

Pigman Character Sketches

Evaluation Criteria: Trait #1 (Ideas and Content) and Trait #2 (Organization)

Trait #1: Ideas and Content

General Thesis Statement at the end of the introductory paragraph: **John is....** *You should complete the sentence with brief descriptive phrase that sums up the character's overall description. This tells the reader you have a purpose and a goal: your essay will illustrate something, not just present a list of random facts. One good way to establish a thesis is to think about all the qualities of the character and decide what it means when you put them all together.*

discipline case at school + parent problems + sarcastic attitude = Thesis:

John is a sarcastic rebel who constantly battles authority.

Good Examples:

- John is a rebel who proves to be his own worst enemy.
- Lorraine is a compassionate character with low self-esteem.
- John/Lorraine is a person I would like/not like to have as a friend.
- John is a funny and outrageous misfit who learns a lesson the hard way.
- Lorraine is a character struggling to overcome many personal demons that complicate her life.
- John/Lorraine is a good friend who brings out both the best and the worst in others.

Bad Examples:

- John is a sophomore in high school who is friends with Lorraine.
- Lorraine tries to get John to quit smoking.
- John has many good qualities and some bad ones, like the time he set off bombs in the bathroom.

SPECIFIC Examples, Details, and Quotations develop the thesis and topic sentences. *Your purpose is to **show** the reader your character, **not just tell** about him/her or re-tell the story.*

Good Examples:

- John is ultra-critical of people who don't deserve criticism. For example, he refers to the nurse who is taking care of Mr. Pignati in the hospital as "the fat huge nurse," even though she has done nothing to deserve such name-calling.
- Lorraine is too easily persuaded. John not only talks her into playing the phone game during which they meet Mr. Pignati, but later she lets him get away with throwing a huge party that trashes Mr. Pignati's house.
- "You're not a pretty girl, Lorraine," says her mother, which makes Lorraine self-conscious about her appearance.
- "The way her old lady talks, you'd think Lorraine needed internal plastic surgery and seventeen body braces. All she really needs is a little self-confidence," says John, illustrating both his tendency to exaggerate and his inner sense of compassion.

Bad Examples:

- John always teases people.
- Lorraine's mother always puts her down.

Trait #2: Organization

Attention Getter at the beginning of the introductory paragraph: *Before launching into your description, you must capture the reader's interest. Provocative questions, intriguing statistics, powerful quotations, or engaging scenarios are all good ways to do this. Remember that your attention getter must relate to the topic of your essay.*

Good Examples:

- Imagine...
- Have you ever...?
- "You can dial that number yourself, sir."
"No, I can't, operator. You see, I have no arms."

Bad Examples:

- John Conlan is a sophomore in high school who has a friend named Lorraine.
- I am doing my character sketch on Lorraine Jensen from *The Pigman*. (Hi Bubba!)

Clear topic sentences in each body paragraph: *Each paragraph has to have a focus. You can't just have a random, rambling list of unrelated facts. All the information in each paragraph must work to illustrate some point, which is stated in a topic sentence.*

Good Examples:

- John's sense of humor is based on sarcasm.
- Lorraine lacks self-confidence, which gets her into trouble.
- John is rebellious.
- Lorraine is compassionate.

Bad Examples:

- John is 15 or 16 years old.
- Lorraine has interesting green eyes.
- John is funny, like the time he put a firecracker behind the "porcelain unmentionable."
- Lorraine is the one who picked out the Pigman's number in the phone game.
- John smokes and drinks all the time because his dad was a drunk and John wants to do something better than his brother.
- Lorraine's mom says that she is not pretty, so Lorraine lies to her all the time.

Transitions between examples within the paragraphs and between paragraphs: *You have to move the reader smoothly from one idea to the next.*

Good Examples:

- Another way John shows his sarcastic sense of humor is by....
- Also, Lorraine lacks confidence in her appearance....
- Not only does John have trouble at school, but he frequently clashes with his parents.
- Lorraine's compassion is just one reason I would want her for a friend.

Standard Essay Format: Intro/Body/Conclusion