

## **No More Slothful Kitten**

### **Writing Model Essay—Character**

A true indication of a person's character is the actions she/he takes. In "No More Slothful Kitten," a colonial short story by Cleta V. Belt, the author creates Sariah Hunt who solves problems for two neighbors and one slothful kitten. In discussing character, one has to look at the qualities the author reveals about the people or characters in the story. Belt uses indirect characterization to let the reader learn about this young colonial girl. The reader can see Sariah's personality traits, her <sup>a.</sup> obedience, <sup>b.</sup> growing compassion, and <sup>c.</sup> ingenuity, by what she says and does, and by what others say in response to her.

*Sariah displays her obedience by her willingness to deliver her mother's venison pies to two needy neighbors.* <sup>1.</sup> She makes no effort to avoid the task even though <sup>1a.</sup> it has snowed the night before and <sup>1b.</sup> she must travel on foot through the cold winter weather. Furthermore, <sup>2.</sup> she has even planned ahead for her duty, <sup>2a.</sup> moving her sled from the barn to the area of the front porch, <sup>2b.</sup> knowing she will be burdened with two bundles of quilt-wrapped pies. Although she would much rather stay in the warm kitchen and play with her kitten, <sup>3.</sup> she readily helps her mother, all too aware before her mother reminds her that <sup>3a.</sup> since her father and older brother are "doing their duty for the new country that was struggling to overthrow the oppression of the British King George," <sup>3b.</sup> everyone must help.

*Sariah's compassion grows as she makes her visits to her neighbors on the snowy day.* <sup>1.</sup> She willingly offers to look for the Widow Hutchinson's lost cat, but when she realizes the cat has died, her <sup>2.</sup> compassion weakens, and <sup>2a.</sup> wordlessly, she goes about her duty, forgetting for a moment the woman's plight as she inhales the aroma of the pie. Tom arrives to bury the cat, and <sup>2b.</sup> Sariah scampers down the steps to continue her duty, relieved she does not have to deal with the widow's grief. <sup>2c.</sup> At Mister Read's his poverty provokes a critical comment, "Mr. Read professed himself to be a man of God and he proudly wore his poverty like a cloak of righteousness." Yet <sup>3.</sup> she overlooks his appearance to help him with his meal. When <sup>4.</sup> she realizes the man has received two roasting kitchens, her compassion unfolds. She can use the second roasting kitchen to assist those who need her help.

*Her ingenuity changes her day and her attitude as she envisions the changes she can bring about in the lives of those around her.* <sup>1.</sup> She can take the roasting kitchen to help her mother, and <sup>2.</sup> bring poor Mister Read warm thick stockings. Her mother had already doomed her kitten to the barn where she must work, so she is certain her mother will not mind <sup>3.</sup> her giving the animal to the widow for company. Sariah has also figured out what the widow can do with her piles of <sup>4.</sup> extra knitted stockings—cover Mister Read's bare toes. All she has to do is talk and organize, to perform good deeds of her own creation.

Sariah realizes that her obedience has placed her in a position to finally do some good deeds, to feel the joy of compassion as her ingenuity creates a way to help her mother and her two needy neighbors, and change her slothful kitten's life from the dangers in the Hunt barn to the comfort and coziness of the Widow Hutchinson's love and affection.

**Standards Focus: Writing Evaluation and Revision: Character**

**Directions:** Using the writing model on the character in "No More Slothful Kitten" and the following questions as a guide, rethink and rewrite your rough draft on the main character of **My Brother Sam is Dead**. You may check the boxes as you work on your rough draft.

A. Reread the first paragraph of the model composition on character. This introductory paragraph tells the reader the topic of your composition.

1. Did you write an introduction to your composition or did you just jump into telling about what happened in the book? You should be analyzing the novel, not just summarizing it.

If you did not write an introduction, write one before you continue. Then answer the following questions about your introduction.

2. Reread the first sentence. This is a grabber, a device to catch the reader's interest. Does your first sentence 'grab' the reader's interest? If not, write a grabber for your composition.

3. Reread the first italicized sentence. This sentence basically introduces your novel to the reader. In your introduction did you identify the title, the author, and briefly tell the plot of your novel? If you didn't, do so.

4. Look at the pieces of the next sentence labeled a., b., and c. Each underlined part mentions one of Sariah's qualities or personality traits that will be developed in greater detail in the composition. If you didn't state Tim's qualities, insert a sentence or two telling about the aspects of his character you are using as a basis for your composition. Focus on three main qualities.

B. Reread the second paragraph of the model composition on character.

5. Look at the italicized sentence at the beginning of the paragraph. This topic sentence tells the reader about the first characteristic mentioned in the introduction. Does your first paragraph have a strong topic sentence which tells the reader about one of Tim's characteristics? If not, write one.

6. Look at the underlined sentences marked 1., 2., and 3. These sentences use specific details to support the idea that Sariah shows obedience. Does your paragraph include at least three specific examples that support your idea of an important character trait of Tim in *My Brother Sam is Dead*, a trait he displays in several chapters? If not, do so.

7. Look at the sentences marked 1a. and 1b., 2a. and 2b., and 3a. and 3b. These sentences use specific detail to support the examples of the ways that Sariah shows obedience. Does your paragraph have at least two specific details that support the examples of the ways that Tim displays an important character trait, a trait he displays in several chapters? If not, include them.

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C. Reread the third and fourth paragraphs of the model composition on character.

8. Look at the italicized sentence at the beginning of paragraphs three and four. These are the topic sentences that tell the reader about Sariah's important traits as mentioned in the introduction. Do your next paragraphs each have a strong topic sentence which tells the reader about one of Tim's characteristics? If not, include them.

9. In paragraphs three and four, look at the sentences numbered 1., 2., 3., and 4. These underlined sentences use specific detail to support the idea that Sariah shows compassion. Does your paragraph cite at least three specific examples that support your idea of one of Tim's characteristics, a trait he displays in several chapters? If not, do so.

10. Do you notice the details in the fourth paragraph that give supporting evidence of the ways Sariah shows ingenuity, as you did in the third paragraph on compassion? Does your next paragraph have at least two specific details that support each of the examples of the ways that Tim displays an important character trait, a trait he displays in several chapters? If not, include them. What can you add to the next paragraph?

D. Reread the last paragraph. This paragraph concludes the composition. It restates and reinforces the ideas presented in the introduction and body of the composition.

11. Does your composition have a concluding paragraph? If not, write one.

12. Look at the underlined words. Each of these refers to one of the aspects of Sariah's character and gives an example of each. Do you restate your ideas about Tim's characteristics in a concise manner as illustrated in the model essay? If not, do so.

E. Reread the sentence in quotations in the second and third paragraphs.

13. Each of these sentences is a direct quotation from the novel. They are used to reinforce the main idea of the paragraph. When writing about literature, effective writers always copy important words from the text as supporting evidence. Remember that this direct quote needs to be in quotation marks. If you are quoting dialogue, use single quotes around the exact words. "The three little pigs said, 'Go away, Wolfie!'" Are there at least five places in your composition you could strengthened with a direct quote? If you haven't already done so, add at least five direct quotes to support your ideas.

Look at your changes. Using the model, you should have revised your rough draft and created an effective analysis of the character of Tim Meeker. Proofread your paper, have a friend proofread it, then rewrite it. Do not put the identifying letters and numbers of the model (a, b, c, 1, etc.) in your final draft. In addition, do not use italics or underlining in your final draft unless they are there to emphasize a title or reinforce an idea. They are there only to help you recognize sections of this composition for your revision.