

# How to Craft a Vivid Character? - the five elements of indirect characterisation

## Topic

You are taking a creative writing workshop and you have to submit the following assignment:

*Imagine you are a university student living in a student hall. Your roommate has suddenly decided to leave.*

*Write a short story describing the events that led up to your roommate's sudden departure.*

Writing topic taken from Paper 2 of the 2014 HKDSE English Language Examination ©HKEAA

The topic requires the first-person narrative, so you need to think from the narrator's perspective (i.e. "I") on the roommate.

## Your roommate's profile

- Your roommate's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: M/F
- Subject major: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Level: Y \_\_\_\_\_
- Family background: \_\_\_\_\_
- Personality (strengths/weaknesses): \_\_\_\_\_
- Hobbies/Traits/Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

## Draw your roommate here!

Look in the past:

Recent look:



## Speech

- What did your roommate tell you when you last met him/her (e.g. problems/achievements/inspirations)?
- How did he/she speak?



## Thought

- What might have happened to your roommate lately?
- What were your guesses about his/her changes in attitude and behaviour?



## Effect on others

Recall and describe one memorable scene in which your roommate interacted with others (e.g. you/family/friend/lecturer/stranger) before his/her sudden departure?



## Action

- What did you see your roommate do most often?
- Did he/she have any strange behaviour before leaving the hall?



## Look

- How would you describe your roommate's usual look (e.g. eyes/face/hairstyle)?
- Did you observe any change in your roommate's appearance (e.g. make-up/hairstyle/fashion style)?

Expressions for introducing speech:

- Speech verbs  
She stammered/yelled/grumbled, "I quit."
- Adverbs  
"I got a job offer," he said calmly/cheerfully/proudly.
- Adjectives  
She said in a sincere/miserable/disappointed tone/voice/manner.

Expressions for introducing thoughts:

- What happened ...?
- Did he/she experience...?
- I wondered why/if...
- I wish he/she would...
- If only I knew...