

# Direct and Indirect Characterization

**Direct characterization** is a trait (physical or personality) that the narrator directly tells us about a character. **Indirect characterization** includes a variety of things we can infer about a character based on his/her actions, thoughts, and interactions with other characters in the story.

**Directions:** Choose one of the characters from our current piece of literature and complete the following tasks. For tasks #1-4, you need to find and write down a line from the text (with page number) and then explain what can be inferred about the character based on this bit of text. If you need more space to write, continue answers on the back of this sheet. For task #5, use colored pencils to sketch what the character physically looks like.

Name of character:

1. Something we're directly told about the character by the narrator:

What does this show us about the character?

3. Something the character does (an action he/she takes):

What does this show us about the character?

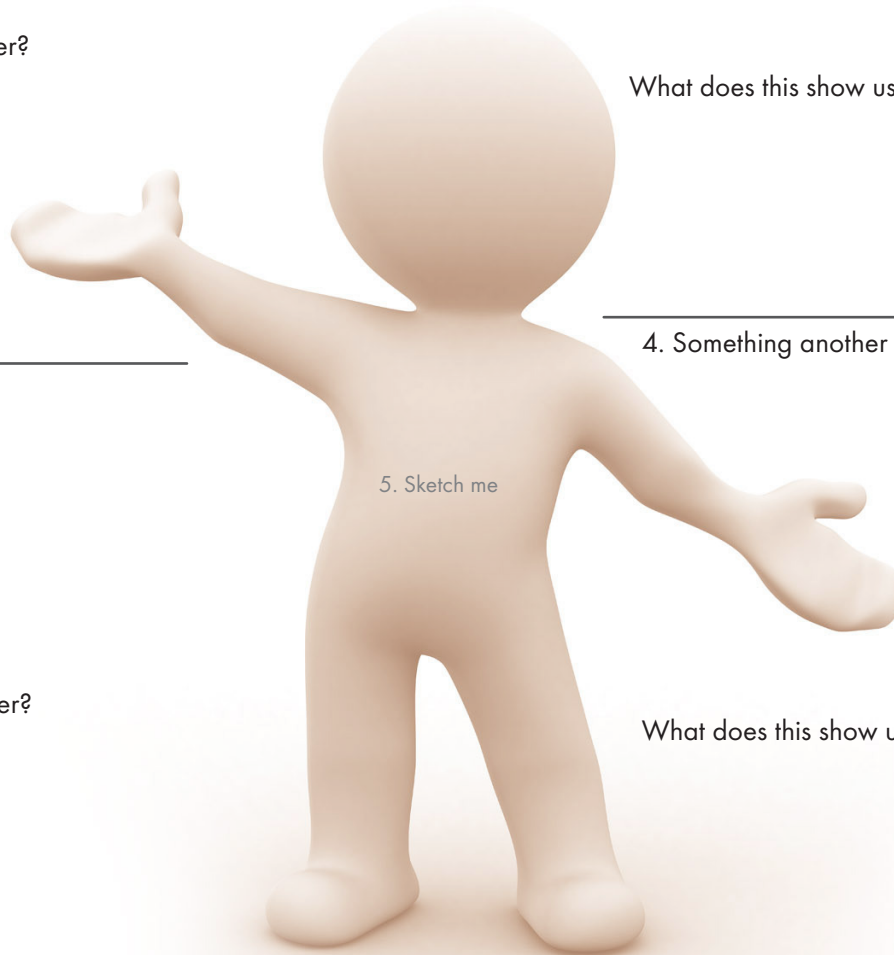
2. Something the character says:

What does this show us about the character?

4. Something another character says/feels about the character:

What does this show us about the character?

5. Sketch me



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Name of character: **Katniss Everdeen** from *The Hunger Games*

1. Something we're directly told about the character by the narrator:

"I pull on trousers, a shirt, tuck my long dark braid up into a cap, and grab my forage bag" (4).

What does this show us about the character?

In this passage, we're directly told what Katniss wears, what her hair looks like, and what task she's about to undertake, foraging food for her family. From this description, we see that she's not a girly-girl; she's practical. Trousers and a braid suggest a no-nonsense quality to her approach to life and a lack of vanity.

3. Something the character does (an action he/she takes): "My real name is Katniss, but when I first told [Gale], I had barely whispered it. So he thought I'd said Catnip. Then when this crazy lynx started following me around the woods looking for handouts, it became his official nickname for me. I finally had to kill the lynx because he scared off game. I almost regretted it because he wasn't bad company. But I got a decent price for his pelt" (7).

What does this show us about the character?

In this passage, we learn that Katniss' practicality wins out over her sentiment. She says she "almost" regretted killing the lynx, but she didn't regret it because the action benefitted her in the end. Because we know this book will be about her journey to the Hunger Games, it's clear that she will kill when she needs to kill.

2. Something the character says:

"'Tuck your tail in, little duck,' I say, smoothing the blouse back in place" (15).

What does this show us about the character?

This shows that Katniss is a loving older sister to Prim. Addressing Prim as "little duck" suggests a tenderness is present in Katniss, even though she has to be tough when she's out in District 12.

4. Something another character says/feels about the character:

"'We could do it, you know,' Gale says quietly.  
'What?' I ask.  
'Leave the district. Run off. Live in the woods. You and I, we could make it,' says Gale" (9).

What does this show us about the character?

This shows that Katniss is desirable. Gale is a hunky guy and he's imagined running off and living with Katniss in the woods. We can infer from this exchange that she is attractive and inspires Gale to daydream.

