**CHARACTERIZATION METHODS**

Characterization is when an author gives us information – either directly or indirectly – about the personality of his/her characters. For instance, if a character says, “Shut up,” to her teacher, what could you assume about the speaker? On the other hand, if a different character says, “Please could you give me a bit of supplementary homework?” what might we infer (conclude) about that character’s personality?

**Direct methods of characterization** *tell* the audience exactly what a character’s personality is like by giving you direct description.

Ex. Sally was a bright and curious student whose whisper-soft voice belied the real force behind what she had to say.

**Indirect methods of characterization** *show* things that reveal the personality of a character.

Speech – What does the character say? How does s/he speak?

Thoughts – What is revealed through the character’s inner thoughts and feelings?

Effect of character on others – What is revealed by the character’s effect on other people? How do other people feel, think, or act in response to the character?

Actions – What is revealed through what the character does and how s/he behaves?

Looks – What does the character look like? How does s/he dress?

*What mnemonic device could you use to memorize the indirect methods of characterization?*

**Directions for Characterization Bingo**

On the Bingo card, you will find various characterization methods used to describe Aunt Adelaide, Daphne, and Ivan from Chapter 1 of *Lost in Lexicon*. To complete the Bingo sheet, you must fill in a line either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Before completing each box, you must write down the answers to the following questions (on a separate sheet of paper) for each box you fill:

1. Write the page number where you found the information.
2. Write what characterization method is used in the description.
3. Write one sentence saying what this bit of characterization reveals about the character.

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| **CHARACTERIZATION BINGO** | | | | |
| “wouldn’t allow television or computers” | “she refused to do any math over the summer” | Says, “Don’t wimp out on me” | “looks like a heron planning to spear a fish” | Doesn’t like to “plung[e] in without a plan” |
| Says, “’Now that we’re thirteen, our entertainment needs are more sophisticated’” | “went on African safaris and volunteered to help find new wildflowers in the Andes” | Keeps score during the Scrabble game | “appointed Ivan the banker” | knows what an anagram is |
| A character clue that isn’t already on this sheet: | Says that it is “tragic that imagination and initiative have died in ones so young” | Thinks Aunt Adelaide has “lost her marbles” | Worries that “if we turn this down, we may never get another chance” | Gets annoyed when Monopoly game is tipped into the box |
| Says, “don’t wimp out on me” | Invents a treasure hunt clue | “former children’s librarian” | FREE SQUARE | “build[s] a mud slide on the riverbank…pretending to be an otter” |
| “hopeless at Scrabble” | Misses all the best shows | “dipped into a couple of puzzle books but found them pretty lame, no match for the thrill of a good video game” | “eccentric old woman” | Would rather “be playing online with my friends…” |