**Why is thinking about characters so important when reading literature?**

To improve your critical reading abilities, an important lesson you need to learn is that stories are less about what happens and more about who they happen to. The reason we can become so interested in fictional characters is because they aren’t completely fictional. For a reader wrapped up in a story, they represent real people (sometimes ourselves) facing real problems in the real world. This is exactly how you should try to experience them as you read.

Just like real human beings, characters are dealt a certain hand in life. Some hands are good ones, others aren’t. How characters play out their hands determines their fate. It is the experience of that fate, as strongly as we can feel it, that we follow as we read.

Every main character is challenged in some way. One way of looking at this challenge is to see it as a situation in which a character’s abilities and experience are insufficient to solve the problem at hand.

It is by engaging in these challenges, overcoming some, and/or succumbing to others, that characters develop. They change as a result of what happens to them as they try to solve their problems and reach their goals. It is this change, or set of changes, that often holds the key to unlocking a story’s meaning.

**Character Analysis- what aspects should we focus our thinking on when analyzing a character?**

**Physical.**What does the character look like? How do the character’s physical attributes play a role in the story? How does the character feel about his or her physical attributes? How does the character change physically during the story? How do these changes affect the character’s experience? Do these characteristics help them face their challenges in the story?

**Intellectual.** How would you describe this character’s intelligence? What does this character know? How does this character’s intellect compare to others in the story? Is this character smart enough to thrive in the world in which he or she lives? What does this character learn as the story develops? Do these characteristics help them face their challenges in the story?

**Emotional.** How does this character feel most of the time? How do his or her feelings change throughout the story? How does this character feel about themself? When faced with challenges in the story, what emotions come up for this character? Do these characteristics help them face their challenges in the story?

**Social.**How does this character get along with other characters in the story? Who does this character choose for friends and why does this character choose them? Where does this character stand in the social order? How does this character’s social standing affect events in the story? Do these characteristics help them face their challenges in the story?

**Philosophical.** What does this character believe about the way life is? What are these beliefs based on? How do these beliefs affect the choices this character makes? How do those beliefs change throughout the story? Do others in the story share these beliefs? Do these characteristics help them face their challenges in the story?

Ultimately, the big question is this: What can we learn from this character about how to live in the world? Reading a story is, after all, like watching an experiment. Given a set of characters and circumstances, we sit back and watch the results unfold. The greatest value in fiction, lies in what we can learn about our own lives when we take time to analyze someone else’s — even if that someone else is just a character in a story.

Create a superhero / super villain poster- assignment- English 9

In this assignment you will need to create a superhero and a super villain. You will need to figure out the details below and then write up those details on a poster. The poster should include a picture of both your superhero and your supervillain. You will also need to present either your superhero or villain to the class and describe them, using your poster. If you want you can also create a sidekick for them. Use the descriptors given about character traits on the other side of the page to help you think of what you should put in each category. You must have all the sections accounted for.

Super hero/villain profile characteristics

Name: Real name (secret identity) and super hero name

Physical appearance: /Looks/Distinguishing features

Clothing/Costume: What type of clothes do they wear? What does their costume look like?

Personality: Are they nice/caring/mean/cruel? Are they opinionated? Are they shy/outgoing? Etc.

Mannerisms: Do they have any particular quirks? (ie. raise one eyebrow, limp etc)

Intelligence level: How smart are they? (super genius/average etc)

Origins:- How did they become a superhero? (background story)

Superpowers: special abilities/special knowledge- What are they? How are they activated?

Strengths: What do they get their strength from?

Weaknesses/bad habits: How are they vulnerable?

Background facts: family (parents/siblings), hometown, friends

Likes/Dislikes: What do they like and dislike?

Profession/job: What do they do for a living? (job/billionaire etc)

Sidekick’s name (if they have one): Do they have a helper ? Ie. Batman and Robin

Arch enemy(ies): Name and brief description
Goal/motive: Why do they do what they do?

Catch phrase/motto: What are they known for saying?

Other interesting facts-Helpful gadgets?/special vehicle/ secret hideout/accent etc.

Story assignment for Superhero/supervillain

You will be expected to create a story that includes both your superhero and your supervillain. Your characters must be well developed and should include details about the aspects you have included in your character sketch. The story must also be well developed and have a beginning, middle and an end. You will also need to include at least one visual. You can work on this on your own, with a partner, or in a group of 3 or 4. If you work with others the length and quality will be expected to be better and you must incorporate all of your super heroes and villains in your final product.

You can choose any one of the following options:

1. Write a story and create a picture of one scene from the story.
2. Write graphic story that includes elements of the story in paragraphs as well as comic strip action scenes.
3. Write a comic strip story.
4. Write a script of a story and act it out for the class.
5. Write a script of a story and do readers theatre for the class.
6. Write a script of a story and do a puppet show for the class.
7. Write a script of a story and video tape it being acted out.
8. Other idea- see me and we will see if it can work ☺
9. Write a script of a story and use a computer/software/cameras etc. to create a movie.

Videos to watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdB1s7_Kuzw>

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rY7A22\_3m4**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rY7A22_3m4)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atfVQFuEiUg**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atfVQFuEiUg)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\_wEddufjfU**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_wEddufjfU)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4kUY6WOlPw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4kUY6WOlPw)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETzh8rbU004**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETzh8rbU004)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4kUY6WOlPw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4kUY6WOlPw)