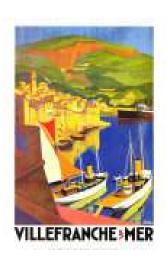# Round/Flat Characters

Round/Flat

- Let's begin by thinking about round and flat characterization like a painting. If you are an artist, you must decide how much detail to put into a painting. Do you want many lines and many colors or just an outline and only black and white?

Round/Flat

- Likewise, authors must decide how much detail to include about each character.
  - Which characters are most important?
  - How will giving detail, or not giving detail, about that character affect the story?

Round

- Characters that are described in depth—with many details—are well-rounded characters. They are called **round** characters.

- The main character in a story is almost always round.

Round

- If you are reading a story and you feel like you know a character extremely well, then most likely the character is round.

Flat

- Characters that are not described well—that you are not given much information about—are **flat** characters.

Flat

- Consider a drawing: a three-dimensional drawing gives more detail than a one-dimensional drawing. If you draw a flat picture of a house, for example, you can only see one side of it. You cannot see three of the four sides. This is how a flat character is; you can only see a few characteristics of the character. There are many things you cannot "see," or many details you are not given by the author.

Round/Flat

- As a reader, judge whether or not the character is round or flat by trying to write down characteristics of the character.

- Answer the question: What do you know about the character? If your list is long, with many characteristics, then the character is round. If your list is short, or there are not many characteristics at all, then the character is flat.

Static/Dynamic Characters

Static/Dynamic

- The key word when dealing with the difference between static and dynamic characters is "change."

- The type of change, though, is specific. We are only concerned with internal changes—changes which occur within the character. These would include a major change in his/her personality or a change in his/her outlook on life. Another important change that a character may undergo is a change in values, or it could be an overall change in the nature of the character.

Static/Dynamic

- Do not focus on changes that happen TO a character, but rather, changes that happen WITHIN a character.

- Think about it this way: Does the event affect the character by changing the character internally?

<..(change)..>

Static

- In order for a character to be considered a **static** character, the character must remain basically the same throughout the entire story.

- The character does not undergo any internal changes.

Static

- Think of static characterization like plastic surgery. The character may change in looks, but unless his/her personality is affected, the character is static.

Dynamic

- A **dynamic** character is a character that undergoes an internal change sometime between the beginning and end of the story.

- The change in the character is usually crucial to the story itself.

Dynamic

- Say a main character goes through a life-altering experience, such as a race car driver getting into an accident. If the driver's <u>personality</u> changes, and he is no longer willing to take on the risk of driving a race car, the character would be dynamic.

Static/Dynamic

- In order to distinguish static characters from dynamic characters, write down a description of the inner character at the beginning of the story. Answer these three questions:
  - How does the character feel about him/her/itself?
  - How does the character act towards others?
  - What is the character's goal?
- Repeat the process at the end of the story. Write a description of the inner character and answer the three questions again.

Static/Dynamic

- Usually, if you are dealing with a dynamic character, you will be able to notice a difference between the personality descriptions as well as between the answers. If there is no major difference, the character is probably static.