

Character Analysis and Traits

Who are the characters in the novels we are reading? How can they be described? What traits do they possess that we can identify and describe?

How do the characters connect with me, my life, my feelings, my experiences? Have I ever felt the way they do? Can I overcome my challenges just as they overcame theirs?

The following activities and graphic organizers and literature circle information can be used with this unit, and others.

Character Analysis

The purpose of this activity is to involve students as active readers. They will be taking notes and writing about a character as they read the text. Students will reflect on whether they think the character is likable or not based on the information they gathered. Students will place the information and their reflections on the following graphic organizer. Their goal is to create a three or more sentence conclusion on whether or not the character is likeable along with their reasons for the final decision.

Start this activity when students begin reading the text. They should continue gathering data as they read the text. (Kuta, 1997)

Profile of Main Character's Personality

The purpose of this activity is for students to look for specific information, to draw inferences, to understand the character's personality. Students will move beyond the text as they read to gain greater understanding of people and themselves.

Before they read, have the students practice the activities on themselves. Discussion and information sharing will help students understand themselves, each other, and the activity for the main character. Students need to take notes on the character as they read author related information through the text. Look for less obvious traits based on the character's decisions, conversation, and behavior. This will help them become more perceptive readers. (Kuta, 1997)

Character Analysis

Novel: _____

Author: _____

Publisher and Year: _____

Instructions: Choose a main character from the novel who you would like to get to know as a person. We learn about people by what they say, how they act, and what others tell us; we also learn about characters in books this way. Track the following information on the character you chose and write what you find on this form. Include the page number where you found the information and give some examples to support your claims.

Character Name _____

Physical Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Personality Description

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Background Information

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Problems in Life

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

On the back of this page, write three plus sentences to explain why this person is likable or not.

Profile of Main Character's Personality

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher and year: _____

Instructions: Everyone has obvious character traits, parts of themselves that are easily seen by everyone else. Each person also has a hidden side that is not shown to anyone but good friends or parents. Choose an important character from the novel and find three to five external personality traits that are stated by the author directly through description. Then look for three to five internal personality traits that first are learned by the reader through a character's words, actions or behavior throughout the novel. Label them on the right side of the square.

<p style="text-align: center;">Internal traits</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">External Traits</p>
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Character's Name _____

Internal Traits

External Traits

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Character, Attribute and Feeling Maps

Following are a variety of character maps and attribute webs and feelings to help students as they read through the text for character traits, attributes, feelings and the text that supports what they find. (Pomperaug Regional School District 15, Connecticut)

Character Comparison to Self

The purpose of this reading and writing activity is for students to become familiar with character traits and descriptive language. This activity will also help students become careful readers while looking for events in the plot or behaviors to support the choice of character trait. Students will increase vocabulary through use of the words in the activity a preliminary discussion.

This activity can be assigned either during or after reading. The vocabulary should be assigned before beginning the activity. Each trait can be assigned a synonym and each of the character traits presented as a vocabulary map. Students are to list specific details from the novel to illustrate the chosen trait, then further analyze their data to decide whether they possess a similar trait. Have them discuss their decisions in class. (Kuta, 1997)

At the middle and high school level, students should generate a list of character traits to choose from. A list of possibilities is also included. Lead students in a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of having that particular trait.

Character Comparison to Self

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher and year: _____

Instructions: Choose an important character. As you read your novel, look for specific traits – descriptive adjectives – that apply to the character. The traits may be stated or inferred as you read. Write down the events or behaviors that display the traits listed. Then explain whether the character trait is one that you have or that someone you know has.

Character's Name _____

Trait	Event or Behavior from the Plot	Similar or Different to Self

See the following lists for possible character traits with both negative and positive connotations. The lists are NOT all inclusive!

Character Traits and Attributes

The table below shows various traits that make up a human. Each trait is shown in two ways; how it manifests in a positive way in a person, and how it manifests negatively in a person.

Trait-Positive	Trait-Negative
Attitudes	
accepts authority, loyal, devoted	rebellious
accepts what's given	ignores, rejects what's given
affectionate	distant, cold, aloof
Ambitious, motivated	self-satisfied, unmotivated
aspiring	self-satisfied
candid	closed, guarded, secretive
caring	uncaring, unfeeling, callous
change; accepts, embraces it	rejects change
cheerful	cheerless, gloomy, sour, grumpy
considerate, thoughtful	inconsiderate, thoughtless
cooperative	uncooperative, unhelpful, combative
courageous	cowering, fearful
courteous	rude, impolite
decisive	indecisive
devoted	uncommitted, uncaring, hostile
determined	indecisive, unsure
does what is necessary, right	does what is convenient
perseveres, endures	relents, gives up
enthusiastic	unenthusiastic, apathetic, indifferent
expansive	kept back, tight, constricting
faith in life	life can't be trusted
faith in oneself	lack of faith in self
faith in others	others can't be relied on
flexible	inflexible, rigid, unbending, stubborn
forgiving	unforgiving, resentful, spiteful
focused	unfocused, scattered
freedom given to others	authoritarian, controlling
friendly	unfriendly, distant, aloof, hostile

frugal, thrifty	Wasteful, spendthrift
generous	stingy, miserly, selfish
goodwill	ill-will, malice, hatred
grateful	ungrateful, unappreciative
hard-working	lazy
honest	dishonest, deceiving, lying
humble	arrogant, conceited, ego-centric
interested	indifferent, uncaring
involved	complacent, indifferent
jealous, not	jealous, envious, covetous
kind	unkind, uncaring, cruel, mean
mature	immature
modest	vain
open-minded, tolerant	narrow, close, small-minded, intolerant
optimistic	pessimistic
perfects	allows imperfection
persistent, sustaining	flagging, fleeting, unsustaining
practical	impractical, not viable
punctual	late, not on time
realistic	naïve, impractical
reliable	unreliable, undependable
respectful	disrespectful, rude, impolite
responsibility, takes	blames others
responsible	unreliable, undependable
responsive	unresponsive, unreceptive
self-confident	lack of self confidence, insecure
self-directed	directed by externals
self-disciplined	undisciplined, unrestrained, indulgent
self-esteem, high	self-esteem, confidence - low
self-giving	self-centered
self-reliant	dependent
selfless	selfish
sensitive	Insensitive, indifferent
serious	silly, trivial, petty
sincere	insincere, dishonest
social independence	social approval required
sympathetic	unsympathetic, unfeeling

systematic	unsystematic, disorganized, disorderly, random
takes others point of view	insists on own view
thoughtful towards others	thoughtless, inconsiderate, callous
trusting	suspicious, mistrusting
unpretentious	pretentious, affected, ostentatious
unselfish	selfish
willing does, willingness	stubborn, unwilling, reluctant
work comes first	convenience first

Attributes	
achieves	doesn't achieve
adventurous	conventional
alcohol and/or drug free	alcohol and/or drug dependent
alert	dull
aware of opportunities	ignorant of opportunities
calm	excitable, nervous
clean	dirty, unkempt
clear goals	lack of, jumbled goals; directionless
clear thoughts	muddled thoughts, confused
completes	leaves hanging, doesn't complete
comprehends	doesn't comprehend
conscious	unconscious
conscious of one's weaknesses	unconscious of one's strengths
constructive	destructive, complaining
content-oriented	outer, surface, form-oriented
creative	uncreative
delegates	tries to do everything
deliberative	reckless

detail-oriented	scrimps on details
develops mental capabilities	leaves mental capacities as is
directed, has direction	directionless, unfocused
disciplined	dissipating
dynamic	passive
educated	uneducated
education exceed previous generation	education not exceed previous generation
education greater than present level of achievement	education less than present level of achievement
education greater than previous generation	education less than previous generation
efficient	inefficient
effort taking	lack of effort
effort achieves results	effort wasted
energetic	listless
enterprising	enterprising, not
entrepreneurial	entrepreneurial, not
envisions the unseen	visionless
experienced (in area)	inexperienced (in area)
fatigue-free	tired, fatigued
focused	unfocused, addled, scattered
goal-oriented	goalless, directionless
good	evil
graceful	clumsy
has enough time	never has enough time
health robust, strong constitution	poor health, weak constitution
high goals	low, no goals
higher social interests	lower, no social interests
idea-driven	ideas don't motivate to act
imaginative	unimaginative
improves self	stays the same

in rapidly expanding field of work	in static or declining field
initiates (has initiative)	lacks initiative
innovative	conservative
insightful	lacks insight, blind to, ignorant of
intelligent	stupid
knowledgeable	ignorant, unformed
knowledgeable in a particular area	no knowledge in a particular area
leads others	submits, yields to others
lives from the depths of life	lives on the surface of life, superficial
lucky; things go your way	unlucky
money circulated for improvement	money hoarded for security
motivated	unmotivated
nerves strong	nerves weak
objective	subjective, biased
observant	blind to, oblivious to
organized	disorganized
patient	impatient, expectant
personable	non-engaging, distant, cold
physical stamina	lack of stamina
polite, mannered	impolite, ill mannered, rude
previous success in family life	previous failure in family life
previous success in school	previous failure in school
previous success in work	previous failure in work
productive interactions with others	chit-chatting
professional (acts)	amateurish (acts)
professional qualification achieved	no professional qualification
regular	irregular, erratic
relationship with other(s)	relationship with other(s)

positive	negative
resourceful	unremorseful, helpless
responsible	irresponsible
results-oriented	does for doing's sake, being merely occupied
risk-taker	averse to risk
sees the whole picture	seeing only parts of the picture
seeks improvement	self-satisfied
spiritual, inner connection	lacks any spiritual, inner connection
stamina	lack of stamina
strength	weakness
stress-free, relaxed	stressed, tense
(has had) supportive family or friends	(has had) indifferent, uncaring family or friends
systematic	unsystematic, disorganized, disorderly, random
tough	weak, soft
trustworthy	untrustworthy
wealthy	impoverished
wealth in present generation	poverty in present generation
well-behaved	ill behaved
work is in harmony with personal life	work is in conflict with personal life

(Posner, 1996)