

## Eight Ways to Reveal Character

### 1. Actions

As Sven moved down the street his feet made a steady echo sound against the pavement. He whistled despite the loud rumble of the traffic and the car horns. When someone yelled out of the window of a passing car to watch where he was going, he just waved back with an overly happy, sarcastic smile on his face. He passed by the garbage on the sidewalk and the old woman pushing the shopping cart filled with newspaper, and continued to smile as he headed east. Nothing could erase that smile from his face, not even the coldness of the streets he called home.

### 2. Dialogue

“I ain’t gonna leave you here, Rocco . . . not with you bleedin’ and all.” Jimmy said as he crouched beside his friend, tears streaking down his face. “My momma taught me better’en to just leave people. The good Lord’ll make it up to me.”

“No,” sputtered Rocco, “you gotta run.” He had barely rolled onto his back to look up at Jimmy when he saw the silhouettes of their pursuers baring down on them through the woods. “You have to make it to the beach, Jimmy. You have to tell them about the virus.”

### 3. Physical Description

Other guys walking through the hallway were taller and even more handsome, but there was something about Billy Blaire. His arms swung loose at his side and his dark hair was long and pulled back behind his head, held by a rubber band. The dark jacket he wore was straight out of the local thrift shop, she could tell, but the way he wore it suggested a sense of pride, or at least a lack of caring what others thought about him.

### 4. Idiosyncrasies

Junior tapped his fingertips against the table and looked at his watch constantly. His leg bounced up and down and he gulped the hot coffee as if it would hurry up his friend’s arrival.

### 5. Objects/Possessions

Michelle touched the locket around her neck and rolled it between her fingers. It was a family heirloom and had an old picture of her mother in it. What would they think of her now that she had run away?

### 6. Reactions

Tony’s words stung Laura. It wasn’t what she expected to hear. They had been dating for over a month now; how could he do this to her? How could he break her heart? All of their dates had been fun; he had said so himself.

As Tony watched the floodgate of her eyes begin to open he looked at his watch. Jeez, he thought, I hope all girls aren’t like this.

### 7. Thoughts

He began to remember when he was younger in high school. The seniors really thought they were something back then, always trying to play their little pranks on the tenth graders. He knew at that moment he couldn’t be one of those kinds of people. He walked over to Jeff and Larry to tell them it was time to stop.

### 8. Background Information

Miles knew what it meant to be alone. When he was a child growing up his father had been in the military. They had traveled from Vancouver, to Calgary, to Ottawa, to Winnipeg. He had rarely had a friend for very long. He had already decided having friends was a risk; the fewer the friends, the easier it was to leave. This philosophy had made him a real outsider at MBCI. In the six months he had been there he had not really made a single friend but as he stood there staring at Sheila, he realized that just might have to change.

## Your Job: To Create a Well-Rounded, Well-Developed Character.

### Rules:

1. You must use, in a substantial way, **4 of the 8 ways** to reveal a character in your written piece. Each technique should blend with the others so that your written piece has a beautiful flow to it, avoiding the choppiness of merely inserting one technique after the other with little regard to style.
2. You **must highlight the 4 different ways** you revealed your character **with a highlighter, labeling the technique above the highlight**.
3. **Focus on developing tension**. To help you do this, you should include a moral dilemma of some sort for your character. You may NOT use one of the moral dilemmas from the “Ethics and Morality” handout.
4. Your piece must not be written in point form. In this way, characteristics will be injected throughout your written work in a way that is enjoyable to read.
5. Your work **MUST BE TYPED** using MLA conventions (to the best of your ability.) We will go over MLA formatting in depth very shortly.
4. Length - **3 - 4 pages double spaced**. And don't give me the sense that you're being a minimalist; make sure your character is well developed.

### Remember:

- You do not have to use one technique, finish it, and then move to another. What will work best for you, and earn you the best mark for style, development, and reading enjoyment is weaving the styles together, like a tapestry of characteristics that reflect the essence of your character. For example, you may use some background info, inject some dialogue, maybe some thoughts, then some more background info, some more dialogue, and finish the piece off with some action. The ingredients are there, you just have to use them, creating your own recipe, and baking your own delicious character cake.

### Tips to Generate Ideas:

- Start off with a brief character sketch. Include:
  - Name
  - Brief Physical description
  - List of objects that tell about your character or reflect his or her personality
  - List of idiosyncrasies he or she exhibits when certain things happen (when he or she is sad, scared, challenged, nervous, etc.)
  - List talents, abilities, or lack thereof.
  - Brief point form History: where has this person been; what things have happened that really make this person who he or she is (a.k.a. backstory).

### COMPOSE & CREATE: Character Development – Evaluation

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Typed with Attempt Towards Proper MLA Formatting	/2
Overall Well-Roundedness and Development of Character	/10
Proper Identification of Character Revealing Techniques, Highlighted	/4
Style, Flow, and Application of Techniques	/4
TOTAL:	/20