

# Lesson Skill: Identifying and categorizing character traits

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**Strand** Reading--fiction

**SOL** 6.5  
7.5  
8.5

**Materials**

- Copies of a short story
- Copies of the attached Character Bone Structure handout

**Lesson**

In this lesson, students develop insight into the author's creation of a character and the reasons the character interacts with others as he/she does.

1. Assign a short story.
2. Distribute copies of the attached Character Bone Structure handout, and review it with students. Have students choose a character from the story and select specific information from the text that illustrates as many of that character's physical and psychological traits described on the handout as possible.
3. Have students use the information they gathered from the text to write a Character Bone Structure for the character.

## Character Bone Structure

To better understand a character's physical and psychological traits, look for information in the text concerning the character's

- physiology (appearance and outward attitude),
- sociology (home location, type of job, family, financial status, free-time activities), and
- psychology (mental state, actions due to attitude, reasons for actions due to attitude).

Specifically, look for the following things:

### Physiology

- Gender
- Age
- Height and weight
- Color of eyes, hair, and skin
- Posture
- Appearance (dress)
- Defects
- Heredity



### Sociology

- Class
- Occupation
- Education
- Home life (Who runs the house or supports the family through work or leadership?)
- Religion
- Place in community (Is this person liked or disliked by the people around him/her?)
- Political ambitions
- Amusements and hobbies

### Psychology

- Moral standards
- Personal ambitions
- Frustrations (disappointments, big and small)
- Temperament (Is this character mild mannered or hostile? When this character comes in contact with other characters, how do they respond? Does this character act differently around different people?)
- Attitude toward life
- Complexes (Are there any mental problems that cause him/her to act in a particular manner?)

*English Enhanced Scope and Sequence*

- Extrovert, introvert, ambivert (Is the character outgoing and social? Does the character keep to him/herself and not want to mix with other people? Can he/she be described as sometimes moody and keeping to himself/herself while at other times outgoing and social?)
- I.Q.