

Character Chart

Activity One: One way authors use characterization is to develop the theme of their text. As you reread “Everyday Use”, we will examine the characterization of Mama and Maggie, and ask, “How does this characterization advance the theme of Walker’s short story?”

Theme: As you discover characterization, you will want to ask yourself, “How does this relate to the theme of the text?” To help you focus on theme, write down your theme statement from the previous lesson.

Theme Statement:

Mama Characterization:

| Trait | Mama | Evidence from Text | Commentary |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Questions to consider about the trait</i> | <i>Description of Mama’s traits.</i> | <i>Note words, phrases in the text that relate to the trait.</i> | <i>Explain how the trait relates to the theme.</i> |
| Speech: What does the character say? How does the character speak? | | | |
| Thoughts: What is revealed through the character’s private thoughts and feelings? | | | |

| Trait | Mama | Evidence from Text | Commentary |
|---|------|--------------------|------------|
| Evolution: How does the character change from the beginning of the story to the end? What other characters, conflicts, or actions cause that change? | | | |
| Actions/Motivations: What does the character do? Why does the character behave this way? | | | |
| Looks: Describe the character's physical appearance. How do they look? How do they dress? | | | |

Maggie Characterization:

| Trait | Maggie | Evidence from Text | Commentary |
|---|--|--|--|
| <i>Questions to consider about the trait</i> | <i>Description of Maggie's traits.</i> | <i>Note words, phrases in the text that relate to the trait.</i> | <i>Explain how the trait relates to the theme.</i> |
| Speech: What does the character say? How does the character speak? | | | |
| Thoughts: What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings? | | | |

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|---|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Effect on others: What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character? | | | |
| Trait | Maggie | Evidence from Text | Commentary |
| Actions/Motivations: What does the character do? Why does the character behave this way? | | | |
| Looks: Describe the character's physical appearance. How do they look? How do they dress? | | | |

Dee Characterization:

| Trait | Dee | Evidence from Text | Commentary |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Questions to consider about the trait</i> | <i>Description of Dee's traits.</i> | <i>Note words, phrases in the text that relate to the trait.</i> | <i>Explain how the trait relates to the theme.</i> |
| Speech: What does the character say? How does the character speak? | | | |
| Thoughts: What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings? | | | |
| Evolution: How does the character change from the beginning of the story to the end? What other characters, conflicts, or actions cause that change? | | | |
| Actions/Motivations: | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| What does the character do? Why does the character behave this way? | | | |
| Looks: Describe the character's physical appearance. How do they look? How do they dress? | | | |

Activity Two: At the end of the story, Mama and Maggie have both changed as a result of Dee's visit, but Dee remains unchanged. How does Alice Walker's choice not to have Dee change help Walker reveal the theme to her audience?