**English Language Arts Handbook**

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**Strategies for Writing an Essay**

When writing literary essays you must:

**Interact with the literature**

* think carefully about what you have read
* engage in critical response as you discuss the literature in relation to the given topic
* suspend judgment and read the work on its own terms
* look for patterns and purpose

**Analyze the literature**

* examine ideas, themes and symbols
* examine characters and their motivations, choices, causes and effects
* go beyond the literal level to discuss the figurative level

**Avoid giving a plot summary**

Assume the person reading your essay has already read the selection. What the reader is interested in are:

* Do you understand what you have read? Can you distinguish between the literal and the figurative levels of meaning?
* Can you perceive what is important about the work even if it is not directly stated? That is, can you read between the lines to determine the theme?
* Can you respond to the selection in a mature, reasonable, thoughtful and sensitive way?
* Can you appreciate the technique and style of the work?

**Be specific**

* Specific examples are needed to show that you know how to back up and interpretation or opinion and you have read the text, and know it well. Avoid being too general with your examples.

**Be accurate**

* Be very clear with that you want to say. Your writing should be straightforward. Avoid flowery attempts to impress the reader with language you are not comfortable using.
* Your facts have to be accurate. Every time you mention a character or plot event, this information cannot be false – otherwise you have committed a basic error. Referring to a character by a wrong name or misspelling a character’s name are inexcusable factual errors.

**Use relevant literary terms**

Using terms appropriately will help to communicate your understanding of the literature, and show that you have mastered literary terms and related concepts.

-If you are writing an essay about character, use character related terms such as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| protagonist | the main character in a work |
| epiphany | a moment of intense realization for the protagonist |
| foil | a character who is contrasted with the protagonist |
| goal | the protagonist’s objective |
| irony | deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning, or an unexpected outcome |
| motivation | the reason the character does what he or she does |

**Common Literary Perspectives and Themes**

Since literature is predictably about life and human nature, certain perspectives recur. These include the following views:

**Purpose is the most important aspect of any literary work.**

Ask yourself why the author wrote the work. What did he or she want to say about a given subject, life in general, or human nature? An author may have a very serious purpose, perhaps related to theme: in Lord of the Flies one theme is that humankind has survived despite its tendency toward violence, war, and destruction. Relevant to this, one of William Golding’s purposes is to show us the darkness of the human heart.

**Most protagonists have to make significant life-altering choices.**

Such choices are based on the character’s beliefs and values as well as the situation and limiting circumstances. Some choices will turn out to be positive or life-enhancing, culminating in personal growth, perspective change, and increased happiness. Other choices, especially in tragedy, will be negative and destructive because of character flaws – the result is death, disaster, or hardship for the protagonist and other characters.

**There will always be a number of conflicts.**

Interpretive literature isn’t about very obvious physical conflicts like shoot-outs or car chases. Instead, conflicts will be between characters with differing attitudes, or within the mind of a single character. These conflicts will typically be emotional, mental and spiritual in nature.

**Most selections will present a dual view of human experience.**

Popular pairs of topics include: good and evil, reality and illusion, conformity and rebellion, the individual and society, tradition and change, love and betrayal, materialism and spirituality. In works like Macbeth, Lord of the Flies, and Hamlet, authors reveal the dual nature of human beings: characters can have contradictory sides that lead to opposing values and beliefs.

**Most selections contain irony.**

Because human beings behave in contradictory ways, and there is more than one view of just about any situation, many selections are ironic. People often turn out to be different from what they first appear to be. The truth of a situation may be different from its appearance, and situations may turn out differently from what was expected. For both reader and protagonist, there is often a learning aspect to ironic misjudgments, errors and any resulting suffering.

**Essay Structure**

Introduction Paragraph

General Statement

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraph I:

1. First main idea topic sentence (include topic and character)  
2. First supporting detail/evidence from text/explanation  
3. Contrasting detail/evidence from text/ explanation  
4. Closing sentence/tie-back to thesis/clincher

Body Paragraph II:

1. Second main idea topic sentence (include topic and character)  
2. First supporting detail/evidence from text/explanation  
3. Contrasting detail/evidence from text/ explanation  
4. Closing sentence/tie-back to thesis/clincher

Body Paragraphs

Body Paragraph III:

1. Third main idea topic sentence (include topic and character)  
2. First supporting detail/evidence from text/explanation  
3. Contrasting detail/evidence from text/ explanation  
4. Closing sentence/tie-back to thesis/clincher

Conclusion

Paragraph

Restate Thesis Statement

Final Statements

**Body Paragraphs:**

**-Develop ideas (focus on character development before and after the epiphany)**

**-Present evidence (plot evidence followed by quotation evidence with commentary)**

**-2 – 4 ideas developed in each paragraph**

**- Create as many paragraphs as required**

**Understanding the Introduction**

The introduction is perhaps the most critical portion of the essay. It gives the reader their first impression of the student and sets the tone for the remainder of the composition. Thus, the introduction should be clear, concise, and tightly controlled. In general, a good introduction functions to:

1. define and limit the topic

ie: the consuming nature of ambition in Macbeth

1. develop the method to be employed by the student

ie: illustrating the process by which Macbeth’s character changes as his ambition leads to his own downfall

1. establish the tone of the essay

ie: humorous, serious

1. arouse interest

For the English 30-1 Diploma Examination, students must use a funnel introduction. As indicated in the previous diagram, this introductory structure moves from a general statement on the given topic to a specific focus for the essay.

**Understanding Thesis Statements**

Before you begin creating an introduction, you must develop a controlling idea or thesis statement. The thesis introduces the central purpose of the essay and gives it direction. It is a universal statement about a topic as related to a piece of literature studied. It should be expressed as a single, clear statement. The basic parts of a thesis statement for a thematic essay include:

1. the title of the work studied (optional if mentioned earlier in the introduction)
2. the name of the author/playwright
3. the genre
4. the technique (character development) employed by the writer to support their argument
5. the given topic
6. the focus/controlling idea (ie. what the essay writer will prove regarding the given topic)

The general structure of the thesis statement is as follows: (Please note that this is not a rigid rule, but intended only as a guide for students.)

Thesis: In the , , the author utilizes *(genre) (title) (author’s name)*

to suggest the idea that .

*(technique: character development) (topic & student’s focus/controlling idea)*

Students should keep in mind that the thesis statement is the primary building block for the entire essay. Time should be taken BEFORE any writing is done to construct a thesis and establish a focus for the essay. This thesis may need to be revised once the essay is complete.

**Other hints for building a thesis:**

* Try to limit the length of a thesis statement. Keep it short and simple.
* Do NOT use complex or wordy language. Simplicity is often the best alternative. However, do not sacrifice your ideas for simple language.
* Make the main argument as direct and specific as possible.

ie: Ineffective – Friendship is nice.

Effective – Friendship can be a pleasant and fulfilling aspect of life.

* Do NOT state the thesis as a question. ie: Is Macbeth a villain?
* Do NOT use the first person pronoun or express the thesis as a personal opinion.

ie: Avoid “I think”/“I believe”/ or “In my opinion”

**Examples:** Given Topic: **Adversity**

Given the general topic of adversity a thesis statement may be:

In the play A Doll’s House, Heinrich Ibsen employs character development to suggest the idea that adverse situations have the power to blow the monotonous continuum of one’s life to pieces and consequently may spur a search for personal identity.

Note: the basic parts

a) title- A Doll’s House

b) author’s name – Heinrich Ibsen

c) genre – play

d) technique – character development

e) topic – adversity

f) focus/controlling idea - Adverse situations have the power to blow the monotonous continuum of one’s life to pieces and consequently may spur a search for personal identity.

**Sample Thesis statements**

1. In the short story “Gaston,” William Sarayan makes powerful use of character development to suggest the idea that appearances are frequently unreliable and do not reveal one’s inner self.

2. In Shakespeare’s play Hamlet, the playwright uses the title character to prove the idea that one must discover his own moral beliefs before he sets out to accomplish his goals.

3. In the play Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller develops the character Willy Loman to demonstrate the idea that personal freedom is limited by a lack of success.

4. Steinbeck develops the characters George and Lennie in the novel Of Mice and Men to examine the idea that while some people cannot handle the demands life offers, others courageously confront challenge.

5. Through the contrasting characters of Willy and Biff, Arthur Miller in the modern drama Death of a Salesman, examines the idea that for some people, the desire to escape the harshness of life is stronger than the need to confront reality.

6. The idea that one must cling to hope in the face of adversity is apparent through the development of the protagonists in the film *Life is Beautiful* by Roberto Benigni and the biography Night by Elie Weisel.

7. Arthur Miller’s play Death of a Salesman and Gus Van Sant’s film *Finding Forrester* utilize character development to portray the idea that an individual’s perspective of reality becomes a guiding force through his life.

**Writing the Literary Essay**

Once the student has established a firm thesis, they may proceed to the introduction itself. As stated earlier, a funnel introduction is one which progresses from the broad to the specific. Students should begin with general statements pertaining to the topic and continue by relating the topic to a particular work studied. Finally, the student must present a thesis statement, which narrows their discussion to a single provable assertion.

The following is an example is an example of a funnel introduction:

In society, people tend to place a great emphasis on first **General**

impressions. This leads to the stereotyping of countless individuals

on the basis of their outer appearance. In order to uncover the true **Specific**

nature of an individual, people must force themselves to look past

this rather *weak* perception of others. Similarly, in the short story

“Gaston”, William Sarayan makes powerful use of character development **Thesis**

to suggest the idea that appearances are frequently unreliable in

that they do not reveal one’s inner self.

This introduction was written for an essay on the theme of unreliable appearances. Note the manner in which the student progresses from general statements on the manifestations of this theme within society to a clear, specific thesis statement. Utilizing the funnel format, the student has effectively introduced and defined the topic, created a focus, and indicated a clear direction.

**Writing the Introduction**

One of the functions of the introduction is to arouse interest, and the student has many creative alternatives for the initial general statement. Choices include:

1. Making a general observation on the theme in society

* ex: In society, people tend to place great emphasis on first impressions.

1. Begin by easing into a quotation (always identifythe speaker)

* ex: Fulton J. Sheen once said, “Pride is an admission of weakness.”

1. Start with a general misconception

* ex: For centuries, society has mistakenly classified ambition as virtue.

1. Begin with relevant concepts from other areas of study

* ex: Dalton’s “billiard ball atoms,” Columbus’ round earth and Copernicus’ heliocentric solar system were all ideas used to find explanations for unexplainable natural phenomena.

1. Start with an analogy – a comparison of two things where the familiar is compared to the unfamiliar

* ex: Finding a boyfriend is much like fishing. You need all of the proper equipment and the proper bait.

1. Begin by stating a fact and linking it to your idea

* ex: When Hitler turned anti-Semitism into an official government policy in 1934, within a decade nearly six million Jews, as well as gypsies, intellectuals, homosexuals, Marxists and other “enemies of the state” were murdered.

1. Start with an anecdote – a short, amusing narrative

* ex: An Australian newspaper reports that four youths in Canberra approached a speed-camera van, and while three of them engaged the operator in questions about how it worked, the fourth surreptitiously removed the van's number plate. The four then screwed the plate on to their own car and drove past the radar at high speed seventeen times, leading to seventeen automated speeding tickets arriving at the Department of Transport.

**Understanding the Conclusion**

-Restate thesis first, but avoid repeating yourself. For example, you might include the name of the author, but not the title. Always include the topic and focus discussed in the essay when you restate the thesis.

- Close off with general, but insightful, sentences that relate to the topic and thesis and that reveal a truth about the human condition.

- Connect ideas by referring to your essay title and/or to the quotation or the example in your introductory statements.

Essay Tips:

* have a creative title that links to the topic and the comments in the introduction and conclusion
* underline all book-length works of literature; use quotation marks for short texts; italicize film titles
* characters in the literature should not be discussed prior to the literature introduced in the thesis
* do not start the conclusion with “In conclusion…”
* do not discuss the character after the thesis is restated in the conclusion
* do end with insightful thoughts that relate to the human condition

**Sample Introduction and Conclusion**

Title and Introduction:

**The Undiscovered Country**

When Columbus set sail in 1492, he left his homeland on a journey to chart out new lands and redefine the map of the world. His discovery of the Americas led to colonization, resulting in new markets and increased world trade. The courage involved in this risk taking venture served to benefit all of humankind. Similarly, in the play Hamlet, William Shakespeare develops the title character to suggest the idea that risk taking requires courage and its process serves to lead an individual on the path of self-discovery.

Conclusion:

Just as Columbus courageously ventured into uncharted waters and unknown lands, Hamlet too, embarked on a journey of self-discovery where large risks were taken. This journey into the self is often “undiscovered country.” Risking this type of exploration is certainly worth the time and effort, as it is during this process that humans gain purpose and an understanding of their existence.

**Writing the Essay Body Paragraph**

The number of paragraphs depends on how many arguments are required to develop the focus presented in the thesis statement. Generally an essay develops 2-4 ideas per body paragraphs.

Body Paragraphs Include:

1. a topic sentence that expresses the main focus of the paragraph as it relates to the thesis; it must include the given topic.
2. 2-4 ideas linked to the main argument presented in the topic sentence each with specific plot support including:

- specific plot incidents to support each idea (do not re-tell plot)

- quotations to support each idea or most ideas (integrate smoothly into your essay)

- an explanation for each idea/support

c) a closing sentence that restate the topic sentence

**Organization of Ideas**

The organization of presentation of ideas in a critical essay depend upon a number of factors. A lot of it has to do with personal choice and the type and amount of supporting evidence a writer feels they have within their chosen text in regards to their topic. Ultimately, the goals is to organize your ideas so that they show some kind of major transformation of character. This can be achieved by:

1. Discussing one character and showing the transformations across your body paragraphs (each paragraph would discuss an element of character transformation).
2. Discussing more than one character using a paragraph for each one.
3. Discussing one character using a chronological approach across the plot of the text (initially, however, consequently). In this format, your “topic sentences” do not have to begin with one of those three words; rather, they must demonstrate the concepts of “at the beginning of the text the character was like this” to “the character faces this… which causes this…” and then lead to “in the end it results in a transformation of some kind.”

With whichever format you choose, it is imperative that you select the number of body paragraphs that lend themselves to the amount of support you have. If there are two great characters to write about, have only two body paragraphs, but make sure they are very developed paragraphs (4 idea paragraph). If you are only discussing one character, consider using three paragraphs with two ideas in each to show character transformation.

**The Writing Process**

**Steps in the Writing Process:**

***1. Pre-writing:*** This is the planning phase of the writing process, when students brainstorm, research, gather and outline ideas, often using diagrams for mapping out their thoughts. Audience and purpose should be considered at this point, and a working thesis statement needs to be started.

2. ***Drafting/Writing:*** Students create their initial composition by writing down all their ideas in an organized way to convey a particular idea or present an argument. Students begin to develop paragraphs by elaborating and connecting their ideas. Audience and purpose need to be finalized.

3. ***Revising:*** Students review, modify, and reorganize their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by making the tone, style, and content appropriate for the intended audience. The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft.

4. ***Editing:*** At this point in the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity. Having another writer’s feedback in this stage is helpful.

5. ***Publishing:*** In this last step of the writing process, the final writing is shared with the group and evaluated. Sharing can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and with the help of computers, it can even be printed or published online.

**Writing the Essay Body Paragraphs**

**Typical 2 Idea Paragraph Structure:**

* Start with a topic sentence to introduce the essay topic and character (1 sentence)
* Idea # 1:
* Chronological transition + idea #1 (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support idea #1 (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support idea #1 + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Contrasting Idea:
* Contrasting transition + contrasting idea (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support contrasting idea (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support contrasting idea + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Tie-back to theme (1-2 sentences)
* End with a clincher statement that includes essay topic and character (1 sentence)

**Typical 4 Idea Paragraph Structure:** (idea #1 and idea #2 are related)

* Start with a topic sentence to introduce the essay topic and character (1 sentence)
* Idea # 1:
* Chronological transition + idea #1 (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support idea #1 (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support idea #1 + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Contrasting transition + contrasting idea (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support contrasting idea (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support contrasting idea + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Tie-back to theme (1-2 sentences)
* Idea # 2:
* Transition of addition + chronological transition + idea #2 (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support idea #2 (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support idea #2 + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Contrasting transition + contrasting idea (1 sentence)
* Plot example to support contrasting idea (1-2 sentences)
* Quotation to support contrasting idea + explanation (1-2 sentences)
* Tie-back to theme (1-2 sentences)
* End with a clincher statement that includes essay topic and character (1 sentence)

**The Literary Present Tense**

Whether you are dealing with fiction, poetry, or non-fiction literature, use the present tense (also called the literary present tense) to discuss the actions and thoughts presented in the text. Do this because literature exists as a present phenomenon regardless of whether or not its author is alive. Here are some examples (the pertinent verbs are in bold):

At the end of Of Mice and Men, Lenny **sees** an enormous rabbit that **chastises** him, making him think of George.

Mrs. Mallard, in “The Story of an Hour,” **whispers** “free, free, free!” after learning of her husband’s supposed death.

In his “Qualities of the Prince,” Machiavelli **writes** that it **is** better for a prince to be armed, because “among the other bad effects it causes, being disarmed makes you despised.”

**Writing about Literature: Third Person**

Traditional academic writing discourages the use of first or second person (“I”, “me”, “we”, “you”). This is because it does not sound objective. Instead, it sounds as though you have only a very limited, personal view of the issue you are discussing, rather than a view of the broader picture.

Academic training requires students to consider all aspects of a topic, from a range of viewpoints. It also requires students to state general claims and then prove each claim by providing solid evidence from the text.

**Avoiding 1st and 2nd Person:**

The following examples illustrate ways to remove 1st and 2nd person from your writing.

Example 1:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| X | “In this essay I will examine how gender and race affect buying behaviors.” |
|  | “Careful examination of gender and race shows how these factors affect buying behavior.” |
|  | “Gender and race affect buying behaviors.” |

Example 2:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| X | “I believe that adversity can help people structure their own identity.” |
|  | Adversity can help people structure their own identity.” |

Example 3:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| X | “I know this because the character reacts negatively when asked about his past.” |
|  | “The author demonstrates the character’s deceitfulness when the character reacts negatively to questions about his past.” |

**Transitional Devices**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| To add ideas: | a second method, additionally, also, again, along with, and, another way, as well, besides, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, next, second, similarly, third, together with, too |
| To show time: | about, a little later, after, afterward, as soon as, at first, at the end of, at the start of, before, during, finally, in those days, immediately, in the meantime, later in the day, meanwhile, next, next week, now prior to, then this year, today, tomorrow, until, when, while, yesterday |
| To show place: | above, across, against, along, alongside, amid, among, around, away from, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, father away, here, in front of, inside, in the distant, in the foreground, into, near, nearby, off, on, on the left, on the right, on top of, outside, over, overhead, there, throughout, under, underneath |
| To show order: | afterward, as a result, consequently, finally, first, for this reason, hence, in conclusion, in the second place, in short, in summary, last, next, second, therefore, to begin with, to conclude, to sum up |
| To contrast ideas: | although, as proposed, but, conversely, counter to, even so, however, in contrast, nevertheless, no doubt, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, still, whereas, yet |
| To compare ideas: | again, also, and, in the same way, likewise, similarly |
| To show results: | accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, generally, hence, specifically, therefore, thus, to clarify, to emphasize, to repeat, usually |
| To introduce illustrations: | as an example, consider as an illustration, for example, for instance, in effect, in other words, like, namely, specifically, such as, that is, to illustrate, to highlight |

**Integrating Quotations**

1. Short quotations (one sentence or less) should be integrated into sentences with minimum disruption to the flow of the essay. The quotation should be smoothly integrated with the text and should be commented on:

Romeo reveals his desire and impatience when he says, “O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?” His haste will later lead to his sudden choice of suicide.

1. Avoid having two quotations in a row. If you have two, use your own commentary to bridge the two.

**Ineffective:** Richard Cory had everything going for him. “He was a gentleman from sole to crown.” “He was rich – yes richer than a king.”

**Effective:** Richard Cory had everything going for him. Not only was he a “gentleman from sole to crown,” but he was also “richer than a king.”

1. Longer quotations should be indented. For example, in an essay on Robert Frost’s “Stopping by woods on a Snowy Evening,” you might quote a stanza to focus a discussion on some aspect of the poem:

The last stanza suggests the seductiveness of the woods – of “dropping out” of human society:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

However, the poet is aware of the promises he has made – responsibilities and social obligations – which necessitate his leaving the woods.

1. Separate lines of poetry running within your sentences with a slash (/), and preserve the capitalization of words at the beginning of the line.

The speaker notes that the bruised heart of the mourner wonders “was it He that bore,/And Yesterday, or Centuries before?”

1. If for the clarity of sentence structure, you must alter a quotation, place the alteration in square brackets.

Goodman Brown claims that “with Heaven above and Faith below [he] will Yet stand firm against the devil.”

1. If you omit material in order to be concise, mark the omission with three periods, called ellipsis (…).

Monstresor states that when it comes to “painting and gemmary, Fortunato… was a quack.”

Note: Most quotations should not be longer than one line long. Do not overuse quotations as it becomes less your work and more the work of someone else.

**Integrating Quotations**

There are three ways to integrate quotations into your essay effectively. All of the methods for integrating quotations are correct, but you should avoid relying too much on just one method. You should instead use a variety of methods.

1. **Use an introductory or explanatory phrase, but not a complete sentence, separated from the quotation with a comma.**

* You should use a comma to separate your own words from the quotation when your introductory or explanatory phrase ends with a verb such as "says," "said," "thinks," "believes," "pondered," "recalls," "questions," and "asks" (and many more). You should also use a comma when you introduce a quotation with a phrase.

Examples:

* Thoreau suggests the consequences of making ourselves slaves to progress when he says, "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."
* Thoreau asks, "Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life?"

1. **Make the quotation a part of your own sentence without any punctuation between your own words and the words you are quoting.**

* Notice that the word "that" is used, and "that" replaces the comma which would be necessary without "that" in the sentence. You usually have a choice when you begin a sentence with a phrase such as "Thoreau says." You either can add a comma after "says" (Thoreau says, "quotation") or you can add the word "that" with no comma (Thoreau says that "quotation.")

Examples:

* Thoreau suggests the consequences of making ourselves slaves to progress when he says that "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."
* Thoreau argues that “shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous."

1. **Use short quotations--only a few words--as part of your own sentence.**

Examples:

* Thoreau argues that people blindly accept "shams and delusions" as the "soundest truths," while regarding reality as "fabulous."
* Although Thoreau "drink[s] at" the stream of Time, he can "detect how shallow it is."

1. **Introduce a long quotation with a complete sentence and a colon.**

Example:

* The last stanza suggests the seductiveness of the woods – of “dropping out” of human society:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

**Words to Use Instead of Said**

The word said is overused in writing. To give your writing more color, try using one of the following 188 words instead of the word said when you are quoting the words someone has spoken. There are many more words for said, but be sure you know the meaning of the form you are using!

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| accused  added  addressed  admitted  advised  agreed  announced  answered  approved  argued  asked  asserted  assured  babbled  barked  bawled  beamed  began  begged  bellowed  bet  bleated  blurted  boasted  boomed  bragged  broke in  bubbled  bugged  called  cautioned  chatted  chattered  cheered  chided  chimed in  choked  chortled  chorused  chuckled  clucked  coaxed  commanded  commented  complained  concluded  confessed  confided | congratulated  continued  convinced  corrected  coughed  cried  croaked  crowed  dared  decided  declared  demanded  denied  described  doubted  drawled  echoed  ended  exclaimed  explained  finished  fretted  gasped  gibed  giggled  greeted  groaned  growled  grumbled  guessed  gulped  gurgled  hinted  hissed  hypothesized  imitated  implied  informed  inquired  insisted  interjected  interrupted  jeered  jested  joked  laughed  lied | marveled  mimicked  moaned  mumbled  murmured  muttered  mused  nagged  nodded  noted  objected  observed  offered  ordered  piped  pleaded  pondered praised prayed  promised  proposed  protested  puzzled  quavered  queried  questioned  quipped  quoted  ranted  reasoned  reassured  recalled  reckoned  remarked  remembered  reminded  repeated  replied  requested  responded  retorted  roared  sang  sassed  scolded  screamed  shot | shouted  shrieked  shrilled  sighed  smirked  smiled  snapped snarled sneered sneezed  snickered  sniffed  sniffled  snorted  sobbed  spoke  sputtered  squeaked  stammered  started  stated stormed stuttered suggested surmised  taunted  teased tempted tested theorized thought  told  urged  vowed  wailed  warned  went on  wept  whimpered  whined  whispered  wondered  worried  yawned  yelled |

**Character Descriptions**

**A. Physical Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| manly, masculine, robust, hardy, sturdy, strapping, strong, resolute, muscular, brawny, beautiful, pretty, lovely, fair, comely, good-looking, handsome, dainty, delicate, graceful, elegant, winsome, fascinating, ravishing, neat, spruce, dapper, immaculate, dexterous, adept, skillful, agile, nimble, active, lively, spirited, vivacious, average, old, wrinkled, young, tall, petite, short, plump, stocky, fat, overweight, fleshy, slim | trim, weak, feeble, sickly, disfigured, frail, decrepit, thin, spare, withered, cadaverous, gaunt, ugly, hideous, homely, course, unkempt, sloppy, awkward, clumsy, gawky, ungainly, graceless, bizarre, grotesque, unsuitable, ghastly, repellent, repugnant, repulsive, odious, unpleasant, loathsome, horrible  complexions: light, pale, fair, tan, olive, dark, blemished, freckled, scarred |

**B. Personal Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| distinguished, noble, illustrious, admirable, influential, impressive, eminent, imposing, well-bred, refined, proper, aristocratic, cultured, generous, benevolent, charitable, magnanimous, philanthropic, humane, merciful, gentle, kind, patient, sympathetic, generous, suffering, compassionate, tolerant, indulgent, forgiving, liberal, conservative, radical, reactionary, ambitious, adventurous, affectionate, adaptable, communicative, silent, shy, imaginative, conscientious, preserving, industrious, persistent, efficient, hardworking, diligent, resourceful, uncompromising, scrupulous, honourable, punctual, earnest, serious, zealous, enthusiastic, strong-willed, determined, resolute, confident, self-reliant, fearless, valorous, brave, audacious, courageous, indomitable, modest, sober, grave, solemn, serious, sedated, discreet, cautious, wary, circumspect, talkative, eloquent, persuasive, reserved, distant, brief, coy, sassy, superficial, saucy, whimsical, witty, sensitive, considerate, responsive, prodigal, extravagant, reckless, affected, pretentious, insincere, artificial, hypocritical, sanctimonious, over-confident, self-centered, vain, boastful, egotistical, conceited | obstinate, stubborn, unruly, rebellious, insubordinate thrifty, frugal, natural, candid, unaffected, naïve, artless, ingenuous, shy, timid, meek, humble, self-effacing, modest, unassuming, docile, amenable, obedient, placid, serene, tranquil, impassive, nonchalant, indifferent, unemotional, composed, stoic, philosophic, pensive, melancholic, moody, mediocre, ordinary, insignificant, petty, stingy, pompous, contemptuous, disdainful, domineering, imperious, oppressive, cruel, vindictive, ruthless, brutish, intolerant, dogmatic, prejudice, lazy, slothful, lethargic, parasitic, inefficient, incompetent, worthless, unambitious, remiss, fickle, unreliable, erratic, irresolute, unstable, capricious, unpredictable, irresponsible, cowardly, craven, mischievous, frivolous, silly, headstrong, impulsive, willful, impetuous, rash, indiscreet, imprudent, reckless, wearisome, apathetic, insensitive, callous, irresponsive, self-indulgent, mercenary, venal, envious, jealous, gluttonous, voracious, greedy, treacherous, obnoxious, reprehensive, contemptible, malicious, scandalous, insulting, insidious, malignant, unscrupulous, squeamish, pig-headed, charming |

**C. Mental Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| educated, scholarly, learned, wise, astute, clever, intelligent, talented, intellectual, capable, competent, gifted, apt, rational, reasonable, sensible, shrewd, prudent, observant, ingenious, subtle, cunning, crafty, wily, sharp-tonged, inventive | unintelligent, unschooled, ignorant, illiterate, irrational, foolish, childish, unaware, obtuse, narrow-minded, ungifted, simple, shallow, dull, idiotic, witless, deranged, demented, challenged |

**D. Moral Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| idealistic, innocent, virtuous, faultless, righteous, exemplary, chaste, pure, virginal, temperate, abstemious, truthful, honourable, trustworthy, straightforward, decent, respectful | wicked, iniquitous, corrupt, degenerate, notorious, vicious, incorrigible, immoral, unprincipled, depraved, indecent, vulgar, deceitful, dishonest, unscrupulous, dishonourable, vile, foul |

**E. Spiritual Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| religious, reverent, pious, devout, faithful, pious, spiritual, holy, saintly, angelic, godlike | skeptical, agnostic, atheistic, irreligious, impious, profane, sacrilegious, blasphemous, materialistic, godless, diabolic, demonic |

**F. Social Qualities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| civil, tactful, courteous, polite, cooperative, genial, affable, hospitable, gracious, amiable, cordial, congenial, amicable, cordial, congenial, amicable, sociable, cheerful, humorous, convivial, jovial, jolly, urbane, suave, political, debonair, elegant, charming, ungracious, abrupt, flattering, sniveling, | peevish, spiteful, unsociable, anti-social, solitary, recluse, contentious, quarrelsome, antagonistic, misanthropic, discourteous, uncivil, impolite, ill-bred, ill-mannered, unrefined, rustic, provincial, boorish, perverse, malevolent, critical, cynical, sarcastic |

**G. Mood Descriptors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ironic, serious, negative, humorous, solemn, wistful, pensive, romantic, wishful, extravagant, positive, ideal, emotional, happy, indifferent, religious, melancholy, sad, thoughtful, reflective, whimsical, excited | angry, frustrated, bitter, disgusted, reverent, respectful, mischievous, somber, sinister, nostalgic, hopeless, content, delighted, eerie, reminiscent, sentimental |

**E. Tone Descriptors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| angry, sharp, upset, silly, boring, happy, humorous, joyful, sweet, vexed, tired, better, dreamy, restrained, proud, sad, dramatic, cold, urgent, joking, detached, confused | childish, peaceful, mocking, vibrant, frivolous, audacious, shocking, somber, provocative, sentimental, condescending, sympathetic, apologetic, sarcastic, benevolent, seductive |