

## PiXL Spine – English Literature – Character

### **Roald Dahl – *Lamb to the Slaughter***

Read Roald Dahl's classic short story *Lamb to the Slaughter* here:

<http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/lamb.html>

#### **Tasks:**

1. Write a list of all the characters.
2. For each character you have listed, identify whether they are flat or round characters, using the information from the mat.
3. Who would you argue is the villain in the story?
4. According to the information on the mat, do you think they are an effective villain?

### **Charles Dickens – *A Christmas Carol***

Read the following descriptions of Scrooge from Stave 1 and 5 (the beginning and end of the novella). Based on these, complete the following:

1. Scrooge is a round character – highlight any words or phrases that show Scrooge has changed.
2. In your own words, explain how Scrooge is a round character.

Stave 1: "Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas."

Stave 5: "I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this. I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

## Lewis Carroll – *Alice in Wonderland*

Read Chapter 8 here: <http://www.cleavebooks.co.uk/grol/alice/won08.htm>

1. Who is the protagonist?
2. Who is the focalizer?
3. Who is the antagonist?
4. Consider the box on the 'villain' from the mat. Which of these qualities does the Queen of Hearts embody?
5. Why is it important to characterise the Queen in this way?

### Propp's Character Types

Choose a novel or short story you have enjoyed reading or studying at school. Complete the table below, thinking about which character embodies the characteristics of Propp's eight character types.

**Text:**

Character type	Example	Explanation why?
Hero		
Villain		
Helper		
Dispatcher		
Donor		
False hero		
Princess		
Princess's father		

## Nomenclature

Choose your favourite novel or series of novels you have read or studied. List the characters' names in the left column, and then make notes about whether their actions and characteristics are what you expected, given the connotations of their name.

Characters' names	Characteristics
Luna Lovegood	A peaceful, very positive character. Free spirited, calm and gentle. Conforms to connotations of her name, particularly her surname of 'love' and 'good'.

## Analysing Character – The Artful Dodger in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*

Read the description below taken from Chapter 8 when Oliver Twist first meets The Artful Dodger. Underline any key words and phrases that you feel present The Artful Dodger in a particular way. Make a note next to your quotations detailing what the character seems like.

The boy who addressed this inquiry to the young wayfarer, was about his own age: but one of the queerest looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced boy enough; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short of his age: with rather bowlegs, and little, sharp, ugly eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly, that it threatened to fall off every moment – and would have done so, very often, if the wearer had not had a knack of every now and then giving his head a sudden twitch, which brought it back to its old place again. He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back, half-way up his arm, to get his hands out of the sleeves: apparently with the ultimate view of thrusting them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers; for there he kept them. He was, altogether, as roystering and swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six, or something less, in his bluchers.

**Thinking hard:** Use your notes to help you write a paragraph in answer to the following question:  
How does Dickens present the character of The Artful Dodger?

## Creating a character

Read through the list of words below. Circle three words in each of the first three columns. Then circle one character type. Using the words you have circled as a prompt, write a paragraph introducing your character, as if this was the first time they have been introduced in a story.

Feelings	Appearance	Personality	Type
Happy	Frail	Gentle	Hero
Sad	Old	Kind	Villain
Nostalgic	Athletic	Funny	Tragic hero
Angry	Pretty	Grumpy	Evil stepmother
Frustrated	Dirty	Supportive	Princess
Stressed	Beautiful	Optimistic	Princess's Father
Anxious	Tired	Wicked	Helper
Exhausted	Haggard	Adventurous	Donor
Joyful	Injured	Cheeky	False Hero
Melancholy	Awkward	Shy	The Amazon woman
Competitive	Glamorous	Arrogant	Femme Fatale
Disappointed	Scruffy	Selfish	
Victorious	Elegant	Generous	

## Analysing Character Descriptions

Read each of the character descriptions below. Choose which of the following two tasks you wish to complete.

Either:

- Using the details you learn from the description, draw an image of the character being described and label it with key words/information about key aspects of their character.

or

- Using the terminology you have been exploring on the mat and in this booklet, write a character analysis. A character analysis should include: identification of the character's name and connotations; identification and exploration of their character type; a discussion of their personality, their appearance, their motivations and their role. You may also want to include comments about their relationships with other characters.

Harry had always been small and skinny for his age... Harry had a thin face, knobby knees, black hair and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Sellotape because of all the times Dudley had punched him in the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning. (Harry from Harry Potter)

She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and I had felt her tyrannical presence as long as I could remember. (Calpurnia from *To Kill a Mockingbird*)

He had a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, a silver scarf over which his long white beard hung below his waist, and immense black boots.

“Good morning!” said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat.

“What do you mean?” he said. “Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?”

“All of them at once,” said Bilbo. “And a very fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors, into the bargain.”

“Very pretty!” said Gandalf. “But I have no time to blow smoke-rings this morning. I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it’s very difficult to find anyone.”

Bilbo had decided that he wanted the stranger to go away, but the old man did not move. He stood leaning on his stick and gazing at the hobbit without saying anything, till Bilbo got quite uncomfortable and even a little cross. (Gandalf from *The Hobbit*)

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