

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 (novel) – a character whom we get to know well and has multi-character traits presented
6. Flat (novel) – 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.

III. Dialect - A dialect is the language used by a people of a specific area, class, or time period. 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 may help suggest age, occupation, and sex of a character. It is also used in conjunction with diction.