

## Writing a character Analysis- “The Cask of Amontillado”

Writing an analysis involves breaking down a story into its various parts and discussing how each character contributes to the story.

First, identify a dominant character within the story. Pick the protagonist, antagonist or other character that has a major role in the story. Next pick three character traits that you feel best describe this character.

Next, gather evidence from the text that demonstrates these character traits. The evidence you choose should come from different parts of the story; consider the beginning, middle or the end.

As you gather specific examples of character traits from the story, make sure to find direct evidence from the text to prove each one.

Follow this format in constructing your two character analysis paragraphs:

### Paragraph #1

- I. Identify the author, title of short story and first character trait you'll be discussing.
- II. Preface your evidence with a summary of the plot where your evidence comes from.
- III. Provide direct textual evidence from the plot of the story to support this character trait.
- IV. Explain what your chosen evidence says about the character using specific details.

### Paragraph #2

- V. Use a transition to introduce the second character trait you'll be discussing
- VI. Preface your evidence with a summary of the plot where your evidence comes from.
- VII. Provide direct textual evidence from the plot of the story to support this character trait.
- VIII. Explain what your chosen evidence says about the character using specific details.

### Paragraph #3

- IX. Use a transition to introduce your third character trait
- X. Preface your evidence with a summary of the plot where your evidence comes from.
  
- XI. Provide direct textual evidence from the plot of the story to support this character trait.
- XII. Explain what your chosen evidence says about the character using specific details.

See this example from “To Build a Fire”

Character Analysis Example:

**Bolded** words are character traits

**Highlighted** words are transition words

In the first part of Jack London’s “To Build a Fire,” the protagonist, the man, is clearly **unrealistic**. As we are introduced to the man, London describes his reaction to the freezing temperatures as, “Fifty degrees below zero was to him precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head” (1). Here, we can interpret the main character’s unrealistic ability to understand the danger of his harsh surroundings as the cold temperature is simply a nuisance, and he doesn’t understand the true danger presented by the cold.

**Even though** the man fails to appreciate the significance of the harsh Yukon setting, he’s very **willful** as he tries to find solutions to his problems. As the man is attempting to build his first fire after wetting his foot in the creek, London writes, “All a man had to do was keep his head, and he was alright. Any man who was a man could travel alone” (7). The man here shows his will and determination to maintain his wits and maintains the thought that he can survive in the cold alone.

**Lastly**, the protagonist in London’s story is demonstrated as **arrogant** as he overestimates his abilities. In a final effort to save his hands from the cold, the man makes a futile attempt to attack the dog. London writes, “As it came within reaching distance, the man lost his control. His arms flashed out to the dog, and he experienced genuine surprise when he discovered that his hands could not clutch, that there was neither bend nor feeling in the fingers” (10). Again, the protagonist shows his arrogance in thinking he can overpower his husky companion who is instinctually more adapted for the frozen environment.