

Lesson 7: Reading Character: Identity and Relationship in Texts

60 minutes · reading lesson

WHAT THE CLASS SHOULD LEAVE ABLE TO DO

- Identify how writers show character through speech, silence and action
- Annotate a text for at least six character or relationship cues, including at least one identity cue
- Explain what each cue reveals about identity or relationship

TERMS THE CLASS MEETS

Term	What it means
Character cue	A detail in a text that shows who someone is, what they want, or how they feel about someone else.
Subtext	What is meant underneath the words that are actually said.
Reaction	What another person does, says, or avoids when something happens.

BEFORE YOU TEACH IT

Before the Lesson

- Have both short scenes available on screen or printed: warm-up *Outside the chipper*, Portfolio *Bus stop, half seven*
- Check students know where their Communication Portfolio folder lives and the filename pattern `m1_17_character_cues_<initials>`
- Be clear with the room: the work box in step 4 is the Portfolio artefact; step 3 is disposable practice

Timing

Default package is 50 minutes (see step 4 teacher notes for the run-order). Protect the Portfolio Build if the period is short; cut the warm-up first and send Think About It home as a journal line if needed.

Teaching Tips

- Read the worked bag-and-waiting example aloud before naming the answer on the page
- Name identity once in step 2 (hood, bag as boundary) so the word is coached, not garnish
- Circulate during warm-up and Portfolio Build with "What does that tell you about them?"
- Model one annotation mark on the board if the room needs it, then step back
- Support students: plain model notes; stretch students can aim for the sharper phrasing

Common Mistakes

- Retelling the plot instead of analysing the cue: redirect to what the detail shows
- Fewer than six cues: push into silence, reactions and identity
- Labels without a reason sentence: finish the reveal half before moving on

- Saving warm-up notes instead of the six-cue work box: check the filename and step 4 box

Differentiation

- Support: cue-type list and sentence frames such as "This shows that..."
- Extension: eight cues, or one extra line on how the relationship shifts by the end of the scene
- Support: paired warm-up, then individual Portfolio annotation

RUNNING THE LESSON

Step 1: Getting Started · 5 min

Open with a quick show of hands: who has known a friend was annoyed without them saying so? Collect two or three examples, then point at the page. Keep this to five minutes so the worked example still has room.

If anyone is catching up from Lesson 6, the three reading strategies still apply; today the focus is what those strategies turn up about people in a text.

Step 2: What to Look For · 8 min

Read the worked example aloud, then ask what the bag and the waiting tell them before you name the answer on the page. Push one identity read (hood, bag as boundary, early arrival) and one relationship read. One idea, one exemplar, stop. The practice is in the next two steps.

Flag for vocational courses: reading body language and unspoken tension transfers straight into customer-facing role-play and interview observation.

Step 3: Practice: Two Cues · 15 min

Keep this to about eight minutes: two cues with a reveal sentence each, not a full debrief. Prefer the practice boxes as the single write surface; the scene marker is there to help them grab a clean quote. Do not show model answers until they have written two of their own.

The common wobble is retelling the plot instead of naming what a detail does. Ask "what does that tell you about her?" and move on. Protect time for the six-cue Portfolio Build next. If the period is short, cut this warm-up first (two cues to one, or skip straight to step 4).

Plain model answers (after they try): She counts the coins twice: action/identity; she is steadying herself before she has to speak. "I'm grand": speech/subtext; a short shut door on the offer. Declan orders two singles before she can answer: action/reaction; he settles it without making her ask, and never looks at her, so it does not become charity.

Step 4: Portfolio Build: Six Character Cues · 24 min

Suggested Timing (60 minutes)

- Getting Started: 5 minutes
- What to Look For: 8 minutes
- Practice: Two Cues (warm-up): 15 minutes
- Portfolio Build: Six Character Cues: 24 minutes
- Think About It: 3 minutes
- What You Covered: 5 minutes

This work-box annotation is the piece that goes in the folder. Protect the full twenty-four minutes. If the warm-up ran long, cut Think About It to a home journal line, not this build. Circulate for specific cues: speech, silence, action, reaction, subtext, identity. If a student only labels without a reason sentence, ask them to finish the second half before moving on. Check that at least one of the six speaks to identity (hood, bag as boundary, early arrival, phone as shield), not only the pair dynamic.

Independent students complete the same annotation alone; the model reading is there to compare after they have marked six of their own. Prefer the plain model notes for support students; the sharper line is stretch only.

If your period is shorter than 50 minutes, cut the warm-up first (step 3), protect this Portfolio Build, and send the Think About It prompt home as a journal line.

Step 5: Think About It · 3 min

Paired talk for about two minutes, then take two or three answers from the room. Keep it light; this is not a full journal write in class. If the period is short, send both prompts home as a single journal line.

Step 6: What You Covered · 5 min

Confirm filenames are in the portfolio folder before they leave. Next lesson turns the journal into a structured tool; today's annotation is useful evidence when they write about relationships later in the unit.

Students' wording will differ. These are the points a full answer reaches, not the only correct form.

Step 3: Practice: Two Cues

Quote one action cue (the coins, the menu board, the jacket). Name the kind of cue and say what it reveals.

Counting the coins twice suggests she does not have enough

Putting a coin back is her deciding to want less

Look for: Say what it tells a reader, not what it is.

Quote one speech or subtext cue. Say what it reveals about the pair.

"I'm grand" is a refusal of help, not an answer

"Just get the small one" is him managing it without naming it

Look for: What is said, or carefully not said.

Quote one reaction (or a silence) that shows how they stand with each other.

He orders before she can answer, so she never has to say she is short

He does not look at her, which keeps it from being charity

Look for: Look at what one of them does in response to the other.

Step 4: Portfolio Build: Six Character Cues

“hood up, bag on the seat beside her”

She arrives closed in. The hood and the bag mark her space before he speaks.

“She does not move the bag”

The bag holds the seat. She is not making room for him yet.

“She looks at her phone”

A shield. She does not have to meet his face.

“I shouldn't have said it like that”

He owns the tone, not necessarily the whole content. A careful apology.

“Her thumb is not scrolling”

The phone is a prop. She is listening while she pretends not to.

“You said it though”

She will not let the apology finish the row. What he said still counts.

“Define all right”

She will not give him a cheap yes. The relationship is still under question.

“leaves a gap on the seat that he does not take”

She offers a little space; he does not step into it. The distance holds.