

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY****characterization:** the way a writer creates and develops a character's traits**characters:** the people, animals, or imaginary creatures in a work of literature**character traits:** the qualities shown by a character**inferences:** reasonable judgments, based on prior knowledge and the text**HERE'S HOW****Step 1: Identify methods of characterization.** Writers use four main methods of characterization to develop characters:

- **Direct comments** about a character's traits.

**EXAMPLE** Candida was not candid. She was, as we say, a teller of lies.

- **Physical descriptions** of the character.

**EXAMPLE** Finely-tailored clothes hung perfectly on George's body.

- **Thoughts, speech, and actions** of a character

**EXAMPLE** Amy glanced at Nick's test sheet. She wondered, should she copy? Then she thought about the grade. Quickly she circled "b."

- **What other characters think, say, or do** toward one another.

**EXAMPLE** Nick rolled his eyes. "Why can't that girl just study?" he thought.**Step 2: Make inferences about characters.** Writers may describe characters indirectly, providing clues. Look for clues that allow you to make an inference or an educated guess about the character.**EXAMPLE**

Try finding the clues that lead you to get to know Lenore in the following passage:

**Miss Walker** (*quietly*). Lenore, that was beautiful.*(Lenore gives a shy, tentative smile)***Girl # 1.** It was just like a book.*(There is a silent moment after this pronouncement. Lenore looks at the other students trying to suppress her excitement.)***Miss Walker.** I'm really very impressed, Lenore. Leave your story on my desk. There are some people I'd like to show it to.

Miss Walker respects and admires Lenore.

Lenore is a shy, modest girl.

Lenore does not like to show off.

Lenore is a talented writer.

—Keith Leckie, Words on a Page