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:

Speech	What does the character say? How does the character speak?
Thoughts	What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?
Effect 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?
Actions	What does the character do? How does the character behave?
Looks	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.

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