

Name _____

Date _____

Development of the Character

The **characters** in a work of fiction are the people, animals, or imaginary creatures who take part in the action. The way that the author creates and develops the characters is called characterization.

Read the following story excerpt and answer the questions.

Finding the Way

When Mia first arrived at Westlake Middle School, she wouldn't look anyone in the eye. During lunch, she sat alone, her shoulders hunched as if trying to disappear. In class, she never raised her hand, even when she knew the answers. The move to a new town after her parents' divorce had left her feeling lost and afraid.

"You should join our art club," suggested Alex, the boy who sat next to her in science class. Mia just shrugged and continued sketching in her notebook.

But Alex was persistent. Every day for a week, he mentioned something different about art club. Finally, Mia agreed to go, if only to make him stop talking about it. The first meeting was uncomfortable. Mia sat in the corner, barely speaking. When asked to create something representing "courage," she stared at the blank paper for nearly twenty minutes before making a single mark. By the end of the session, she had drawn only a tiny bird perched at the edge of a nest.

"Sometimes the bravest thing is just showing up," her art

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teacher, Ms. Rivera, whispered as Mia was leaving.

Three months later, Mia's artwork covered an entire wall of the art room—bold, colorful paintings that seemed to leap from the canvas. In class, she had begun to speak up, her voice growing stronger each time. At lunch, she sat with the art club kids, sometimes even laughing out loud.

When the principal announced a school mural competition, Mia surprised everyone, including herself, by volunteering to lead the team. "I think I know how to bring everyone's ideas together," she said, standing tall in front of her new friends.

1. How does Mia's character change throughout the story?

2. What causes Mia to develop as a character?

3. What specific details show Mia's character development?

Name _____

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Development of the Character-**Answer Key**

1. How does Mia's character change throughout the story?

Mia changes from a withdrawn, fearful student who isolates herself to a confident leader who volunteers to lead the mural team.

2. What causes Mia to develop as a character?

Alex's persistent invitation to join art club, Ms. Rivera's encouraging words, and finding a safe space to express herself through art all help Mia develop confidence.

3. What specific details show Mia's character development?

Her artwork changes from a "tiny bird" to "bold paintings"; her posture shifts from "shoulders hunched" to "standing tall"; she moves from sitting alone to laughing with friends; and she progresses from never speaking to volunteering to lead.