

## Cambridge International AS & A Level Literature in English 9695

Introduction to Literature – Lesson 2: Character		
Learning objectives:	By the end of this lesson learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>understand and describe the characters in a text.</li><li>use textual evidence to support their interpretation of character traits.</li></ul>	
Lesson objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Learners will explore the ways in which writers convey characters.</li><li>Learners will consider the different ways in which character traits are conveyed in a text.</li></ul>	
Vocabulary:	central character, foil, minor or major character, protagonist, antagonist, round characters, flat characters, static characters, dynamic characters, narrator	
Previous learning:	Learners have begun to explore how contextual aspects and the writer’s choices of these impact on meaning.	
Plan		
	Activities	Guidance
Beginning	<p>Choose an extract or short story where a character (or characters) are first introduced. Discuss what these first introductions reveal about the characters. Learners underline key words and phrases in the extract or short story and discuss the methods the writer has used to convey the character.</p> <p>Learners discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Is a character introduced through physical description, description of clothes or possessions, or possibly where they live?</li><li>Is a character introduced through their actions or what others say about them?</li><li>Does the writer/narrator make direct comment about a character?</li><li>How sympathetically does the writer/narrator present a character?</li></ul> <p><b>Resources:</b> Extract or short story.</p>	<p>Here we are focusing on the way writers use the first appearance of a character as a way of establishing their significance. The extract/short story will provide key quotations.</p> <p>Learners could group quotations under headings of different characteristics.</p> <p>Learners should be able to discuss how characters are created and their meaning and importance within an extract/short story, rather than just using character studies.</p>
Middle	<p>In groups, learners consider the main character(s) in the text exploring their presentation/description and the role they play in the text.</p> <p>Learners decide which adjectives are appropriate to describe the character(s) and why, using evidence from the text to support what they say.</p> <p>In pairs, or small groups, learners map out key moments in the text which involve the character(s) and identify how these impact on the development of the character during the extract/short story.</p> <p>Learners should consider physical description, actions, inner thoughts, reactions and speech</p>	<p>Give learners the names of the main character(s) in the text and some adjectives that might be used to describe them, e.g. brave, heroic, selfish, optimistic, introvert, sophisticated, eccentric.</p> <p>Make sure learners know that it is crucial, when writing about a text, to support what you say with evidence from the text. This evidence should include both details from the plot and quotes by or about the character.</p>

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	<p>in these key moments. If the text is written in the third person, ask learners to discuss the idea of omniscient narrators.</p> <p>Ask learners how far any narrative is omniscient. Discuss if information is always withheld to create suspense or for other purposes such as irony?</p> <p>If the text is written in the first person, ask learners to discuss the idea of biased narrators. Learners consider the impact of seeing events through the narrator's eyes. Do we only learn about one character's attitudes, in the extract/short story?</p> <p>Learners could also explore the idea of intrusive narrators who comment on character and action. Discuss the effects of this. Do we trust a narrator's judgement? Why, or why not? Introduce the idea of free indirect speech and thought. Ask learners about the possible advantages of this.</p> <p>Individually, or in pairs, learners write a paragraph in response to the stimulus: 'Consider the ways in which the writer presents character in this extract/short story'.</p> <p>Learners share their paragraphs with the class and discuss effective / less effective use of quotations.</p>	<p>If exploring more than one character these can be allocated to different groups/pairs to feedback to the rest of the class.</p> <p>Learners first underline quotations they would like to use which should be blended within their analysis/evaluation.</p>
<b>End</b>	<p>Ask learners to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How convincing is the main character/narrator?</li> <li>• To what extent does this character represent real life?</li> <li>• How effectively does the main character (or characters) interact with the setting?</li> <li>• How would you describe the state of mind of the main character(s)?</li> <li>• How does the writer suggest the thoughts, feelings and motives of their fictional persona?</li> </ul>	
Additional information		
Differentiation		Assessment
<p>Select extracts that are more accessible or more challenging in terms of language choices for learners. Different pairs/groups can work on different extracts or different sections of an extract.</p>		<p>Learners find two short, contrasting sections of dialogue (or these can be provided). Learners write notes on the ways in which the writers use dialogue in these sections to convey character and attitudes. What do the different kinds of speech reveal about the characters and their attitudes? Learners should also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the speech direct or indirect?</li> </ul>

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- Is the speech tagged or untagged?
- Do certain characters dominate the dialogue?

### Follow-up work

Learners explore an extract from a play with a focus on the central character(s) of the play.

Learners select key quotations for a central character and discuss what we learn about these characters. They could focus on the importance of the character's (or characters') roles, the distinctive features in their language, their impact on the play's major themes, etc.

It is important that learners have a secure understanding of, and opinions about, central characters in a text and can support them with quotations and references from the text.

Learners could think about the importance of minor characters. (There may be some discussion about who exactly the minor characters are in their set texts.) What do they add to our understanding of the central characters and concerns of the text?