

Mastering Character Description

Learning objective: To analyse and apply techniques for creating vivid, multi-dimensional character descriptions using expanded noun phrases, figurative language, and psychological insight.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of descriptive techniques. Try to define the term first, then check the answer to see if you included the essential elements for Year 5 writing.

What is an 'Expanded Noun Phrase'?

A phrase that adds more detail to a noun by using adjectives and prepositional phrases (e.g., 'The golden-maned lion with a gentle, thoughtful gaze').

Define 'Show, Don't Tell' in creative writing.

Instead of stating an emotion (e.g., 'Max was nervous'), you describe the action or physical reaction (e.g., 'Max's hands trembled as he tightened his grip on the maths puzzle').

What is a 'Simile' and how does it aid characterisation?

A comparison using 'as' or 'like' to provide a vivid mental image, such as 'Pip moved as gracefully as a ribbon caught in a summer breeze.'

Explain 'Personification' as a descriptive tool.

Giving human qualities to non-human objects or animals, such as 'The stars winked down at Nova, whispering secrets of the ancient cosmos.'

What are 'Emotive Adjectives'?

Words chosen specifically to influence the reader's feelings about a character, such as 'courageous', 'wretched', 'dazzling', or 'forlorn'.

How do 'Fronted Adverbials' improve character movement?

They place the adverbial at the start of the sentence to describe how or when a character acts, e.g., 'With a swift flick of his tail, Finn dived into the sapphire depths.'

What is 'Characterisation'?

The process by which an author reveals the personality, appearance, and motivations of a character through their actions, thoughts, and dialogue.

Explain the difference between a Simile and a Metaphor.

A simile compares using 'like' or 'as', whereas a metaphor states one thing IS another to create a stronger, more direct image (e.g., 'Leo is a mountain of stillness').

Why use 'Precise Verbs' instead of common ones?

Using specific verbs (e.g., 'sprinted' instead of 'ran') provides a clearer picture of the character's energy and intent.

What is 'Internal Monologue'?

A character's inner thoughts or feelings revealed to the reader, helping us understand their motivations and personality.