

## Literary Terms #6 – Character

### I. Types of Characters:

#### A. Character – the actors in the story

1. Major – main characters; protagonist and antagonist
2. Minor – they may be involved in a conflict with a major character and are essential to the plot, but only so that something can be learned or shown about the major character.
3. Dynamic – a character who changes over the course of the story  
Usually the dynamic characters are the main or protagonists who face challenges; a developing character
4. Static – a character who does not change over the course of the work
5. Round – a character whom we get to know well and has multi-character traits presented
6. Flat – a character not described much in detail and usually has just one known trait

#### B. Character Traits – the qualities of the character; what the character is like (greedy, angry, jealous, etc.)

### II. Characterization – The method a writer uses to reveal the personality of character in a literary work.

#### A. Methods may include (1) by what the character says about himself/herself; (2) by what others reveal about the character; and (3) by the character's own actions

#### B. Types of Characterization –

1. Direct Characterization - the method used by the author to directly tell the readers what a character's personality is like.
2. Indirect Characterization – the author doesn't tell the readers directly but provides clues in describing the personality of the character.

Things to remember --

- Literary characters may embody more than one of these character types at the same time. A dynamic character may also be the antagonist, and a protagonist can also be, say, a flat and stock character (i.e. the one-dimensional hero).
- Here's a very common mistake: while characters are often round and dynamic, that does not mean these two terms mean the same thing. The former refers to a character's complexity, while the latter refers to a character's development over time. Students also make this mistake with flat and static characters.

III. Dialect - A dialect is the language used by the people of a specific area, class, or any other group of people. The term dialect involves the spelling, sounds, grammar and pronunciation used by a particular group of people and it distinguishes them from other people around them.

A. Dialect helps the reader to determine characterization and the social norms or the period for the piece.