CHARACTER ANALYSIS

On the road to discovering theme

Dr. de Hart
English
A FEW STARTING POINTS

Consider:

• The character’s name (does it tell us anything?)

• Significant family relationships (who is loved, hated, influential, silent, etc.)

• Close friends and the role that they play in this character’s life and decisions.
CRITICAL ANALYSIS

• How does the character FIRST appear to us in the story? Things to look for:
  
  • **outward appearances.** Note how the character is first described, this is not always the most important discovery, but one worth observing.

  • **What significant actions** does this character demonstrate?

  • **Pay attention to the character’s words** (with others or alone)

  • **Pay attention to inward thoughts**
• Look for moments of silence

• Notice a lack of action when it would seem proper to act.

• The combination of all of these clues is what establishes the character’s traits (who they really are and what they are like)

• Always support your analysis with proof! Cite specific examples of action, inaction, thoughts, and words. Your opinions must be based on facts/evidence/proof!
CHARTING YOUR ANALYSIS

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Complete this chart **for every main character**
(add additional rows, always giving page numbers and quotations where dialogue is being cited).
• IS THERE A **TURNING POINT** IN THE CHARACTER? DO YOU SEE ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE CHARACTER IS NO LONGER DEMONSTRATING THE SAME TRAITS THAT HE/SHE BEGAN THE STORY WITH?

• REVIEW THE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND DIALOGUE AND THINK ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE TURNING POINT OCCURRED WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW THE CHARACTER REACTED! **HINT**: THIS USUALLY OCCURS DURING A MOMENT OF CONFLICT.
What is the turning point for young Bruce Wayne?
CONFLICT

• CONFLICT is a struggle between two forces.

• An EXTERNAL conflict can take place between two characters, between a character and a group, or between a character and an animal or force in nature.

• An INTERNAL conflict is a struggle that takes place within a character’s heart or mind.
Quiz Review: Character Analysis

1. First Step - how do you get to know the character? Be specific as to what to look for:
   - Appearance
   - Relationships
   - Actions
   - Words
   - Silence
   - inaction

2. How would you know if the character changed? What are you looking for? How do you identify it?
   - Their behavior (traits have noticeably changed. They are showing differences in their words, actions, relationships, etc.)

3. What do we call it when the character has changed? What is the term for this moment?
   - Turning Point

4. What is the likely cause of that change?
   - Conflict

Tuesday, September 18, 12
Character Traits

**Trait**

**Definition:** A special quality or qualities about a person(s) or character that tell us what they are like. Characteristics or Personality.

In a story, the character’s traits are revealed by the character’s actions, inner-thoughts, & what the character says (his/her words).
Frequently used words (adjectives) describing character traits

Copy 10 traits that could describe you from this list.
A TRAIT describes a person or character.

Examples of character traits:
- Courageous
- Intelligent
- Shy
- Thoughtful
A Trait describes a person or character

Keeping it interesting with synonyms

- Courageous
  - Brave
  - Bold
  - Fearless

- Shy
  - Quiet
  - Calm
  - Lonely

- Intelligent
  - Smart
  - Educated
  - Witty

- Caring
  - Gentle
  - Kind

- Thoughtful

Tuesday, September 18, 12
My Character Traits
Your name:___________

Major Trait
- synonym 1
- synonym 2
- synonym 3

Major Trait
- synonym 1
- synonym 2
- synonym 3

Major Trait
- synonym 1
- synonym 2
- synonym 3

Major Trait
- synonym 1
- synonym 2
- synonym 3
Charting Character for Theme

- Character’s Actions/inaction
- Character’s Appearance
- Character’s Words/silence
- Character’s Relationships

Trait
CHARACTER: Jim

**Character’s Actions/inaction**
- Jim never leaves Julie alone page. 11
- Jim questions Julie every time she has plans without him Pages 14-15

**Character’s Words/silence**
- “Where have you been? You didn’t answer my calls!” page 11

**Character’s Appearance**
- When Jim heard Julie complimenting Joe’s choice, of jeans, Jim went out & bought the same jeans that Joe was wearing. Page 22

**Character’s Relationships**
- Jim gets angry with his best friend Dylan because Dylan was talking to Julie in class. page 19
OVERVIEW:

The student will read ____________. Throughout the reading the student will make use of a reader/writer journal taking notes on character analysis as it relates to theme.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY:

- Character
- Theme
- Turning Point
- Internal Conflict
- External Conflict
- Dialogue
- Traits

EXPECTATIONS/DEADLINE:

The student will turn in (1) a COMPLETE reader/writer journal demonstrating comprehension of character development through evidence (direct quotation). Noting character traits at the beginning of the story, through the story, turning point, conflict (internal and external). A graphic organizer for taking notes will be used for the journal entries. (2) The student will also turn in a 1 page typed character analysis essay following the instructions for a five paragraph essay. Choose a single character and supply evidence! Analyze - do not describe. DUE WED. DEC. 8th 2012! NO late papers.
### Complete a chart such as this (or demonstrate with the same proof in an organized manner, for ONE character from the story you have just read. THREE traits must be identified and given evidence. In other words, if using this chart, it must be done 3 times for a single character and identifying a different (and provable) trait each time. Complete this and have the notes signed off by Dr. de Hart before beginning the Essay. Essay will be due Friday, 09/30.
### Beginning, Middle, End of the Story 3 Trait/Character Analysis

#### JOURNAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Evidence/Quotation (author, page number)</th>
<th>What it means</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trait #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Words</strong></td>
<td>“I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secrets of philosophy are mine...” (p.1)</td>
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<td><strong>Young Student</strong></td>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td>“he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.” (p.2)</td>
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<td><strong>studious</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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Complete a chart such as this (or demonstrate with the same proof in an organized manner, for ONE character from the story you have just read. THREE traits must be identified and given evidence. In other words, if using this chart, it must be done 3 times for a single character and identifying a different (and provable) trait each time. Complete this and have the notes signed off by Dr. de Hart before beginning the Essay. Essay will be due Friday, 09/30.
I. Thesis Paragraph.
   - State three character traits you can prove about the character.

II. 1st Evidence Paragraph.
   - Take the 1st of the traits you identified (i.e. Jealousy) and support that the character is jealous with hard verifiable evidence from the book (cite directly, page number and quote the evidence)

III. 2nd Evidence Paragraph.
   - Take the 2nd of the traits you identified (i.e. angry) and support that the character is an angry person with hard verifiable evidence from the book (cite directly, page number and quote the evidence)

IV. 3rd Evidence Paragraph.
   - Take the 3rd of the traits you identified (i.e. violent) and support that the character is violent with hard verifiable evidence from the book (cite directly, page number and quote the evidence)

V. Concluding Paragraph.
   - Restate and summarize that the character is as you stated in the thesis statement and make general reference to how you have proven it in the previous 3 paragraphs.
If there is a turning point (and almost always there will be with a major character - note, conflict) and you have now discovered why it occurred and how it changed the character, you have discovered THE THEME! This is the life lesson, the main idea of the story.

State the theme in a simple sentence (NOT a single word!) A theme might be, “forgiveness comes at a cost,” but it will NOT be “forgiveness.”

In writing the theme do NOT refer to the story or the characters, it is a life lesson for the reader. Example of what NOT to do: “Bruce Wayne learned that fighting crime is better than being a victim.” What would be better? Fix this poorly written theme into a correct one: “_______________________”

If the character does not have a turning point, what explanation can you give for why this character does not change? Why would the author leave this character unchanged? Explain. The theme might be hidden in what the reader learns by a character not changing and the consequences that follow.
Finding The Theme Graph

Character

Significant words, actions, thoughts, silence, inaction = Character Traits

Conflict

Turning Point

New/Different Traits

Theme

The Life Lesson

Evidence

Tuesday, September 18, 12
Describe a significant event that the main character experiences that tells the reader something about him/her. Cite from the text.

Describe another significant event that the main character experiences that tells the reader something about him/her.

What was the conflict moment (turning point) in the story that changed how the character (his/her traits) changed? And Why does he/she view life in a different way. Give a specific example (cite evidence).

What is the life lesson for the reader (the theme)? What has the reader learned from this story?
Character Traits of a major character in the story
name: __________

Instructions:
Using your character trait chart
List 4 traits that describe the character and also include at least 3 synonyms to help keep it interesting!
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**What traits are identifiable based on the above evidence?**
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
ENGLISH
Dr. de Hart

OVERVIEW:

The student will read ________________. Throughout the reading the student will make use of a reader/writer journal taking notes on character analysis as it relates to theme.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY:

- Character
- Theme
- Turning Point
- Internal Conflict
- External Conflict
- Dialogue
- Traits

EXPECTATIONS/DEADLINE:

The student will turn in (1) a COMPLETE reader/writer journal demonstrating comprehension of character development through evidence (direct quotation). Noting character traits at the beginning of the story, through the story, turning point, conflict (internal and external). A graphic organizer for taking notes will be used for the journal entries. This does not need to be typed. (2) The student will also turn in a typed character analysis for 1 of the main characters. This character analysis section will become 3 typed pages. Use the notes from the journal as an organizing tool for providing evidence to substantiate conclusions. (3) The student will also turn in a 2 page (minimum) colored illustrated comic book style depiction with no less than 4 boxes with quotations beneath the illustration revealing the starting point of the character’s traits, a significant conflict moment, the turning point, and the conclusion.

All parts of the assignment MUST be complete. IN TOTAL the assignment turned in will be:

1. The Reader/Writer Journal handwritten. Expected to be weeks of notes all kept in a single notebook, properly formatted.

The Paper will count for 100 points. It will be DUE NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 2nd. NO LATER PAPERS FOR ANY REASON.
Writing your Paper

Questions you should answer before writing.

1. What is the theme you have identified in the story?
2. How do the characters help prove your theme is valid?
3. Can you prove your theme is valid with quotations?
Once you have identified a **THEME** (the life lesson) in a story AND you can find a **SIMILAR THEME** in another story, the “life lesson” that they share is called a **UNIVERSAL THEME**.

Often times two different stories will share a common or similar life lesson - a **UNIVERSAL THEME**. It can even occur when one theme is found in a short story and the same theme is found in another genre of literature such as a poem or play.
Universal Theme

**Nightingale and the Rose**
- Boy is a student
- Selfish Girl is object of student’s affection
- Student does nothing for the object of his love
- Nightingale dies alone

**The Happy Prince**
- ?
- ?
- ?

**DIFFERENCES**

**DIFFERENCES**

This Venn Diagram must be included in your notes. Completely filled out!
**Universal Theme**

**Nightingale and the Rose**
- Boy is a student
- Selfish Girl is object of student’s affection
- Student does nothing for the object of his love
- Nightingale dies alone

**The Happy Prince**
- ?
- ?
- ?

**SIMILARITIES**

**DIFFERENCES**

From the similarities, look for a common life lesson; Life message; THEME. This is the UNIVERSAL THEME.

Tuesday, September 18, 12
Universal Theme Assignment

OVERVIEW:

The student will read Oscar Wilde’s fairy tale, “Happy Prince.” Throughout the reading the student will make use of a reader/writer journal taking notes on character analysis as it relates to theme. The student will then compare & contrast the character analysis of “The Happy Prince” with the previous character analysis from “The Nightingale and the Rose.” Using notes and a graphic organizer designed for Universal Theme, the student will provide written evidence in an essay demonstrating how character analysis and theme may be linked to another piece of literature (same or difference genre) and provide a Universal Theme.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY:
- Character
- Theme
- Turning Point
- Internal Conflict
- External Conflict
- Dialogue
- Traits

EXPECTATIONS/DEADLINE:

On Monday, October 25th, 2010, the student will turn in (1) a COMPLETE reader/writer journal demonstrating comprehension of character development through evidence (direct quotation). Noting character traits at the beginning of the story, through the story, turning point, conflict (internal and external). A graphic organizer for taking notes will be used for the journal entries. (2) The student will also turn in a 2 page typed character analysis from The Happy Prince as it leads to theme using the notes from the journal as an organizing tool for providing evidence to substantiate conclusions. (3) The student will write a 1 page analysis of the Universal Theme from “The Happy Prince” and “The Nightingale and the Rose,” noting the theme (specifically) and demonstrating clearly the similarities AND the differences (compare/contrast). It is expected that the student will have evidence from the text (properly cited) as evidence. (4) The student will also turn in a 2 page (minimum) colored illustrated comic book style depiction with no less than 8 boxes with quotations beneath the illustration revealing the Universal Theme from both stories and how they were arrived at. NOTE, the student has 9 school days and 2 weekends to work on this project and make use of computers at the school, in his/her English classroom during lunch/after school, and should not make an excuse that they are without computers or printers on the day that the project is due. (5) A vocabulary page(s) with unknown words AND definitions must be turned in with the final paper. a TOTAL of 6 pages PLUS JOURNAL NOTES should be turned in on Monday, October 25th.

50 POINTS for the project.

Extra Credit may be given to students who complete the ENTIRE assignment and go BEYOND the requirements.
**CHARTING YOUR ANALYSIS**

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Complete this chart **for each character** (add additional rows, always giving page numbers and quotations where dialogue is being cited).

Tuesday, September 18, 12
Using your character chart, complete the following graph to find the theme and have sufficient evidence to write your paper.

- **Character**
- **Significant words, actions, thoughts, silence, inaction**
- **Conflict**
- **Turning Point**
- **Theme**
  - The Life Lesson
In Oscar Wilde’s fairy tale, “The Nightingale and the Rose,” the theme is *Death is the greatest of all gifts.*

Among the three main characters in “The Nightingale and the Rose,” there is a student who announces he is in love; a girl who is the object of his “love”, and a bird (the nightingale) who is motivated by her belief that “love is better than life.” (p. 2).

The fairy tale begins with a student, a boy, who *thinks* that he is in love with a girl who tells him that if only he would give her a “red rose she will dance with him.” (p.2). The student’s “love” does not appear to be as true as he says it is, the student cries and complains but he actually doesn’t do a single thing to find the rose that he can give to the girl he supposedly *loves*; “he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.” The student’s lack of action is evidence that his feelings are not as deep as he thinks they are otherwise he would act! ...

[in the next paragraphs I would show how the girl’s motivation proven at the beginning of the story is nothing more than selfishness, a self love, not a love that shares its feelings or heart with another. Finally, after evidence to support that opinion, I would introduce the Nightingale and show that its belief in love is the only one that has words and actions, actions that end in death - the final evidence of love as the greatest of all gifts ...” Evidence supporting the theme would make a complete paper.]