

Characterisation

Information sourced from [Wikipedia](#)

What is characterisation?

Characterisation is the representation of people or other beings or creatures in narrative and dramatic works. Characters in theatre, television and film differ from characters in novels due to an actor interpreting the writer's description in their own unique way to add layers and depth to a character. With drama the character can usually be seen and heard so there is no need for the character to be described how they might need to be in a novel.

Direct Characterisation

This is explicit characterisation where the author tells the audience what the character is like. This could be done with a narrator telling the audience about this character and their traits. Another way this can be done is by the character telling the audience directly about themselves to the audience. Finally another way of direct characterisation is another character in the play describing the character to the audience.

Indirect characterisation

With indirect characterisation the audience must infer for themselves what the character is like through the characters thoughts, actions, speech, physical appearance, mannerisms and interactions with other characters in the play. Through these actions the audience is then able to draw their own conclusions about the character being played. By watching the reactions of other characters in the play towards this character can also show indirect characterisation. Below I have gone into a bit more detail about each of the indirect characterisation techniques.

Looks

Looks include how the character is presented, this could include what the character is wearing or how their hair and makeup is done. For example to show that a character is messy the character could be dressed in a way that shows them in messy clothes with messy hair etc. Another example would be to show a character is bright and cheerful, this could be shown in the way that they dress and wear their hair.

Speech

How the character speaks is another indirect characterization technique. This can be what the character says and how they say it to show what the character is like. This can also be shown by the way other characters talk about each other in the play or different scenes.

Relationships

This is the relationship between the characters that we see in front of us during the play. This could be the interactions they have with each other. Relationships can also be shown through how other characters talk about each other in the different scenes in the play. From here the audience is able to infer what the character is like.

Thoughts

Thoughts of the characters can be shown in many different ways. The character could think out loud and talk directly to the audience about how they are feeling. Another way this can be shown is through the character thinking out loud or talking to themselves in a scene. Another technique is a flashback which can take the story back in time to show the audience what has happened prior to the story of events.

Actions

The actions of characters can have a big impact on the characterisation and how the audience sees the character. Actions not only have the characters interact but can highlight tension and drama between characters.