
Sample Character Descriptions

From *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J. K. Rowling (Scholastic, 1998)

- He was a big, beefy man with hardly any neck, although he did have a very large mustache. Mrs. Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbors. (p. 1)
- A giant of a man was standing in the doorway. His face was almost completely hidden by a long, shaggy mane of hair and a wild, tangled beard, but you could make out his eyes, glinting like black beetles under all the hair. (p. 46)

From *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (Bantam, 1993)

- Where I was big, elbowy and grating, he was small, graceful and smooth. ...he was lauded for his velvet-black skin. His hair fell down in black curls, and my head was covered with black steel wool. And yet he loved me. (p. 17)
- Her skin was a rich black that would have peeled like a plum if snagged, but then no one would have thought of getting close enough to Mrs. Flowers to ruffle her dress, let alone snag her skin. She didn't encourage familiarity. She wore gloves too. (p. 78)

From *Holes* by Louis Sachar (Scholastic, 2000)

- They were dripping with sweat, and their faces were so dirty that it took Stanley a moment to notice that one kid was white and the other black. (p. 17)
- Madame Zeroni had dark skin and a very wide mouth. When she looked at you, her eyes seemed to expand, and you felt like she was looking right through you. (p. 29)

From *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver (HarperCollins, 1998)

- We wore our best dresses on the outside to make a good impression. Rachel wore her green linen Easter suit she was so vain of, and her long whitish hair pulled off her forehead with a wide pink elastic hairband.... Sitting next to me on the plane, she kept batting her white-rabbit eyelashes and adjusting her bright pink hairband, trying to get me to notice she had secretly painted her fingernails bubble-gum pink to match. (p. 15)

continued

Sample Character Descriptions (continued)

- Mama Bekwa Tataba stood watching us—a little jet-black woman. Her elbows stuck out like wings, and a huge white enameled tub occupied the space above her head, somewhat miraculously holding steady while her head moved in quick jerks to the right and left. (p. 38)

From *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Hayes Barton Press, 2005, originally published 1885)

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl – a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes – just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t'other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was laying on the floor – an old black slouch with the top caved in, like a lid. (p. 11)

From *The Black Cauldron* by Lloyd Alexander (Henry Holt, 1965)

A bellow of laughter resounded beyond the chamber, and in another moment a giant, red-headed warrior rolled in at the side of Adaon. He towered above all in the chamber and his beard flamed around a face so scarred with old wounds it was impossible to tell where one began and another ended. His nose had been battered to his cheekbones; his heavy forehead was nearly lost in a fierce tangle of eyebrows; and his neck seemed as thick as Taran's waist. (p. 25)

From *Look Homeward, Angel* by Thomas Wolfe (Simon & Schuster, 1995, originally published 1929)

My brother Ben's face, thought Eugene, is like a piece of slightly yellow ivory; his high white head is knotted fiercely by his old man's scowl; his mouth is like a knife, his smile the flicker of light across a blade. His face is like a blade, and a knife, and a flicker of light: it is delicate and fierce, and scowls beautifully forever, and when he fastens his hard white fingers and his scowling eyes upon a thing he wants to fix, he sniffs with sharp and private concentration through his long, pointed nose...his hair shines like that of a young boy—it is crinkled and crisp as lettuce. (p. 135)

continued

Sample Character Descriptions (continued)

From *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles (Simon & Schuster, 2003, originally published 1959)

For such and extraordinary athlete—even as a Lower Middler Phineas had been the best athlete in the school—he was not spectacularly built. He was my height—five feet eight and a half inches...He weighed a hundred and fifty pounds, a galling ten pounds more than I did, which flowed from his legs to torso around shoulders to arms and full strong neck in an uninterrupted, unemphatic unity of strength. (p.16)