**Character Sketch: Teacher Notes**

This assignment is appropriate for students in grades 7-9, and can be further adapted for older or younger readers. For younger grades, listening to the teacher read the novel aloud then creating character sketches for particular characters in small groups works very well. Assign a character to each group. Each group member can prepare a character sketch; once the group’s sketches are completed, members can be reassigned for a sharing exercise in which a member from each group will present his or her sketch to the members of other groups. For older readers, deeper reflections connecting plot and character to themes of memory, storytelling, and identity will allow students to fulfil more sophisticated outcomes and objectives by relating the character and his/her evolution to the student’s own experience (see associated lesson on themes).

Objective:

* Students will create a character sketch for a character from *The Storyteller’s Daughter* to develop insight into the importance of characterization, with a focus on that character’s motives, personality, and role in the novel.

Learning Outcomes:

* **Organize** information using appropriate forms (i.e. visual and written aspects of character sketch) for a specific purpose of developing understanding of character
* **Analyse** events and dialogue to create a verbal “picture” of a particular character
* **Evaluate** information for completeness, accuracy, usefulness, and relevance by using quotes or anecdotes to support analysis
* **Integrate** new information with prior knowledge to draw logical conclusions and to refine understanding of characterization and character evolution

Begin by defining characterization, and discussing the difference between flat and well-rounded characters.

* Characterization is “the author's expression of a character's personality through the use of action, dialogue, thought, or commentary by the narrator or another character” ([Purdue OWL](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/575/01/)).
* Flat and round characters: characters are “described by the course of their development in a work of literature. Flat characters are two-dimensional in that they are relatively uncomplicated and do not change throughout the course of a work. By contrast, round characters are complex and undergo development, sometimes sufficiently to surprise the reader” ([Encyclopaedia Britannica](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/209627/flat-and-round-characters)).
* Discuss terms such as protagonist, antagonist, antihero, and supporting characters.
* Select a well-known story (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood or other fairy tale or short story) and create a sample character sketch to demonstrate how information can be extrapolated from plot, dialogue, and description.
* Have students choose a character from the novel, and fill out the character sketch handout. Note that there is space for a visual representation of the character; the artistry of the representation is less important than the accuracy of details.
* The bonus question asks why students chose their particular character. Discuss what makes characters sympathetic/relatable, as well as what makes some characters more interesting than others. To what extent do students identify with characters in this novel? Is such identification important to the success of a novel? Is it possible to relate to these characters, given that this is a fantasy novel and their experiences go beyond the realm of the real?
* You may choose to have students use their handout to create a more formal essay on characterisation.

List of Characters:

Skye MacNamara  
Maggie MacNamara  
Ethan MacNamara  
Morag Fraser  
Robert Fraser  
  
Fran Shepherd  
Doctor and Doctor Shepherd (James and Marie)

Amy Miller  
Mrs. Leanne Miller  
Darren Miller  
Matthew and Jamie Miller

Mr. Larry Selby

Bertram  
Morrigan  
Nemain  
Macha

Taranis  
Mr. Duncan  
Mrs. Schnout