

Directions: In this passage from “The Rule of Names,” Ursula K. LeGuin characterizes Mr. Underhill, the local wizard on a remote island. Read the passage. Then, on a full sheet of paper, copy the graphic organizer. Fill in the chart to analyze LeGuin’s characterization. Beneath your chart, write a 3–4-sentence character sketch of Mr. Underhill.

“Morning, Mr. Underhill,” said the villagers as he passed them in the narrow street between houses with conical overhanging roofs like the fat red caps of toadstools. “Morning, morning!” he replied to each. . . . All of them spoke to him, some with affection, some with affectionate disdain. He was all the little island had in the way of a wizard, and so deserved respect—but how could you respect a little fat man of fifty who waddled along with his toes turned in breathing steam and smiling? He was no great shakes as a workman either. His fireworks were fairly elaborate but his elixirs were weak. Warts he charmed off frequently reappeared after three days; tomatoes he enchanted grew no bigger than cantaloupes; and those rare times when a strange ship stopped at Sattins Harbor, Mr. Underhill always stayed under his hill . . . He did not like anyone to visit his cave, not even the anteroom, beyond which in fact nobody had ever got. When he saw people approaching the hill he always came trotting out to meet them. “Let’s sit out here under the pine trees!” he would say, smiling and waving toward the fir grove, or if it was raining, “Let’s go have a drink at the inn, eh?” though everybody knew he drank nothing stronger than well-water.

Some of the village children, teased by the locked cave, poked and pried and made raids while Mr. Underhill was away; but the small door that led into the inner chamber was spell-shut, and it seemed for once to be an effective spell. Once a couple of boys, thinking the wizard was over on the West Shore curing Mrs. Runna’s sick donkey, brought a crowbar and a hatchet up there, but at the first whack of the hatchet on the door there came a roar of wrath from inside, and a cloud of purple steam. Mr. Underhill had got home early. The boys fled. He did not come out, and the boys came to no harm, though they said you couldn’t believe what a huge hooting howling hissing horrible bellow that little fat man could make. . . .

Literature 3

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Methods of Revealing Character	Clues or Details	Underhill’s Character Traits (My Inferences)
Narrator’s direct comments	(1.)	(5.)
Physical appearance	(2.)	
Character’s words, actions, thoughts	(3.)	
Other characters’ words, actions, thoughts	(4.)	
(3 to 4 sentences) (6.)		

Review: Characters are the people, animals, or imaginary creatures in a work of literature. All characters have traits, or qualities, that distinguish them. Characterization is how an author creates and develops the traits of a character. Authors use four main methods to develop a character. These methods are: (1) making direct comments about the character through the voice of the narrator; (2) providing a physical description of the character; (3) Showing the thoughts, speech, and actions of the character; and (4) showing what other characters think about, say to, or do to the character.

Directions: Read each description of a character. Think about how the author develops the character's traits. Then **circle** the letter of the *best* answer.

1.

Ned was living up to his reputation as a hard hitter with control and finesse. With a backhand as good as his forehand, he moved gracefully from side to side, returning balls with quiet authority. When his desperate opponent tried lobbing the ball over Ned's head, the star player reached up and showed an overhead shot as strong as his forehand.

In this passage, the author mainly characterizes Ned by

- a. the narrator's direct comments.
- b. a description of Ned's physical appearance.
- c. Ned's words and thoughts.
- d. another character's words, actions, or thoughts.

2.

Mr. Deeds gulped down his fish far too ravenously and with no concern for the inevitable bones. When he came to one, he gave an agonizing cry of terror, clutched his throat, and stammered "B-b-bone!" as if everyone at the table didn't know it. With his face turning beet red, he jumped from his chair and motioned wildly for Mrs. Deeds to pound his back.

In this passage, the author mainly characterizes Mr. Deeds by

- a. the narrator's direct comments.
- b. a description of Mr. Deed's physical appearance.
- c. Mr. Deeds' actions and words.
- d. another character's words, actions, or thoughts.