

# Describe the Main Character | WHO is the story about?

Stories always include characters. Characters can be a person, an animal, or an object. Stories can have a combination of different character types—people and animals (e.g., Goldilocks and the Three Bears).

## A PERSON



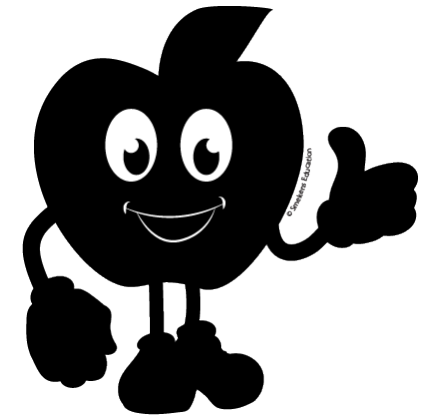
(e.g., Goldilocks, Cinderella, Alexander, Lilly)

## AN ANIMAL



(e.g., Three pigs, Scaredy Squirrel, Walter/farting dog)

## AN OBJECT



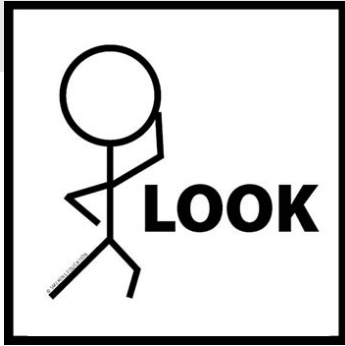
(e.g., an egg/*After the Fall*, a doughnut/*Arnie the Doughnut*)

### Stories ALWAYS have a main character.

- The person, animal, or object who has the problem is the main character.
- The main character is described (in pictures and words) on every/almost every page.
- There could be multiple main characters who all have the same problem.

### Stories MIGHT have other characters.

- These other people, animals, or objects are each described (in pictures and words) on some pages.
- They are NOT the ones with the problem.
- These other characters might be the cause of the main character's problem (e.g., rival, villain, competitor, opponent).
- These other characters might be "guides" or heroes who eventually help the main character solve his problem.
- These other characters might not help or hurt the main character. They are just part of the story's background (e.g., the rest of the class, the mom making supper, the other shoppers at the store).



# Describe the Main Character | What does he LOOK like?

Readers look for descriptive words that reveal what the character looks like. Collect details stated in the text, facial expressions in illustrations, and text style in print and multimedia.

## PRINT TEXT CLUES

### APPEARANCE

- Height (e.g., tall, short, comparison)
- Weight (e.g., plump, slender)
- Animal (e.g., furry, scaly, feathered)
- Alien (e.g., color, size, shape)
- Robot (e.g., humanoid, mechanical)
- Disfigurement (e.g., type, size, location)
- Disability (e.g., type, consequences)
- Gender
- Age
- Nationality (citizenship)
- Race (physical traits)
- Ethnicity (cultural identification)
- Scars, tattoos, piercings
- Hair
- Eyes
- Glasses
- Nose
- Mouth/teeth

### HABITS

- Posture (e.g., slouching down, standing straight, avoiding eye contact, holding head high)
- Gestures (e.g., swaying back and forth, tapping a foot, crossing his arms)
- Walk (e.g., stride, pace, rhythm)
- Needs assistance (e.g., crutches, walker, braces, wheelchair)
- Mannerisms (e.g., biting fingernails, saying "sorry," twirling hair)
- Special powers (e.g., imaginary or real—in science fiction)

### ACCESSORIES

- Clothing (e.g., fits appropriately, current style, appropriate for weather/occasion)
- Clean or dirty
- New or old/tattered
- Scent (e.g., fragrance, perfume, body odor)
- Makeup
- Extras (e.g., purses, backpacks, suitcases)

### RELATIONSHIPS

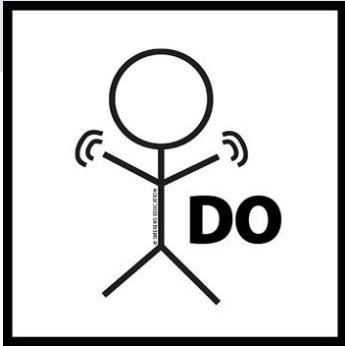
- Family (e.g., grandma, dad, child, parent, cousin)
- Work (e.g., boss, secretary, farmer, mechanic)
- Student (e.g., grade level, school)
- Community (e.g., hermit, apartment-dweller, homeless)
- Status (e.g., single, married, widowed)

## VISUAL CLUES

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Identify the character details that are the SAME within the illustrations that were stated in the author's print text.

Identify any NEW details that the illustrator added in the pictures (that weren't specified in the print text).



# Describe the Main Character | What does he DO?

Readers follow the character around, noting all the places he goes, actions/reactions he takes, and choices/decisions he makes. Like the moving arms on the icon, the character is always doing something.

## PRINT TEXT CLUES

### ACTIVE

Throw  
Run  
Bake  
Build  
Buy  
Climb  
Close  
Dance  
Drink  
Eat  
Fall  
Fix  
Grab  
Help  
Hit  
Hop  
Jump  
Kick  
March  
Play  
Push  
Ride  
Run  
Touch

### INTERACTIVE

Visit  
Meet  
Greet  
Leave  
Bring  
Take  
Enter  
Exit  
Converse  
Respond

### INACTIVE

Still (frozen in fear)  
Sat  
Listen  
Stand  
Wait

### REACTIVE

Answer  
Reply  
Acknowledge  
Obey  
Disobey  
Ignore  
Cause  
Provoke

### DECISIVE

Accept  
Reject  
Agree  
Disagree  
Vote  
Choose

## VISUAL CLUES

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Identify the action details that are the SAME within the illustrations that were stated in the author's print text.

Identify any NEW details that the illustrator added in the pictures (that weren't specified in the print text).



# Describe the Main Character | What does he SAY?

Readers pay attention to speech bubbles in illustrations and words within quotation marks to learn what a character said and how he said it.

## PRINT TEXT CLUES

### DIALOGUE/*What he said*

Look for quotation marks.

These are words included in the story; the author wrote them.

Look specifically at what the main character said (to the other character(s)).

### HOW he said it

Look for words other than "said"

- *whispered*
- *chuckled*

Note adverbs that provide insight into the character's personality and attitude.

- *whispered excitedly*
- *whispered angrily*
  
- *chuckled jokingly*
- *chuckled sarcastically*

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION/ *What he wrote*

- Letters
- Diary entries
- Text messages
- Emails
- Handwritten notes to self
- Digital notes to self

### NARRATION/*What they said he said*

The narrator can summarize a conversation.

No quotation marks, but it sums up what a character talked about.

These are words included in the story; the author wrote them.

## VISUAL CLUES

### SPEECH BUBBLES IN ILLUSTRATIONS

Look inside ovals floating above or beside and pointing at a character in the picture.

These are details in the picture that the illustrator provides.

### TEXT FEATURES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- Handwriting, penmanship
- Emojis
- Correct spelling (or lack of)



# Describe the Main Character

What does he THINK and HOW does he FEEL?

Readers “hear” what a character is thinking, feeling, dreaming, or remembering. This comes through details stated in the print text or in thought bubbles within illustrations.

THOUGHTS		FEELINGS	
PRINT TEXT CLUES	VISUAL CLUES	PRINT TEXT CLUES	VISUAL CLUES
<p><b>KINDS OF THOUGHTS</b></p> <p>Wonderings            Dreams            Goals            Hopes            Fears            Worries            Wishes            Wants</p> <p><b>THINKING WORDS</b></p> <p>Look at the print text for synonyms that mean <i>thinking</i>— <i>wondered about, curious about, wished for, really wanted, considered, pondered, etc.</i></p>	<p><b>THINKING BUBBLES IN ILLUSTRATIONS</b></p> <p>Look inside the cloud bubbles floating above or beside and pointing at a character in the picture.</p> <p>These are details in the picture that the illustrator provides.</p> <p>Identify the SAME details the author stated that show what the character is thinking.</p> <p>Identify any NEW thinking details that the illustrator added in the pictures (that weren't specified in the print text).</p>	<p><b>FEELING WORDS</b></p> <p>Look at the print text for any feeling words that the author gives (e.g., furious, exhausted, excited, surprised).</p> <p>Sometimes feelings are tied to actions (e.g., cried, shouted, clapped, etc.).</p> <p><b>PUNCTUATION</b></p> <p>Exclamation marks            All capital letters            Underlined, bold text, italics            Ellipses (to show that speech trailed off, was unfinished)</p>	<p><b>FACIAL EXPRESSIONS IN ILLUSTRATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at the face of the character in the picture. Specifically, notice the details in the eyes, the angle of the eyebrows, and the shape of the mouth.</li> <li>• Note body language, posture, stance (e.g., slouching down, standing straight, avoiding eye contact, holding head high).</li> <li>• Identify the feeling details that are the SAME within the illustrations that were stated in the author's print text.</li> </ul>

These thoughts may be put into italics so that the reader knows they weren't actually verbalized. They were self-talk or thoughtshots. The character was talking to himself.



## MOTIVATION

### WISHES & WANTS

The most important thought or feeling a character has comes early in the story. *What does he want? What is his goal? What is he trying to achieve?* This wish or want is tied closely to the problem. What he wants he can't have because of the problem.

- Identify any NEW feeling details that the illustrator added in the pictures (that weren't specified in the print text).