Character Analysis

Overview

Do you realize when you make judgments about character in a movie or in a TV show; you are quickly doing a character analysis in your head?

A character analysis involves you looking at a character from all angles and then making a judgment about the character. Another way to think of it is that you are on a jury and in order to judge the person you must hear, see, read, and understand all the evidence first.

When would you use a character analysis? What is it good for? It helps you write a compare and contrast essay on characters. First, you would do a quick character analysis for each character, then find what they have in common (compare) and what they do not have in common (contrast).

So how do you go about writing a character analysis?

1. Analyze the character from all angles
2. Make a judgment based on the evidence
3. Use your opinion or judgment statement as your thesis statement
4. Write the body paragraphs of your essay to support this statement from each angle
5. Write your introduction and then conclusion

Graphic Organizer

This graphic organizer helps you brainstorm and organize your thoughts so you easily write a character analysis essay.

1. Fold a sheet of paper in half and then in half again so when you unfold it you have four equal sized rectangles or quadrants.
2. Write the headings in each quadrants (see example)
3. Fill out the four quadrants using factual data, not opinion. If you want to use an opinion, you must cite the page numbers.
4. Write your opinion or judgment of the character in the opinion box. This statement will become your thesis statement in your essay (i.e. the point you are trying to argue)
5. Write your body paragraphs using each quadrant as one of your paragraphs.
6. Add an introduction and conclusion (don’t forget to put in your thesis statement!)
Basic Facts about the Character

- Name
- Physical Characteristics
  - Ex. Eye & hair color, gender, ethnicity, body size
- Family (or lack thereof)
- Location of character
  - Ex. House in the Woods, a castle, Neverland, City, State, Country, Land Far Far Away
- Age
  - Ex. Specific year, young, elderly, middle-aged

What are some of his behaviors at the beginning of the story? And now? What caused that change?

- Ex. WAS grumpy, NOW more gentle CAUSED BY a woman coming into his life.
- Ex. WAS happy, NOW depressed CAUSED BY trauma

OPINION of character (Thesis statement)

How does he see himself?

- Adjectives
  - Ex. Brave, shy, nerdy, strong, weak
- Character traits that seem to define him
  - Ex. Quick temper, disabilities
- Past events that seem to define him
  - Ex. Physical or mental abuse, witnessing something horrific, physical injury

How do other characters see him?

- Adjectives
  - Ex. Brave, shy, nerdy, strong, weak
- Character traits that seem to define him
  - Ex. Quick temper, disabilities
- Past events that seem to define him
  - Ex. Physical or mental abuse, witnessing something horrific, physical injury

PERCEPTION