

# Narrative Writing – Character description

Descriptive  
language

Characteristics

Personality

When we describe a character,  
factual information alone is not  
sufficient, no matter how accurate  
it might be. The details must  
appeal to our senses.

Aura,  
Movement,  
Show not tell

## Overview of tasks:

- Task 1 – Improve a basic character description
- Task 2 – Create 'Rap sheet' for your character/inmate
- Task 3 – Role on the wall – generate your descriptive words and phrases about your character (inside and out)
- Task 4 – Write your character description for your new inmate at Camp Green Lake

# Character description; example of a poor one...



- He had black hair and green eyes. He wore a hat and a tie. He had a moustache and was tall. He had a weapon. He was not a nice person. He didn't have a nice childhood.

**How can this be improved?**

# Example: Character description; improved



**What features have been included that make this more effective?**

- He lived in the shadows; a menacing figure. Dark, greasy, lank hair hung limply around his ears. A wiry, barely-there moustache sat above his thin lips, like a caterpillar. Hiding beneath the circular, shadowed glasses on the bridge of his nose were cold, calculating, shark's eyes of frosted green. He hid his deformed hand behind his back. In the other he grasped his latest weapon; taken from his latest victim. He was soulless, his upbringing had ensured he had no empathy or care for anyone else. He was as tall and as imposing as an Oak tree. His voice was as deep as the ocean. He was merciless, menacing and a monster.

Task 1 – Improve this paragraph about Mr. Sir from the book ‘Holes’...

Sentence starters

Descriptive  
phrases

Alliteration

Rule of three

Similes/Metaphors

What can be improved...?

- The man wore sunglasses and a cowboy hat. He had a tattoo of a rattlesnake on his arm. He wore jeans and a white shirt. He wore cowboy boots on his feet. They were brown. He was a nasty man. He had a bad temper. He had quit smoking and ate Sunflower seeds as a snack. He didn't like children. He hated his job. His nose was big and his eyes were blue. He was short and had a big belly. He had bandy legs. He was cruel and never kind.

See uploaded sheet

# Task 2 – RAP sheet (Record & Prosecution)

Create a 'RAP' sheet for a new inmate that's arrived in Camp Green Lake. Use the sub-headings to create your inmate's back story:

- Name
- Age
- Length of sentence
- Crime/Crimes Committed
- Family
- Education
- Past Crimes
- This information will be used as a stimulus for your character description

You can recreate a RAP sheet for your own character on J2 Writer using text boxes and by pasting pictures in.

Dwayne is the most recent inmate at Camp Green Lake.

This is his 'RAP' sheet

Dwayne 'Volcano' Evans

## RAP Sheet

### Record of Arrests and Prosecutions

Name: Dwayne 'Volcano' Evans

Age: 15

Length of Sentence: Indefinite

### Crime Committed:

Gang Leader of the West Side Boys.  
Found guilty of attacking the leader of the East Side Guys, making threats to the judge and assaulting a police officer.

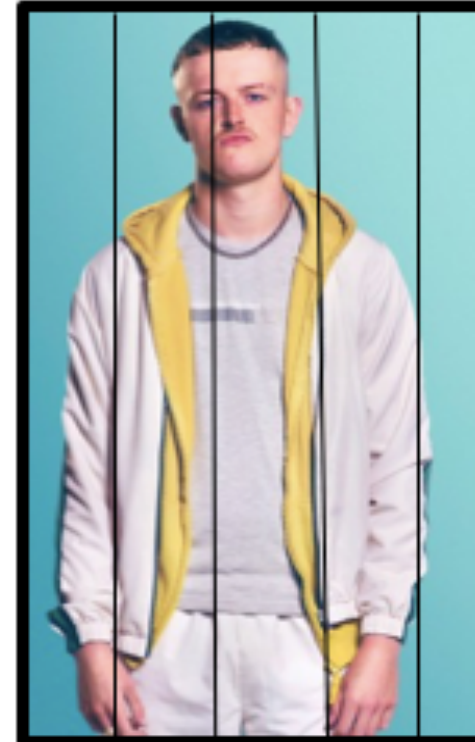
### Family:

- **Mum** – Whereabouts unknown
- **Dad** – Works 4 jobs and so has very little time to spend with his children.
- **Brother** – Currently in prison for robbing a bank

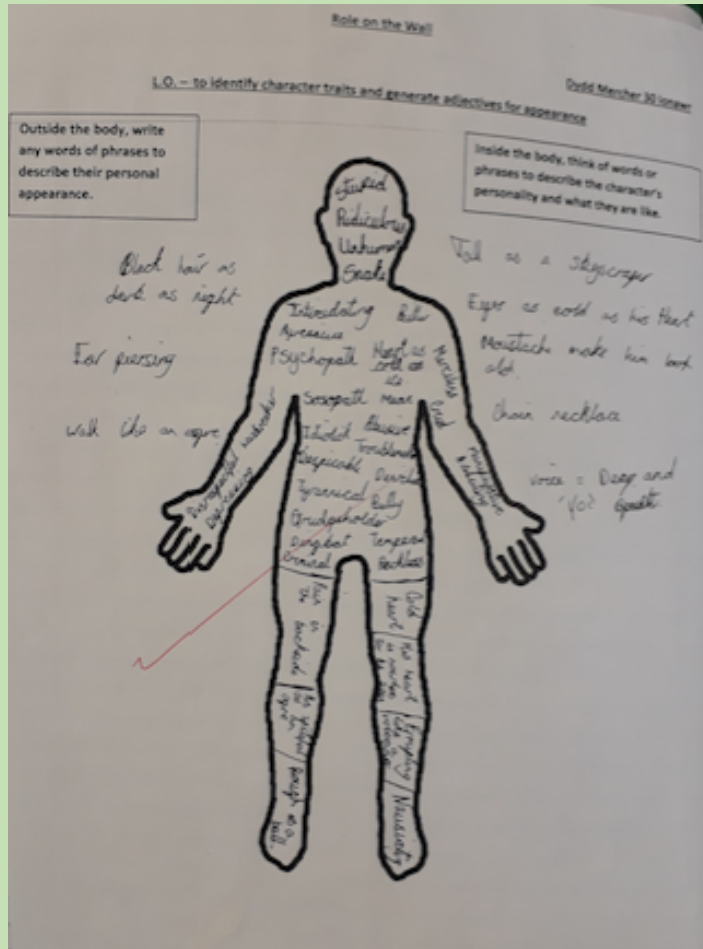
Education: Illiterate and Innumerate

### Past Crimes:

- Theft
- Expelled from 6 schools for repeated bullying and truancy
- Violent crimes (too many to list)



# Task 3 – Role on the wall

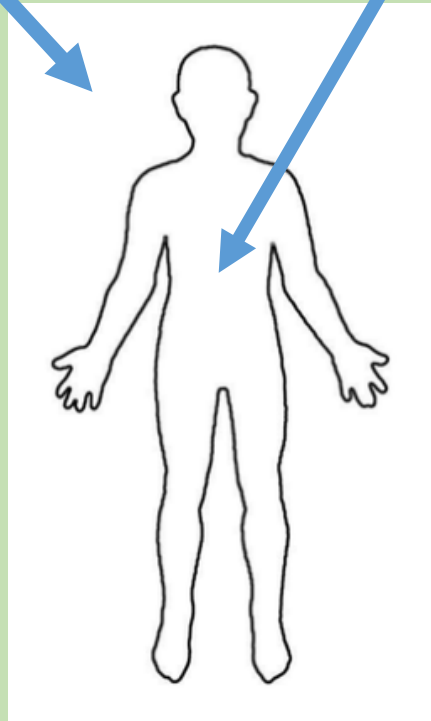


- Create a 'Role on the wall' for your character filled with descriptive words and phrases, alliteration, similes and metaphors.
- On the 'OUTSIDE' of the body think about including lots of detail about your character's appearance; how he moves, his height, clothes, any distinguishing features (tattoos, birthmarks etc)
- On the 'INSIDE', include descriptive words and phrases about his personality & characteristics

**e.g – next slide**

## 'Outside' descriptions

- Hair, as black as night
- Three ear piercings
- Walks as quietly as a predator seeking its prey
- As tall as a skyscraper
- Eyes as cold as his heart
- A chain necklace chokes him
- A barbed wire tattoo creeps up his right arm
- His voice is deep, dark and dangerous



## 'Inside' descriptions

- Erupts like a volcano
- His soul is as dark as a cave
- He is despicable, intimidating and a psychopath
- A tempestuous, tyrannical, terror
- His heart is as cold as ice
- He is a slithering, manipulative snake

# Task 4 - Character description

## Think about:

The main criteria that make up a **character description** are:

- The **character's** appearance. (outside your 'Role on the wall')
- The **character's** background/past.
- Try and describe: Scent, Skin, Aura (the vibe they give), Movement (outside your 'Role on the wall')
- Their personality/characteristics (inside your 'Role on the wall')
- What made them like this? (inside your 'Role on the wall')
- How long have they been this way? (inside your 'Role on the wall')

**Details like these are what keeps the reader reading.**

# Other things you could consider...

Consider:

- How is this person viewed? Do they seem dangerous, alluring, secretive, suspicious? The way another character views someone else gives insight about them as well. Are they attracted? Repulsed? Curious?
- How do they think?
- What do they feel?
- How do they view/react to certain situations compared to how others would?
- What is their mental state?



WAGOLL!

- ‘He lived in the shadows. His sunken eyes were almost as cold as his heart. His hair was as black as the dead night and surrounded his swan-like neck. The way he walked made others shudder and cower. His voice was deep and intimidating when he talked (which wasn’t very often). One of his ears was pierced; a skull hung down from his earlobe. He barged into people as he strolled through the town like a panther stalking its victim. He had a terrible upbringing and didn’t know another way of life. His ‘school’ was the mean streets he inhabited, his education was supplied by his ‘gang’. His heart was encased in ice; he had no empathy or care. The nickname he had was ‘Volcano’; he was always erupting with fire when he lost his temper. The boy was a merciless, mercenary, tyrannical monster. The tattoo of barbed wire trailing up his torso was a road map to his heart.

# Checklist... Success Criteria

## Remember:

describe the character's appearance?



describe the character's background/past?

describe how the character speaks?



describe how the character moves?

describe the character's actions, thoughts and feelings?

describe the character's personality?



include figurative language to enhance my description?  
*e.g. His heart swelled with a sea of tears, her whining voice sounded like the screech of an untuned violin...*

To recap - Tasks:

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