

# SMART™ Lesson

## Analyzing Character Motivation in Mystery and Suspense Literature

Welcome to this lesson on analyzing character motivation in mystery and suspense literature. We will be exploring the importance of understanding character motivation in these genres and how it helps us better appreciate the story.

### Understanding Character Motivation

Character motivation is the reason why a character does something. It is the driving force behind their actions and decisions. Understanding character motivation helps us better understand and connect with the characters in a story. It also helps us to anticipate their actions and predict the outcome of the story.

### The Importance of Character Motivation in Mystery and Suspense Literature

In mystery and suspense literature, character motivation is critical for understanding the plot. In these genres, the story often revolves around a character who is involved in a crime or some other dangerous situation. It is the character's motivation that helps us understand why they are doing what they're doing and what their end goal is.

Without understanding a character's motivation, the story may not make sense, and we may not be able to predict important plot points or twists. For example, if we don't know the main character's motivation for solving a mystery, we won't be able to understand their actions or predict what they might do next.

### Identifying Character Motivation

So how do we identify a character's motivation? We can start by looking for clues in the story. What does the character say and do? What are their thoughts and feelings? We can also look at the situations the character finds themselves in and what they hope to achieve.

Once we understand a character's motivation, we can analyze it to determine if it's a positive or negative force. For example, a character's motivation to bring justice to a criminal is a positive force, while a character's motivation to attain power at any cost is a negative force.

### Practice Identifying Character Motivation

Now it's your turn to practice identifying character motivation. Read the following excerpt from a mystery novel, then answer the questions that follow:

"Detective Lily Chen looked around the room, taking everything in. There was a broken vase on the floor, a tipped-over chair, and a woman lying motionless on the ground. She had seen all sorts of crime scenes before, but there was something about this one that felt different. She knew in her gut that this was personal."

1. Who is the story following?
2. What is the character doing in the beginning of the passage?
3. What clues does the character notice in the room?
4. What is the character's motivation for investigating the crime?

Take a moment to think about your answers before moving on.

## Answers:

1. The story is following Detective Lily Chen.
2. The character is looking around the room, taking everything in.
3. The character notices a broken vase on the floor, a tipped-over chair, and a woman lying motionless on the ground.
4. The character's motivation for investigating the crime is that she knows in her gut that this is personal.

## Conclusion

Character motivation is an essential component of understanding mystery and suspense literature. By identifying a character's motivation, we can better appreciate the story and predict important plot points. We hope that this lesson has helped you understand the importance of character motivation and given you the tools to analyze it in your own reading.