

SMART™ Lesson

Analyzing Character Development in Historical Fiction

Historical fiction is a genre of literature that combines fictional characters with real historical events. By analyzing character development in historical fiction, we can better understand the time period in which the story takes place and the events that occurred during that time.

Character Development

Character development refers to the changes that a character undergoes throughout a story. This can include changes in their thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and actions. In historical fiction, character development can reflect the cultural and societal changes that occurred during the time period.

How to Analyze Character Development

When analyzing character development in historical fiction, there are several factors to consider:

- What is the character's starting point at the beginning of the story?
- What events or experiences lead to changes in the character?
- What are the character's thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and actions throughout the story?
- How does the character's development reflect the historical context?

Example: To Kill a Mockingbird

In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, Scout Finch is the protagonist and undergoes significant character development throughout the story. At the beginning of the novel, Scout is a young girl who is naive and innocent to the racial prejudices that exist in her town. However, as she grows older and witnesses the unjust treatment of Tom Robinson, a black man who is falsely accused of a crime, she begins to question the society in which she lives. Her experiences with her father, Atticus Finch, and her black housekeeper, Calpurnia, lead her to develop a deeper understanding of the racial injustices that exist in her community.

By analyzing Scout's character development, we can better understand the racial tensions that existed in the southern United States during the 1930s.

Worksheet

1. What is historical fiction?
2. What is character development?
3. What are some factors to consider when analyzing character development in historical fiction?
4. Who is the protagonist in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
5. What experiences lead Scout Finch to question the society in which she lives?
6. How does Scout's character development reflect the historical context of the novel?

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Analyzing Character Development

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