

Analyzing Characters **Rudy Delarosa**

When writing about or describing a character's traits, be sure to think about the character's inner life (his or her history, world view, and desires), their visual distinction (his or her body, face, or wardrobe), and expressive traits (the way he or she speaks, any behavior associated with this character). By focusing on these aspects, you can produce a better image of the character for your readers.

Think about conflicts. In school, we are taught that stories rely on conflicts and that some conflicts are internal and external. However, if you truly tracked conflicts to their source, you will notice that most conflicts are internal- they all start with someone, somewhere wanting something.

When analyzing characters, you need to consider the following:

1. Facial Expressions- pay close attention to the way authors describe a character's facial expressions, for these expressions can reveal multiple facets of a character's being. Facial expressions can indicate physical states such as pain or exhaustion. A face's true power, however, lies in its ability to convey basic human emotions.

2. Body Language- body language can tell readers about a character even before they speak. If they walk upright they could be considered confident; if they are hunched over with a lower posture, we can identify these characters as weak and dispossessed. Focus on the ways authors describe a character's body in certain situations. Do they shrink away from problems, or do they face them head-on? Look at the positioning of characters as well. If a character is elevated, he or she is meant to be presented as powerful, while one who is lower or kneeling is meant to be perceived as humble. Different postures can mean multiple things. While reading, you need to focus on the situations and circumstances that the characters are in when they exhibit these postures. For example, a bow may mean shy, ashamed, or even defeated. It all depends on the situation. Also, posture can be a powerful indicator of how a character speaks. Pay close attention to hands as well for they can reveal quite a bit about a character. Palms-up can make a character seem friendly, nonthreatening, and honest; a downturned palm symbolically raises the speaker, claiming authority, power, and control over others (just as an adult pats a kid on the head indicating control).