

## Sample character sketch - my friend Liz.

My friend Liz is the most amazing friend anybody could ask for. We've been through so much together, we're basically like sisters. We met on the first day of school in sixth grade, both of us terrified by the massive size of the middle school. She had the locker right above mine. I told her I didn't know anybody in our class and she said "You do now." We've been friends ever since.

Most boys think Liz is cute. She has long red hair, cascading over her shoulders. She laughs about everything and when she does, you see about a hundred white teeth - so bright, you almost need sunglasses. When she laughs, her eyes grow wide, glowing emerald green. Liz likes to dress kind of skater-ish, in camouflage pants, sweatshirts, and wristbands. But, she's unpredictable, too. Sometimes she'll wear overalls or a fancy dress. She must have three closets full of clothes, because she barely ever wears the same outfit twice.

Liz is the most lively, animated character I've ever known. She's always rushing around, trying to get the latest scoop on everybody. It's like she's in the FBI. Right before she shares important news, Liz tosses back her hair, takes a deep breath, and quickly looks side to side, to be sure the coast is clear. She never says anything mean about people, she just wants to know what's going on.

She always supports me in everything I want to do. Not many girls in our group of friends play sports, but when I told Liz I wanted to go out for basketball, she said "Go for it." Now, she comes to see almost every game I play and cheer me on.

Not only is Liz a tremendous supporter, she also trusts me to give her my honest opinion and to say what I feel. Last year, she thought Mrs. Jones gave her a lower math grade than she deserved. I told her the truth - that Liz handed everything in late and what did she expect? Next marking period, Liz got her work in on time, and pulled off an A-. Thanks to me, she said. Liz is a wonderful listener. She lets me tell her all my problems and she never diminishes the importance of my worries. I can tell she's really listening, too, because she looks directly in my eyes the whole time, like she's trying to see inside my head and figure me out.

We don't always agree on everything, and sometimes we even fight like sisters. But, in the end, we always stick together.



# Writing a CHARACTER SKETCH

## - can you draw your friend IN WORDS?

Writers need to describe people believably and realistically. They need to describe characters in such detail readers can actually feel they know them.

A **character sketch** is a way to put people on paper. It goes beyond just describing a person's physical characteristics. Character sketches are most effective when they reveal "telling" details that capture the essence of someone's personality.

→ You are going to write a character sketch for someone you know. It could be a friend, family member, or anybody you know well.

Here's a list of things to include in your character sketch:

- opening – introduce the topic (your friend)
- explain how you met, or where you know each other from
- give a physical description – appearance, clothes, voice, habits, mannerisms, etc.
- personality trait #1, and supporting evidence
- personality trait #2, and supporting evidence
- personality trait #3, and supporting evidence
- closing comment – try to reconnect to your opening

You do not have to follow this exact order, but your character sketch does need to include all these parts.

### TIP:

Think about your friend in vivid detail. What color are her eyes? What kind of clothes does she favor? What kind of shoes? How is her hair cut and styled? Dig deeper. How does he talk? Fast, slow, soft? What nervous habits does he have? What does he daydream about? What music does he like? What sports? What subjects in school? These details can say a lot about personality.