

## DIRECT AND INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION EXERCISES

1

**Direct Characterization (TELLING):** The author (or another character) directly tells the traits of a character. Example: *Joe is mean and angry.*

**Indirect Characterization (SHOWING):** The author shows the reader the traits of a character through that character's thoughts, words, and actions. The author also shows that character's traits by how other characters respond to him, including what they think and say about him. Example: *Joe sits by his window and yells at people.*

The difference between direct and indirect characterization is the same as the difference between SHOWING and TELLING. **Showing** is when the author *shows* what the character is like. **Telling** is when the author *tells* the reader what the character is like.

An example of indirect characterization: *Peter was bored with the TV program, but the remote control was all the way across the room, so he just watched it anyway. His sister will be home soon, and she could get the remote control for him then.*

An example of direct characterization: *Peter was very lazy, and would never shift himself more than was absolutely necessary.*

Directions: Label each quotation with "I" for indirect, or "D" for direct.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Jane was a beautiful young woman.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ When Jane walked in the room, everybody stopped to stare at her. She commanded attention wherever she went.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Jim was very unlike any other businessman. He made sure that all his clients got what they had paid for.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Jim was an honest man. He never cheated anybody in his entire life.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ An old couple living near John's house considered him just like their own son. He would shop for them every day and get them whatever they needed.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ John cared a lot for the well being of others. There was an old couple living alone near his house, and John was so kind-hearted that he bought groceries daily for them.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Ed Johnson scratched his head in confusion as the sales rep explained Dralco's newest engine performance diagnostic computer. The old mechanic hated modern electronics, preferring the old days when all he needed was a stack of manuals and a good set of tools.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ "That Ed Johnson," said Anderson, watching the old mechanic scratch his head in confusion as the sales rep explained Dralco's newest engine performance diagnostic computer. "He hasn't got a clue about modern electronics. Give him a good set of tools and a stack of yellowing manuals with a carburetor needing repair, and he'd be happy as a hungry frog in a fly-field."
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Julie held up six different outfits in front of the mirror and pondered which would go best with her navy blue shoes, pastel eye shadow and the diamond earrings she'd already procured from her overflowing vanity. After ninety minutes of mixing and matching, and cell-phoning her sister three times for advice, Julie finally made up her mind. She'd give the navy blue skirt and white sweater a try, hoping Trent would love it.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Julie owned a multitude of outfits and accessories, and it always took her forever to decide which combination might impress Trent. As usual, she called her sister several times for advice since she could never make up her mind. After doing so, Julie decided to give the navy blue skirt with the white sweater a try.

Characterization

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following excerpts, which include indirect characterization, and write a sentence that states *directly* what the author is saying about the character.

1. As Mr. Byrd walked by families, mothers pulled their children close to their side.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Kylie's name was called, and she slowly walked up to the stage, staring straight at the ground.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Samantha sat in front of a mirror looking at herself. What does he see in me? she wondered.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Tom cried when my goldfish died.

\_\_\_\_\_

Use the following direct characterizations to create at least two (2) ways an author might *indirectly* state the same idea.

1. Arnold is a klutz.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Katie is a motherly person.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Lou is an amazing musician.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Henrietta is a wonderful friend.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Characterization Worksheet 1

**Directions:** Read a short description of an event. Identify a character trait that is revealed by each action. Explain your answer.

1. Jake is Cassie's older brother. One day they are walking home from school when a cold front rolls in and the temperature drops 20 degrees. Jake is dressed more appropriately for the weather than Cassie. He takes off his hooded sweatshirt and offers it to her. She gratefully accepts. Jake is now colder, but he is happier.

What character trait does Jake demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

2. Craig is a football player training over the summer for next season. The coach demands that all players come in at 6:00 AM and lift weights until 8:00 AM, when practice begins. Craig gets there at 5:00 AM to begin his training.

What character trait does Craig demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

3. Anna volunteered to help Kylie clean her house. When Anna washed the mirrors, Kylie asked her if she used paper towels instead of newspapers. When Anna admitted that she had, Kylie asked her to redo them. Then, while Anna was sweeping, Kylie corrected her on her technique. "Don't just push the dirt around, Anna. SWEEP it," Kylie told Anna.

What character trait does Kylie demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

4. Corey came back from the bathroom and noticed that her rainbow pencil was missing. She looked around the room and saw that Beth was using a rainbow pencil. Corey started crying uncontrollably and ran out of the room.

What character trait does Corey demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

5. Kelvin found a wallet on the ground. He opened up the wallet and saw an old woman's ID card. Kelvin took the ID out of the wallet, walked to the woman's house, and returned the wallet to her.

What character trait does Kelvin demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

6. Jonathan invited a bunch of friends over to his house. He then talked to them for hours about all the trophies that he had won, his rare comic book collection, and how much money his dad makes. His friends did not enjoy their time at Jonathan's.

What character trait does Jonathan demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

7. Rocky's cousin brought him to a party. Rocky didn't know anyone at the party. Shortly after getting there, Rocky's cousin disappeared. Rocky made a lot of new friends at this party and had a great time.

What character trait does Rocky demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

8. The teacher asked Khadija what the answer was to the problem on the board. Khadija wore a worried expression on her face for a moment and then put her head down on her desk. After the teacher moved on to someone else, Khadija whispered to her friend that the answer was 26. Khadija was right.

What character trait does Khadija demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

9. After Mark's mechanical pencil ran out of lead, he asked Pete, who sat next to him, if he could borrow a pencil. Pete yelled, "No, Mark. If you didn't come prepared, why is that my fault? Bring TWO pencils to class! You can't have one of mine or you'll never learn your lesson."

What character trait does Pete demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.

10. Scott doesn't talk much, but five girls in our homeroom class are currently competing for his attention. This is nothing new. Girls have liked Scott for as long as I can remember.

What character trait does Scott demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer by referencing the text.