

## Character Sketch

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### Prewriting

To decide on the person who will be the focus of your character sketch, think about people in your life who would make interesting subjects. Choose two or three people and then brainstorm as many details as possible about each one. Use the chart below to organize your ideas.

	Person #1	Person #2	Person #3
Name			
Traits			
Actions			
Anecdotes			
Quotations			
My Feelings			

## Character Sketch

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### Drafting and Elaboration

The paragraph that follows is taken from a character sketch written by a student. It lacks some of the key elements needed for a strong character sketch. Improve the draft by following the Suggestions for Elaboration. You may use information from the Reader's Notebook or add your own ideas. Write your revised version on a separate sheet of paper.

#### Draft

Amanda is a great kid. I've known her for a while now, and I really enjoy taking care of her. I love seeing her, and I really enjoy the things we do together. When I walk in the door, we have this little tradition that she just loves. It's so much fun to play our little game and hear her high-pitched squeal.

#### Suggestions for Elaboration

- Tell how long you've known Amanda.
- Show how you take care of her.
- Give an example of something that you do together.
- Describe the "little tradition" that Amanda loves.

#### READER'S NOTEBOOK

I've known Amanda for the last year. ■ I babysit for her every other Saturday night. ■ When I walk in the door, she calls out my name and waits for me to find her. ■ After I discover her, I tickle her. ■ I just love hearing her high-pitched squeal and hearing her ask for more.

## **Character Sketch**

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### **Peer Response Guide**

As you write your character sketch, there are many things to keep in mind. To make sure your character sketch successfully conveys the unique personality that you are describing, ask a peer reviewer to read it and answer the following questions.

1. Do you gain a clear impression of my person from reading the first paragraph?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

2. Can you visualize what my person looks like from reading my character sketch?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

3. Do I provide enough details about his or her actions?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

**Peer Response Guide continued**

4. Have I included snippets of dialogue and examples of mannerisms that show what the person is like?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

5. Do I clearly reveal my own feelings toward this person?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

6. Is the structure of my character sketch strong—with a strong beginning and a strong conclusion?

***Response:***

***Suggestions for Revision:***

## Character Sketch

# Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

### Revising

#### TARGET SKILL ► Using Quotes to Show Character

When revising your character sketch, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I chosen quotes that reveal something significant about the person?
- Does my character sketch contain anecdotes that tell something about the person's actions?
- Have I shown rather than told what the person is like?
- Have I described the person's surroundings so that readers will understand his or her environment?

### Editing and Proofreading

#### TARGET SKILL ► Using Modifiers Correctly

Use the suggestions given below to revise and proofread the following paragraph from the rough draft of one student's character sketch. Correct errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling using proofreading marks. Then copy your corrected draft on a separate sheet of paper.

- Be sure that you use adverbs to modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.
- Avoid sentence fragments.
- Check for correct use of capitalization. Remember that proper nouns are capitalized, but common nouns are not.
- Make sure that verb tenses are consistent unless there is a flashback that is clearly identified.

#### Draft

I'll never forget that first time. I was in seventh grade and even though I read *The Babysitters' bible* and had taken that course, I am real nervous. I walk in with my Winnie the Pooh backpack. With Tigger's tail popping out of the top. My backpack is stuffed with Games, Books, markers, and paper of all different shapes and colors. My Survival Kit was all set to go, but was I?

### Applying

Now edit and proofread your own character sketch. Refer to the bulleted list above.

## Character Sketch

### Strong Student Model

#### Amanda

1. Provides vivid picture of Amanda's physical appearance

Amanda is one of the sweetest kids I've ever known. For the past year, I've babysat for her every other Saturday night. I look forward to seeing her big brown eyes and her mop of curly brown hair, but most of all, I love our little routines. When I walk in the door, Amanda calls out my name, and then I search for her. Once I discover her hiding place, a tickle session always follows. There's something about her high-pitched squeal that I can't resist.

I'll never forget the first time I babysat for Amanda. I was in seventh grade and even though I had read *The Babysitters' Bible* and had taken the "Babysitting Made Easy" course, I was nervous. I walked in with my Winnie the Pooh backpack, with Tigger's tail popping out of the top. My backpack was stuffed with games, books, markers, and papers of all different shapes and colors. My Survival Kit was all set to go, but was I?

Amanda noticed my backpack right away. She said she loved Winnie the Pooh, too, and then she asked what was in my backpack. We spent the entire evening playing "Pooh Goes to School." Amanda was so excited and kept telling me, "I'm going to Kindiegarten next year, and I'm gonna get a Pooh backpack just like yours. But I'm not gonna wear jeans. I only wear dresses to school."

2. Dialogue shows what Amanda is like by showing how she speaks.

3. Anecdote reveals writer's feelings toward Amanda.

Another Option:  
• Include comments from other people about Amanda's personality.

Over the last year, Amanda and I have grown close. One time I couldn't babysit, so I arranged for my friend Jill to take my place. I was afraid that Amanda would be upset, but she said, "If Jill is Ria's friend, then she can babysit. But next time, I want Ria." I love the way Amanda calls me "Ria." Even though no one has called me that since I was a little kid, I love the way it sounds when Amanda says it.

4. Clearly reveals writer's feelings toward Amanda

5. Nice touch to end character sketch with story about the end of each evening with Amanda

I have grown to love Amanda as if she were my own little sister. I think that one reason she is so special is that I've always wanted a little sister. Taking care of Amanda makes me feel needed and important. When she hugs my legs and asks for "one more minute of back scratching," I just want to squeeze her. I always end an evening of babysitting with our special "Gigantic, Tremendous Amanda and Maria hug." I tickle her tummy and then hug her until she flops back into bed with a huge smile.

## Character Sketch

### Average Student Model

#### Amanda

1. Sentences should not begin with like! Also, these sentences are too short and choppy.

Amanda is such a great kid. For around a year, I've babysat for her. I love her big brown eyes and curly brown hair. And I love our routines. Like when I walk in the door, Amanda calls out my name. Then I search all over the house for her. Once I find her, we always have a tickle session.

I'll never forget that first time. I was in seventh grade and even though I read *The Babysitters' Bible* and had taken that course, I was nervous. I walk in with my Winnie the Pooh backpack, with Tigger's tale popping out of the top. My backpack is stuffed with games, books, markers, and paper of all different shapes and colors. My Survival Kit was all set to go, but was I?

Amanda noticed my backpack and said she loved Winnie the Pooh, too. Then she asked what was in my backpack. We played "Pooh Goes to School" all night. Amanda was so excited and told me, "I'm going to Kindergarten next year, and I'm gonna get a Pooh backpack just like yours. But I'm not wearing jeans like you. I only wear dresses to school!"

Amanda and I have gotten close. There was one time when I couldn't babysit, so I asked my friend Jill to fill in for me. Amanda said, "If Jill is Ria's friend, then she can babysit, but next time, I want Ria back." I love the way Amanda calls me "Ria." Even though no one has called me that since I was a little kid, I love the way it sounds.

I have grown to really love Amanda. I think one reason why is because I've always wanted a little sister. Taking care of her makes me feel needed and important. When she hugs me and asks for "one more minute of back scratching," I just want to squeeze her. I always end our evenings with our special hugs. Amanda loves them.

2. Topic sentence is too vague. The writer could make it more specific by telling the first time for what.

3. Dialogue is an effective tool that reveals something about Amanda's personality.

4. Good anecdote that shows Amanda's loyalty to author

Another Option:

- Describe her surroundings in a way that could reveal something about her personality.

5. Conclusion expresses author's feelings toward Amanda.

6. It would be a stronger ending to describe the special hug.

## Character Sketch

### Weak Student Model

#### Amanda

1. Opening should state who Amanda is and what her relationship is to the author. A physical description is needed.

3. More specific details are needed here. What was the title of the book? Did the course have a name?

5. The writer has paraphrased Amanda's words. A direct quote would be better because it would allow readers to "hear" Amanda's voice.

7. Conclusion is weak. The story about Jill should be elaborated in a separate paragraph. The final paragraph should leave readers with a strong impression.

Another Option:

- End with an anecdote that shows the writer's relationship with Amanda.

Amanda is a great kid. I've known her for a while now, and I really enjoy taking care of her. I love seeing her, and I really enjoy the things that we do together. When I walk in the door, we have this little tradition that she just loves. It's so much fun to play our little game and hear her high-pitched squeal.

I'll never forget that first time. I was in seventh grade and even though I read that Babysitting book and had taken that course, I was nervous. So I walk in with my Winnie the Pooh backpack, with Tigger's tale hanging out. My backpack is stuffed with games and all kinds of other things that kids love.

Amanda saw my backpack and wanted to know what was inside. She said that she loves Winnie the Pooh, too. We played "Pooh Goes to School" for the longest time. Amanda told me that she was going to Kindergarten next year and that she would get a backpack just like mine, but that she wouldn't wear jeans. Only dresses for Amanda.

There was this one time when I couldn't babysit for Amanda. I got my friend Jill to do it. Amanda was pretty cool about it, but she wanted me to come the next time. I think I like her so much because I don't have a little sister and I've always wanted one. I feel so lucky to know such a great little kid.

2. The writer should tell what the little tradition is so that readers understand why it is so special.

4. The writer needs to be consistent with verb tenses and stay with the past tense.

6. Sentence fragment needs subject and verb.

## Character Sketch

### Rubric for Evaluation

<b>Ideas and Content</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Strong</b>
1. Presents a vivid picture of the personality and physical appearance of the person			
2. Includes dialogue, mannerisms, descriptions, and other devices to show what the person is like			
3. Reveals writer's response to the person			
4. Clearly describes person's environment as a means to understand him or her			
5. Gives a strong impression of the person			
<b>Structure and Form</b>			
6. Includes a strong beginning and strong conclusion			
7. Starts each paragraph with a topic sentence			
<b>Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics</b>			
8. Uses modifiers correctly			
9. Contains all complete sentences and no sentence fragments			

### Writing Progress to Date (Writing Portfolio)

The strongest aspect of this writing is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The final version shows improvement over the rough draft in this way: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A specific improvement over past assignments in your portfolio is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A skill to work on in future assignments is \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_