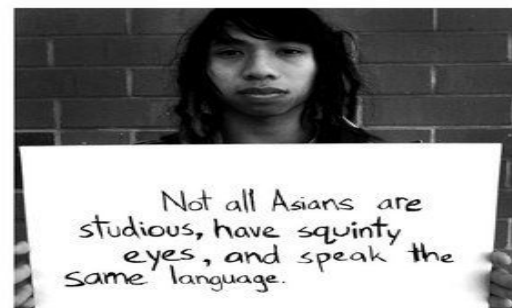
Stereotype

Suspence

- The tension or excitement felt by the reader as he or she becomes involved in the story

Suspense Example

- Rainsford expressed his surprise. "Is there big game on this island?"
- The general nodded. "The biggest."
- "Oh, it isn't here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island."
  - From "The Most Dangerous Game"

Suspense

Suspense is the growing interest and excitement readers experience while awaiting a climax or resolution in a work of literature. It is a feeling of anxious uncertainty about the outcome of events. Writers create suspense by raising questions in the minds of their readers.

Irony

- A contrast between appearance and actuality
  - Verbal: a writer says one thing, but means something entirely different

"I still think the lab should at least pay you workman's compensation!"

Irony

- A contrast between appearance and actuality
  - Situational: occurs when something happens
  - That is entirely different from what is expected

Irony

- A contrast between appearance and actuality
  - Dramatic: occurs when the reader knows information that the characters do not

Dramatic Irony Example

For some reason, nobody could tell that Clark Kent and Superman are the same person. The cape and no glasses change his identity.

Romeo & Juliet
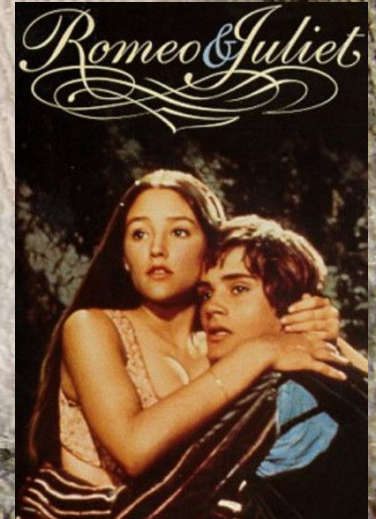
Irony

- Dramatic: occurs when the reader knows information that the characters do not

Moral

- A message conveyed or a lesson learned from a story, poem or event.
  - Not necessary that the author clearly states it
  - It can be left for the audience or learners to figure out
  - Sometimes moral is clearly stated through a proverb

Stories are memory aids, instruction manuals and moral compasses

Aleks Krotoski, The Guardian, 11 August 2011

Mood

- The feeling or atmosphere a writer creates for the reader
  - Accomplished with: connotative words
    - Sensory images
    - Figurative language
    - Sound and rhythm of language

Tone

- The writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject
- The feeling an author conveys to the reader
  - Contributes to the overall mood of a work
    - Formal, serious, passionate, lighthearted, witty
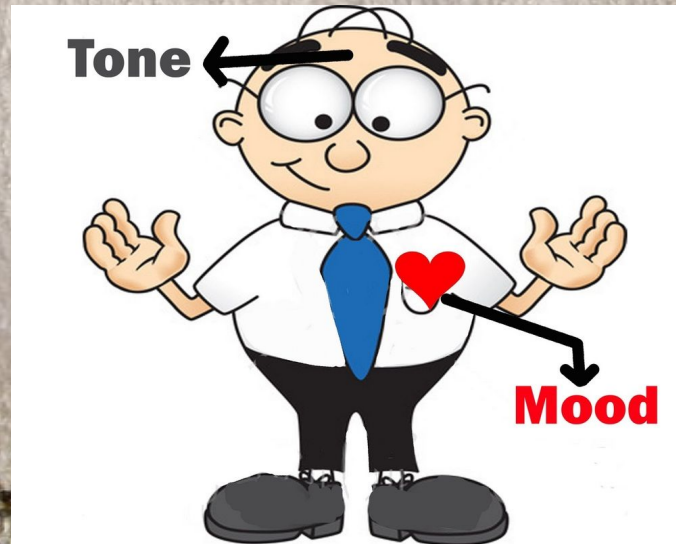
Tone

Mood

Amused Playful
Angry Suspicious
Sad Menacing
Humorous Gloomy
Formal Informal
Tense Sinister
Cheerful

Author

TONE is how the author decides to present their work.

Reader

Happy   Lonely
Suspenseful Anxious
Frightened   Hopeful
Joyful   Sorrowful
Grateful
Romantic

MOOD is the feeling the reader gets from the work.

Theme

- The central idea.
  - Usually an idea about life or people
  - Sometimes stated outright, more often left for the reader to discover as the story is told
  - An idea revealed by the events of the story
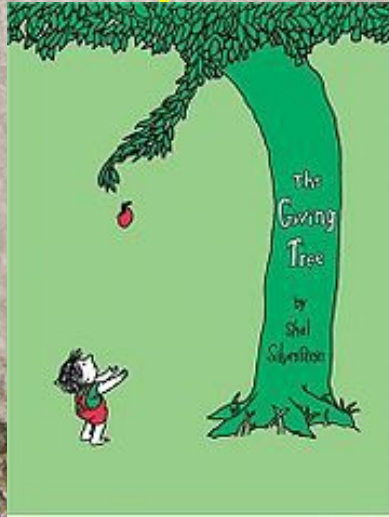
The theme of "Cinderella" is **implied**. The reader can infer the message that if you are in a bad situation, you should do the best that you can. In the end, things will work out for you.

Conflict

- The struggle between two opposing forces that is the basis of the plot:
  - Internal
  - External

The Four Types of Conflict

Man vs. Man

Man vs. Nature

Man vs. Himself

Man vs. Society

Foil

- A character that has characteristics that oppose another character, usually the protagonist
  - May be completely opposite to the protagonist, or very similar with <u>one key difference</u>
  - Used to highlight some particular quality or qualities of the main character
  - Doesn't necessarily work in opposition to the protagonist (simply a person with qualities different than the protagonist)
  - May even work together with the protagonist (Sherlock Holmes and Watson)

Foil

- A character that has characteristics that oppose another character, usually the protagonist
  - Note: a foil is NOT an antagonist (character in direct conflict with the protagonist)
    - Think of good cop/bad cop
    - Protagonist CAN NOT be a foil
    - There can be more than one foil in a story
      - There can be foil pairs besides the protagonist or the protagonist can have more than one foil character

Literary Foils

Pairs of characters whose differences illuminate the important characteristics in each other

Foil

Definition: A character who illuminates the qualities of another character by means of contrast.

Example: Gaston's combination of good looks and terrible personality emphasizes Beast's tragic situation. The former is a monster trapped inside a mans body; the latter is a man trapped inside a monster.

Foil Character

Definition:
A **FOIL CHARACTER** is a minor character which has traits that are in contrast with the main character. It is used to make the traits of the main character emphasized.

FOIL

A character who is compared and contrasted with the protagonist

Protagonist

- Main character of a work of literature, theater or cinema
  - Can be more than one in a large piece of work
  - In really large volumes (War and Peace by Tolstoy) it may be impossible to identify "main" character
- Usually the "good guy" but can also be an antihero
- Good or evil, the audience is generally supposed to empathize with this character & understand the motives that leads the character to do what he/she does

PROTAGONIST

A protagonist is the main character in a novel.

Protagonist

- Antihero: always main character of story (protagonist)
  - But: lacks the traditional heroic values of morality and bravery
    - Audience still expected to understand mental calculations even if they don't agree with the actions the antihero takes

EX: Walter White from

"Breaking Bad"

EXAMPLE: Protagonists don't have to be likeable

▶ The Grinch does a lot of terrible things—sneaks into homes, steals presents, tries to ruin Christmas.

▶ He is not likeable for much of the story yet he is the protagonist because the story is about him.

Examples of protagonists:

Antogonist

- The chief instigator of conflict with the protagonist
  - Not necessarily evil
  - Lack heroic qualities (like the antihero)
  - Not main character of story
    - Audience doesn't get to see the inner life of the character and usually doesn't empathize with his/her motivations
  - May be a person or group who present obstacles to the protagonist - whether or not it is justified or cruel

ANTAGONIST

The antagonist is the villain in the story. They oppose the protagonist (the main character).

protagonist — the main character

antagonist — the character that creates conflict for the main character

Antagonist

- The character or force that works against the protagonist; introduces the conflict

- Examples:
  - President Snow in *The Hunger Games*
  - The Japanese army from *Code Talkers*

Motif

- A unifying element in an artistic work, especially any recurrent image, symbol, theme, character type, subject or narrative detail
- Function:
  - present prevailing theme and reinforce smaller ones
  - Help readers understand underlying messages the writer intends to communicate to them

Motif

EX: In The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn, there are several motifs to support the central idea of the narrative:

- Childhood - gives a lighter tone and enjoyable to read to lesson the central idea of slavery and racism
- Moral education of young Huck and Tom
- Jim's superstitions - he appears silly to believe in "signs' and omens that end up predicting an event

Motif

EX: Common motif in fairy tales is the wicked stepmother

- The wicked stepmother forces Cinderella to clean house and keeps her from the ball
- Snow White's stepmother hates her for being beautiful and plots to kill her

Juliet:

Motif

EX: *Romeo and Juliet* has a motif of light and dark to underscore their love, their family's hate of each other and their impending deaths

Romeo of Juliet: "She is the sun" (light)

Juliet of Romeo's need to flee Verona: "More light and light it grows; more dark and dark our woes."

"shaken, not stirred"

is one of the most recognizable motifs used in many James Bond Movies.

Motif

Definition

- A reoccurring element, such as a word, phrase, idea, image, action, character, or symbol, which appears frequently throughout a piece of literature for emphasis and unity.

Example

- In the movie *The Sixth Sense,* the director specifically uses the color red throughout the movie to emphasize when something supernatural is going on.
  - The character Cole wears a red sweater, a red balloon floats up toward the attic in the birthday party scene, Bruce Willis's character Malcolm jiggles a red doorknob several times, and you'll probably be able to find several more examples.

THEME VERSUS MOTIF

THEME	MOTIF
Theme is the fundamental concept or the underlying message that is conveyed through a piece of writing.	Motif is a recurring element, idea or concept that has a symbolic value in a text.
Theme is not explicitly given in a text.	Motif is often explicitly stated through the use of repetition.
Theme is abstract.	Motif is concrete.

Plot

- Usually refers to the sequence of events and happens that make up the story

- There is usually a pattern that threads the plot together
  - This can be intentional or unintended

- Basically refers to the main outcome and order of the story

Plot

Elements of plot:

1. Exposition: sets the scene
   a. Writer introduces the characters and setting

2. Complication: single event that begins the major conflict

3. Rising Action: builds during the story and creates excitement or interest
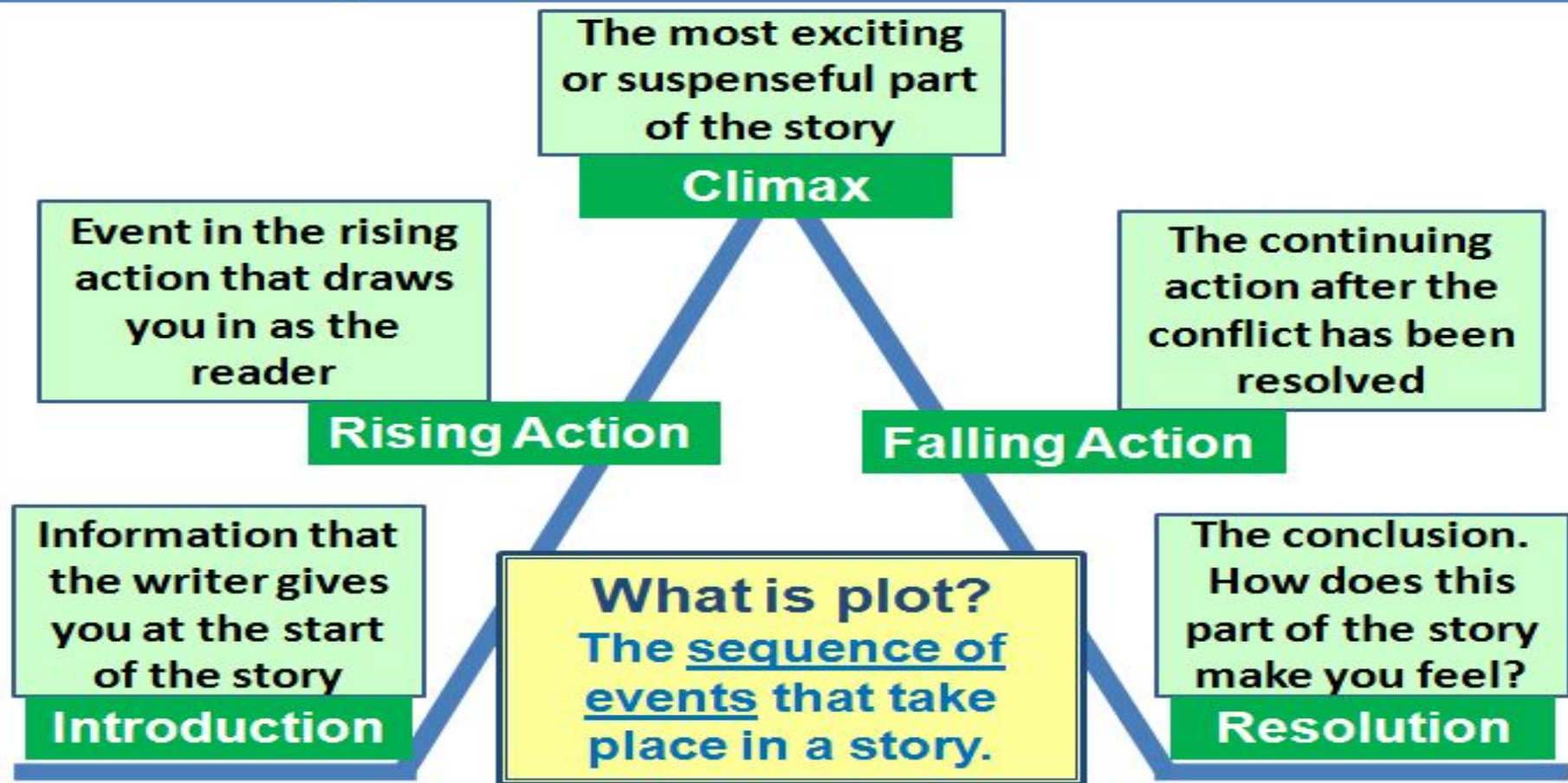
4. Climax: moment of greatest tension in the story

Plot

Elements of plot:

5. Falling Action: results from the climax and tells us the story is winding down

6. Resolution: when the character (main) solves the main problem/conflict or the problem is solved for the main character

Recap of Narrative Plot Structure

The most exciting or suspenseful part of the story

Climax

Event in the rising action that draws you in as the reader

Rising Action

The continuing action after the conflict has been resolved

Falling Action

Information that the writer gives you at the start of the story

Introduction

What is plot?
The _sequence of events_ that take place in a story.

The conclusion. How does this part of the story make you feel?

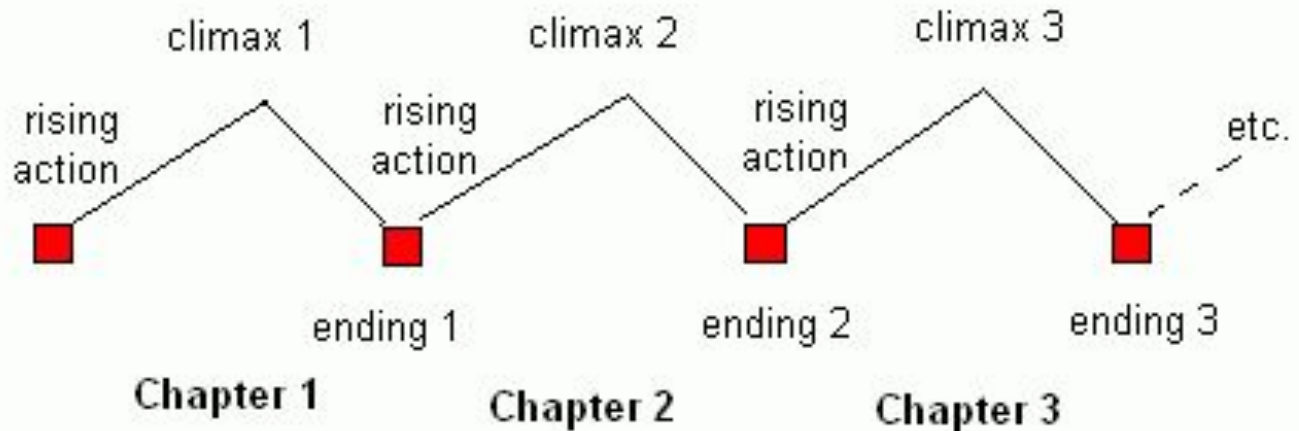**Resolution**

Plot

5 Types of plot structure

1. Progressive: chronological (the pyramid structure)
2. Episodic: stair steps: rising action, climax, ending 1, repeats chapter by chapter

Plot

5 Types of plot structure

3. Parallel: each main character has a separate but related story line that merges in the end

EX:

Character 1 plot line: III -------III----III---III----III---III ---

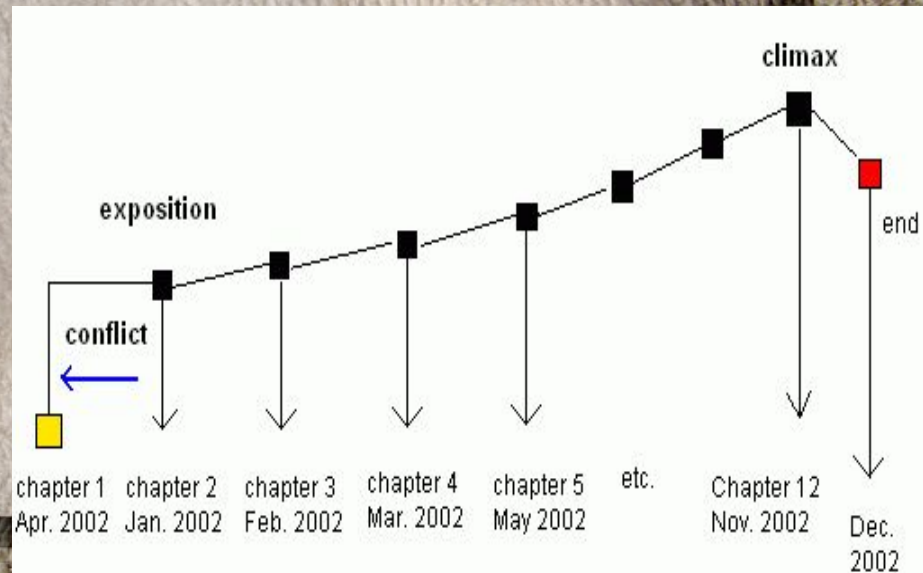Character 2 plot line: -------III ---- III---III----III----III--

Plot

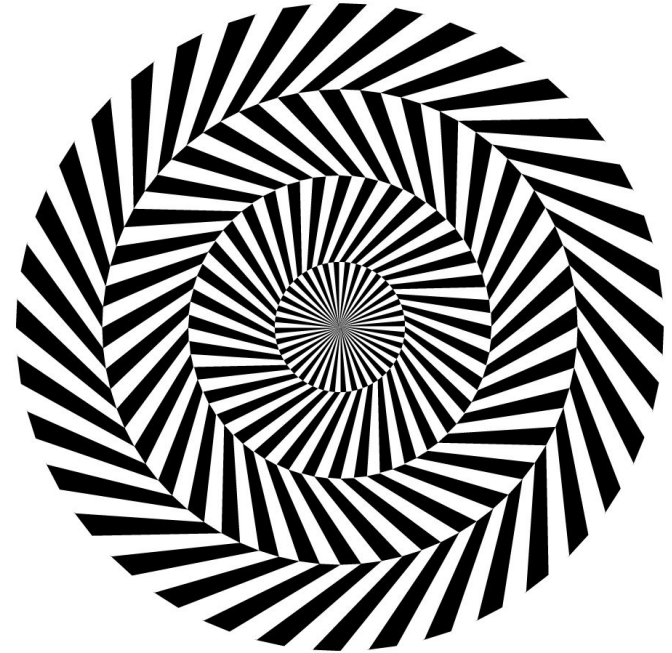4.Flashback: structure gives information about events that occurred earlier

- Author begins story in the middle of the action but goes back to fill in the background for full understanding

Plot

5 Types of plot structure

- 5. Concentric Circles: story centers on a character and their perceptions of the world instead of following the traditional linear path

Characterization

- Device that is used step by step in literature to highlight and explain details about a character in a story
- It's the initial stage where the writer introduces the character
- Then talks about
  - Behavior……. And as the story builds, the
  - Thought process

Characterization

- Next: the character expresses opinions and ideas with conversations with the rest of the characters
- Finally, (characterization) shows how others respond to the character's personality

Characterization

2 types of characterization:

1. Direct or explicit
   - Uses another character, narrator or protagonist to tell the audience about the subject
     - The author is telling the audience what a character is like

EX: "Bill was short and fat, and his bald spot was widening with every passing year."

Characterization

2. Indirect or Implicit

- Subtle introduction of the character to the audience
  - The author is showing the audience what a character is like through his/her thoughts, actions or deeds
  - Requires audience to make inferences about why the character would think or do those actions
  - Also known as implicit characterization
  - Takes more time to develop the character, but usually leaves a deeper impression on the reader

Characterization

EX: "Bill sighed as he looked at the offer of a gym membership. He really should join. But just thinking about it made beads of sweat collect at the top of his bald spot."

EX: "Jane is a cruel person," she said.

"As Jane walked past the box labeled 'Free Puppies,' she furtively glanced around her, then gave the box a swift kick."

Examples of Characterization

Direct Characterization

- Gary is a nice and caring person.

- Gary can sometimes be very mean or rude.

Showing

Indirect Characterization

- Gary watched his little brother for two hours while their mother was ill, taking care of his every need. He did this without being asked and he did not ask for anything in return.

- "The next thing I know, Gary was tearing up my rose garden," said Beatrice his elderly grandmother as she gave her statement to the police. She was still badly shaken after the attack.

Telling

EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

angry, obstinate and may have authority issues

Characterization

"Characterization is an essential component in writing good literature. Modern fiction, in particular, has taken great advantage of this literary device. Understanding the role of characterization in storytelling is very important for any writer. To put it briefly, it helps us make sense of the behavior of any character in a story by helping us understand their thought processes. A good use of characterization always leads the readers or audience to relate better to the events taking place in the story. Dialogues play a very important role in developing a character because they give us an opportunity to examine the motivations and actions of the characters more deeply."

~https://literarydevices.net/characterization/

Character Traits

- The words used to describe the character and create the characterization of him/her/it.
- This comes to us through what the character:
  - Says (words)
  - Does (actions)
  - Thinks (thoughts)
  - Reactions of others (what others think/say/do)

Character Traits

2 types of traits:

- **Physical**
- **Personality**

Character Traits
Outside Vs. Inside

Outside Vs. Inside

Physical Traits
{What we see with our eyes}
brown hair
blue eyes
tank top
blue shorts
tennis shoes
tan skin

Thoughts
Words
Feelings
Actions

Personality Traits
{What we learn based on what the character says and does, thinks and feels}

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The Good Friend

The Slow One

The Pimp

The Good Little Church Girl

The Shy One

The One That Always Swears

The Grumpy One

The One That Always Gets Hurt

The One Thats Up To No Good

The Jock

The One With The Bad Memory

The Geek

The Innocent One

The Drama Queen

The Lazy One

The Gangster

The Goodie Two Shoes

The Stylish One

The Tiny Dangerous One

The One With All The Gossip

The Ladies Man

The Flirt

The Tower

The One You Can Depend On

The Annoying One

The Cutie Pie

The Funny Guy

The One Thats Always Hungry