

Character Essays

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Rewrite a 'real person' sentence: 'Scrooge is mean because he doesn't want to spend money.'

Step 1 · Name the writer

'Dickens presents Scrooge...'

Step 2 · Add a method

'...through a list of grasping verbs, "squeezing, wrenching, grasping"...'

Step 3 · Add a purpose

'...to make his greed seem physical, so that his later generosity is all the more striking.'

Answer: 'Dickens presents Scrooge's greed through a list of grasping verbs, "squeezing, wrenching, grasping", making it seem physical so that his later generosity is more striking.'

Check: Writer + method + purpose.

2. Now try one with the steps

Find a character's function: Fred in A Christmas Carol.

Step 1 · What he does

Step 2 · Contrast

Step 3 · Function

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. What does it mean to call a character a 'construct'? [1]

2. Name the four sources of evidence about a character. [2]

3. What is a foil? [1]

4. Rewrite with the writer at the front: 'Juliet is brave.' [1]
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5. What are the three stages of a character arc? [1]
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6. Give one function of Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet. [1]
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7. Why can paragraphs that go scene by scene become weak? [2]
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8. How does the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth change across the play? [2]
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9. Write a thesis about the function of Utterson in Jekyll and Hyde. [2]
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10. Why is 'what others say' useful but risky? [2]
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11. Explain how Banquo works foil to Macbeth. [2]
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12. Plan three arc points (with a quotation each) for Scrooge. [3]
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13. How can context explain a character's function? Give an example. [2]
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14. Why does a character who does NOT change still need an 'arc' in your essay? [2]
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4. Before you hand it in

Writing about feelings characters were friends ('I feel sorry for Juliet').

'Shakespeare evokes sympathy for Juliet by...'

Describing personality with no function.

Ask: what job does this character do in the text?

Only using what the character says.

Mix sayings, actions, others' views and description.

Ignoring change.

Name a start, a turning point and an end.