

# Defining Characterization

**Characterization** is the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character. Characterization is revealed through **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization**.

**Direct Characterization** *tells* the audience what the personality of the character is.

Example: "The patient boy and quiet girl were both well mannered and did not disobey their mother."

Explanation: The author is directly telling the audience the personality of these two children. The boy is "patient" and the girl is "quiet."

**Indirect Characterization** *shows* things that reveal the personality of a character. There are five different methods of indirect characterization:

<b>S</b> peech	What does the character say? How does the character speak?
<b>T</b> houghts	What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?
<b>E</b> ffect on others toward the character.	What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?
<b>A</b> ctions	What does the character do? How does the character behave?
<b>L</b> ooks	What does the character look like? How does the character dress?

**TIP #1:** Use the mnemonic device of STEAL to remember the five types of indirect characterization

**TIP #2:** Use indirect characterization to analyze visual media:

**Film:** Look at how the character dresses and moves. Note the facial expressions when the director moves in for a close-up shot.

**Drama:** Pay attention to the way that the characters reveal their thoughts during a soliloquy.

## Indirect Characterization (STEAL)

Story	Character	
Type of Characterization	Example	What does the example reveal about the character?
<u>S</u> peech		
<u>T</u> houghts		
<u>E</u> ffect on Others  (How Others React to the Character)		
<u>A</u> ctions		
<u>L</u> ooks  (Appearance: sloppy, unkempt, dirty, etc., <i>not</i> ugly or beautiful)		