Next, write the name of a character from your current story or novel on the board. Students should use their novels to find examples of the character’s words, actions, thoughts, and feelings that reveal information about his or her personality. In small groups, have students share the passages and analyze what they say about the character.

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Life-Size Characters**

**HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY:**
Because the final product is life-size, create the characters in cooperative groups. Since the project involves an in-depth look at a character, use it with novels instead of short stories. If the whole class is reading the same novel, assign different characters to different groups, or allow each group to choose one of the characters. If reading different novels, ask groups to use the protagonist as their character.

**OBJECTIVES:** To create a visual representation of a character; to analyze a character

**TIME:** Three to four 40-minute class periods

**MATERIALS**
large sheets of butcher paper 5’ or 6’ long • construction paper • markers and crayons • rulers • scissors • glue sticks • Life-Size Character Analysis and Life-Size Character Rubric reproducibles (pages 34–36)

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**TEACHER TIP**

To help students remember how an author creates a character, I use the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. First, I ask students to stand next to their desks. When I say, “Five ways an author creates a character are . . .,” the class responds with the following phrases and gestures:

**Phrase**
what the character says
does
thinks
feels
looks like
other characters say about
main character

**Gesture**
point to the mouth
run in place
point to the head
point to the heart
pose like a fashion model
with hands toward each other; flap them open and shut to imitate mouths talking
STEP-BY-STEP

1. Assign or have groups choose a character from the novel they are reading.

2. Number group members 1 to 4 and tell them to assume the following group roles:

   1. **Character's Voice:** Look for examples of the character's speech that reveal important information about him or her. Record at least two direct quotes. Beneath each quote, record what you think the character's words say about him or her.

   2. **Character's Deeds:** Search for passages that show something the character does. Write at least two examples of the character's actions. Use direct quotes, or state what the character does in your own words. Beneath each statement, record what you think the character's actions reveal about him or her.

   3. **Character's Looks:** Find passages that describe the character's appearance. If you cannot find a direct quote, write what you think the character looks like and why you picture the character this way. Include information about the character's hair color, eye color, age, height, and distinguishing features. Draw a sketch of the character.

   4. **Character's Thoughts and Feelings:** Find descriptions of the character's thoughts and feelings. Record at least two passages that show what's inside the character's mind and heart. Beneath each quote, record what you learn about the character by examining his or her thoughts or feelings.

3. Distribute copies of the Life-Size Character Analysis reproducible and ask each student to complete the section that corresponds to his or her group role. If one group member finishes before another, he or she can assist other group members.

4. Tell group members to make suggestions for improvement and peer edit each other's work.

5. As a group, students discuss similarities and differences between themselves and the character. Then one group member completes “The Character and Me” section of the reproducible on page 34.

6. Next, a volunteer lies down in the middle of the butcher paper to be traced. After the tracing is completed, group members outline the shape in black marker and erase any pencil marks.

7. Working cooperatively, students add clothes and facial features to the “body” to portray the character studied. They may work from the sketch drawn by the “Character's Looks” group member.

8. Students cut the shapes from Life-Size Character Analysis reproducible and glue them onto the butcher paper. Students glue “The Character and Me” to the bottom of the butcher paper.

9. Each group introduces its life-size character to the class. The class then compares and contrasts the various characters.

10. Use the Life-Size Character Rubric (pages 35–36) to evaluate students’ work.
STUDENT PAGE

Life-Size Character Analysis

NAME _________________________________________  DATE ___________  SECTION ___________

CHARACTER’S NAME __________________________________________________________

Character's Voice

What the character says:
________________________________________
____________________________________
________________________

Character's Deeds

What the character does:
___________________________________________
___________________________________________
___________________________________________
___________________________________________

Character's Voice

What the words show:
____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________
____________________________________________

Character's Looks

Hair color: ____________  Eye color:__________
Age: ________________  Height:______________
Distinguishing features:______________________
___________________________________________
_____________________________________

Character's Thoughts and Feelings

What the character thinks and feels:
________________________________________
__________________________________
________________

Character's Thoughts and Feelings

What the thoughts and feelings show:
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

The Character and Me

Similarities: __________________________
_________________________________
Differences: _________________________
_________________________________