

Standards Focus: Main and Subordinate Characters

In order to understand a plot and its significance, it is important that the reader understand the characters and their relationships. **Main characters** are those characters around which the plot is centered. They are essential to the plot and are the most important factors in the advancement of the plot. Main characters can be either good or evil. If they were not there, the story would be different, and not as detailed and comprehensive. Main characters usually undergo some sort of change in the story. Those who do not undergo a change by the end of the story have usually been deliberately written that way. Sometimes they don't change to show a sort of "they will never learn" attitude. Or the character himself doesn't change but the other characters change as a result of that, emphasizing the fact that the character hasn't changed. **Subordinate characters** are supporting characters. They are basically there to help the main characters accomplish the action. They do not necessarily need to be in the story in order for the plot to unfold. They may not undergo any changes in the story. They also add realism to the story, since we live in a world filled with many different kinds of people. Finally, each character has a **motivation**, or forces which give the character a reason to act they way they do or make the decisions they make.

Directions: For each of the following characters, identify:

- a) whether the character is main or subordinate*
- b) the character's main motivation*
- c) the character's main conflict*
- d) how this character's conflict and motivations have affected the plot so far.*

Ex. Ralph

- a. main
- b. to see to it that the "inhabitants" of the island get home as soon as possible
- c. Jack
- d. Ralph has been elected "leader" but is having trouble getting Jack and some of the others to follow his example. Jack has a natural tendency to lead the boys in the choir, as he is the head chorister, and some of the other boys are taking advantage of the fact that there are no adults in charge. Ralph is acting nearly on his own.

1. Piggy

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. Jack

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

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3. Simon

- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- _____
- _____

4. "choir"

- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- _____
- _____

5. the pig

- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- _____
- _____

6. "littluns"

- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- _____
- _____

7. "the beastie"

- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
- _____
- _____