How to write a characterization

write a characterization / characterize (charakterisieren): Vorgänge, Sachverhalte, Personen / Figuren in ihrer jeweiligen Eigenart treffend und anschaulich kennzeichnen und ggf. unter einem bestimmten Gesichtspunkt zusammenführen

Characters can be presented in two ways:
a. direct (explicit) characterization: the narrator or a character tells the reader what sort of person a character is
b. indirect (implicit)characterization: the reader has to draw conclusions about what the character is like by what the character says or does → Beware (!): the *verisimilitude*[1] of your characterization is dependent upon the relationship between the characters also.

Step 1	Make a grid and note down: • what the narrator or other characters say about the character you are dealing with • what the character says about him- or herself • the character's outward appearance (e.g. what he or she looks like) • the character's behaviour (e.g. what he or she says, thinks or does) → add the lines from the text so that you can find the passages later more easily
Step 2	From your notes • draw conclusions about the character (e.g. what kind of person is he or she?) from what he or she says, thinks or does; find appropriate adjectives → write the adjective into the second column of your grid next to the information from the text
Step 3	Write your introduction with • the character's name • the role he or she plays in the story (protagonist; antagonist; main / minor character) • a general statement about the character
Step 4	Write your main part with details about the character: • outward appearance → begin with his or her most prominent features and then follow with minor ones (but they should be relevant) • direct information about him or her (see step1) • your conclusions from the character's behaviour (see step 2) → don't forget to give reference from the text (lines and examples) to prove your statements → follow the basic structure for every character trait: name it! – quote it! – explain it! (the order can be changed)
Step 5	Write your conclusion (the result of your analysis!) • summarise what the reader learns about the character • state whether the character has developed or stayed the same during the plot → don't add any new aspects here!

[1] verisimilitude = Wahrheitsgehalt

Example of a grid to structure your notes

Basic information (+lines)	Direct characterization (+lines)
• name, age, • social position (job), family, ... • outward appearance	• what is directly mentioned in the text (by the narrator or other characters) • what the character says about him- or herself → always ask yourself if you can trust his or her statements
Indirect characterization (+lines)	**Your conclusions**
• behaviour • thoughts • feelings	appropriate adjectives

Example of a written characterization

Introduction (character's name, role and a general statement)	
Main part basic information (+ lines) basic structure: (name it – quote it – explain it) explanation of behaviour – lines – result (adjectives)	
Conclusion	

Useful Phrases for a Characterization

X seems to be ... / appears to be ... X can be seen / considered / described / characterized as... X is described / portrayed / characterized / presented as... This feature becomes apparent / obvious when... His / her outward appearance / behavior shows / reveals that... His / her behavior indicates that ... When saying that ... he / she reveals that ... In lines ... it becomes obvious that... Proof of this can be found in ll. .... when X	However, even if X is... he / she is ... Since X is portrayed as a ..., X can be called a ... This behavior clearly indicates that X ... This is an example of ... This shows that X is ... This is also the reason why X ... Not only does X ...., he / she also ... Another significant aspect is ... From this one can conclude that ...