

STUDY GUIDE Unit 2

Character

A **character** is a person, animal, or object that an author uses in telling a story. Characters can real or make-believe. Just like you, characters have problems, wants, feelings, and thoughts. To learn about the characters in a story, pay attention to what they say and do. Ask yourself questions like

- **What traits does the character have?**

A **trait** is an interesting thing about a character. It makes a character special. A trait could be the way a character looks or acts. Words like “funny,” “fast,” “strong,” or “smart” describe traits.

Example: Freddie is a tall boy with black hair. He likes to eat ice cream.



- **What relationships does the character have?**

A **relationship** is a connection between people. This can mean characters are friends, family, or schoolmates.

Example: Bea and Carolina are sisters. They are also best friends. They always do everything together.

- **Why does the character do something?**

It is important to know why characters do things. Characters sometimes do things because of how they feel.

Example: Joe Bear kicked the skateboard because he was angry.



- **Who is telling the story?**

The **narrator** is the person telling the story. The **point of view** is the view of the narrator. He or she can change how the reader sees things. In the example below, the narrator is a big sister. She makes the reader think that the baby does not like her.

Example: My new baby sister does not like me. She always cries when I try to hold her.

- **What problem does the character have?**

Most stories are about how characters solve a problem. Look for what characters in a story are having trouble with. How do they solve their problems?

Example: Joey's bike has flat tires. He solves his problem by putting more air in them.



- **How does the character change?**

Sometimes characters change in a story. Another character in the story may change how the main character acts.

Example: George did not like his neighbor Kate. She never said hi to him. One day, Kate tripped and hurt her ankle. George asked Kate if she was okay and helped her get up. Now, George and Kate are best friends.

THEME

THE THEME OF a story is the most important thing the author wants readers to understand. It's the author's thoughts about a general belief of how things are or how they should be. In fables, the theme is the moral, or lesson, the story teaches. The moral may even be stated at the end of the story.

- A writer's message, or main point, is the **theme** of his or her literary work. Looking for a theme helps you look more deeply into the literature and makes for more enjoyable reading.
- You will need to infer what the theme is from the work's title, key scenes, characters, symbols, and plot events.

To Identify Theme:

An author may not state the theme directly, but you can figure it out. Think about what the characters in the story are like and what they do, and ask yourself questions like:

- Did something that happened in the story change a character?
- How do the characters' actions relate to things in my life?
- What message is the author trying to send me?
- Does the title of the story give a clue to the theme?