

## 2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of analyzing character, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the passage below. Then answer the question that follows.

**a** Because the narrator has known Tiny since childhood, his perceptions of her can provide insight as to how she may have changed over the years.

**b** Lena's concern that Tiny might grow too miserly indicates that Tiny's interest in making money is not related to a desire to spend money.

### GOLD RUSH BUSINESSWOMAN

Of all the girls and boys who grew up together in Black Hawk, Tiny Soderball was to lead the most adventurous life and to achieve the most solid worldly success.

... While she was running her lodging-house in Seattle, gold was discovered in Alaska. Miners and sailors came back from the North with wonderful stories and pouches of gold. ... That daring, which nobody had ever suspected in her, awoke. She sold her business and set out for Circle City. ...

That winter Tiny kept in her hotel a Swede ... [who] ... deeded Tiny Soderball his claim on Hunker Creek. Tiny ... went off into the wilds and lived on the claim. She bought other claims from discouraged miners, traded or sold them on percentages.

After nearly ten years in the Klondike, Tiny returned, with a considerable fortune, to live in San Francisco. I met her in Salt Lake City in 1908. ... She told me about some of the desperate chances she had taken in the gold country, but the thrill of them was quite gone. She said frankly that nothing interested her much now but making money.

... I was in San Francisco two summers ago when both Lena and Tiny Soderball were in town. ... Tiny audits Lena's accounts occasionally, and invests her money for her; and Lena, apparently, takes care that Tiny doesn't grow too miserly.

From MY ÁNTONIA by Willa Cather, © 1918

### USING LOGIC

The way that one character perceives another character can provide information about either character or both characters. In the passage, the narrator's words tell about Tiny.

1. What does the narrator's description of Tiny reveal about her?
  - A. The hope of becoming rich was her only motivation for going to Alaska.
  - B. She has been a bold and resourceful explorer since she was a child.
  - C. She is obsessed with making money because she gave up her business for the chance to find gold.
  - D. Her sense of adventure has given way to a need for security.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

### CAREFUL PREPARATIONS

1 It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

2 Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I first put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see the old man as he lay upon his bed. Ha!—would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well within the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—and every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into his chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

From THE TELL-TALE HEART by Edgar Allan Poe, © 1843

2. On the basis of the details in the passage, what relationship does the narrator **most** likely have with the old man?

- A. The old man is the narrator's father.
- B. The narrator takes care of the old man.
- C. The narrator is the old man's employer.
- D. The narrator and the old man are longtime enemies.

3. What is the narrator's motivation for planning to kill the old man?

- A. He resents the old man's wealth.
- B. He seeks revenge for the old man's cruelty toward him.
- C. He is frightened by the old man's pale blue eye.
- D. He wants to end the old man's suffering.

4. The narrator uses words such as **wisely** and **cunningly** to convince readers that he is

- A. rational.
- B. educated.
- C. blameless.
- D. organized.

5. The narrator says that moving his head through the doorway to look into the old man's bedroom took an hour. What does this statement reveal about the narrator?

- A. He is sensibly cautious and methodical.
- B. He respects the old man's need for rest.
- C. His descriptions of his own actions are exaggerated.
- D. His actions are not reasonable.

6. Which words **best** describe the narrator?

- A. dependable and helpful
- B. innocent and trusting
- C. fearless and arrogant
- D. irrational and obsessed

## 2 Refine the Skill

By refining the skill of analyzing characters, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

### THE REVEREND MR. HOOPER

**a** Phrases such as "dressed with due clerical neatness" and "stooping ... as is customary with abstracted men" indicate that he is tidy, methodical, and absorbed in thought.

**b** The way that one character responds to another provides insight into both characters. The parishioners hardly return Mr. Hooper's greeting because they are taken aback by his appearance.

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

From THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL by Nathaniel Hawthorne, © 1836

### MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

People make assumptions about someone who walks into a room. The person's hair, clothes, poise, and style sense give a first impression. Characters can make similar impressions.

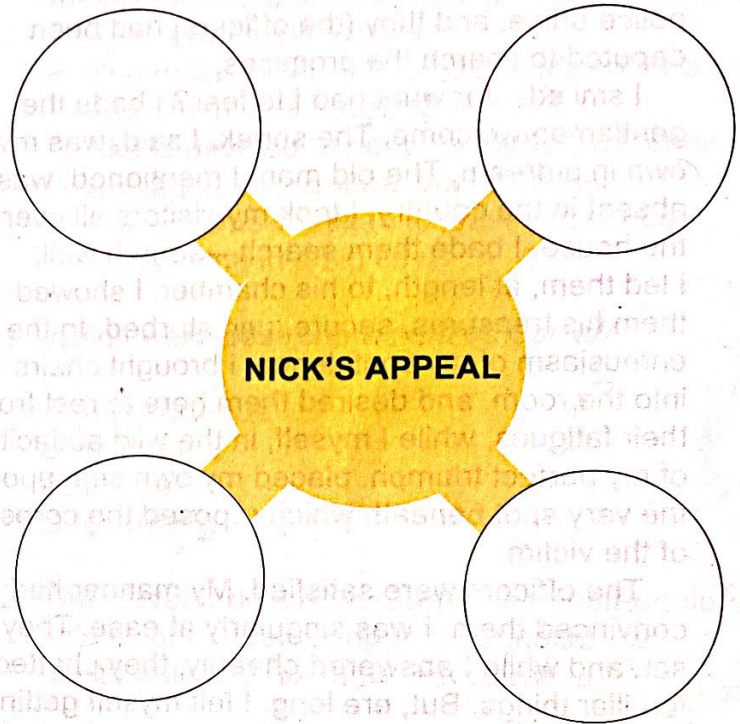
1. According to the description of the way Mr. Hooper dresses and walks, he seems
  - A. awkward and strange.
  - B. neat and reserved.
  - C. self-conscious and shy.
  - D. troubled and unfriendly.
2. Which statement **best** confirms that Mr. Hooper's veil has a chilling effect on his appearance.
  - A. He looks down at the ground as he walks.
  - B. The veil completely conceals his eyes.
  - C. Parishioners do not return his greeting.
  - D. The veil is the only remarkable thing about him.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage and the question. Then use the drag-and-drop option to complete the web.

### THE APPEAL OF NICK

- 1 It is difficult to convey in words the charm that Nick possessed. Seeing him, you beheld merely a medium-sized young mechanic in reasonably grimed garage clothes when working; and in tight pants, tight coat, silk shirt, long-visored green cap when at leisure. A rather pallid skin due to the nature of his work. Large deft hands, a good deal like the hands of a surgeon, square, blunt-fingered, spatulate. Indeed, as you saw him at work, a wire-netted electric bulb held in one hand, the other plunged deep into the vitals of the car on which he was engaged, you thought of a surgeon performing a major operation. ...
- 2 All this, of course, could not serve to endear him to the girls. On the contrary, you would have thought that his hands alone, from which he could never quite free the grease and grit, would have caused some feeling of repugnance among the lily-fingered. But they, somehow, seemed always to be finding an excuse to touch him: his tie, his hair, his coat sleeve. They seemed even to derive a vicarious thrill from holding his hat or cap when on an outing. They brushed imaginary bits of lint from his coat lapel. ...
- 3 No; it can't be classified, this powerful draw he had for them. His conversation furnished no clue. It was commonplace conversation, limited, even dull. ...
- 4 His unconcern should have infuriated them, but it served to pique. He wasn't actually as unconcerned as he appeared, but he had early learned that effort in their direction was unnecessary. Nick had little imagination; a gorgeous selfishness; a tolerantly contemptuous liking for the sex. Naturally, however, his attitude toward them had been somewhat embittered by being obliged to watch their method of driving a car in and out of the Ideal Garage doorway. His own manipulation of the wheel was nothing short of wizardry.

3. Drag and drop into the character web below the traits that **most** likely contribute to Nick's appeal to women.



He looks like a surgeon when he works.
He is a wizard at driving.
His complexion is pale.
His behavior is selfish.
He makes no effort with women.
He has little imagination.

### 3 Master the Skill

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

#### A VISIT FROM THE POLICE

- 1 As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart—for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.
- 2 I smiled—for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.
- 3 The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness—until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears. ...
- 4 “Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks! here, here!—It is the beating of his hideous heart!”

From THE TELL-TALE HEART by Edgar Allan Poe, © 1843

4. The narrator suggests that he felt no fear when the police officers arrived. Which statement by the narrator implies that he felt more fear than he claimed?
- A. “The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country.”
  - B. “I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed.”
  - C. “In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues ...”
  - D. “The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was ‘singularly at ease.’”
5. The police officers rest and chat of familiar things. What do these actions **most** likely reveal about the police officers?
- A. They are unsuspecting.
  - B. They are distrustful.
  - C. They are apologetic.
  - D. They are thorough.
6. On the basis of the details in paragraph 3, which word **best** describes how the narrator feels as he sits with the officers?
- A. ill
  - B. guilty
  - C. confident
  - D. cheerful
7. When the narrator hears the noise, the police officers sit and continue to chat. The police officers **most** likely
- A. wonder about the narrator’s headache.
  - B. are annoyed by the narrator’s talkativeness.
  - C. do not hear the noise that the narrator does.
  - D. are still trying to obtain evidence of foul play.
8. The narrator is motivated to confess **most** likely because he believes that the
- A. house is alive.
  - B. officers are criminals.
  - C. officers are tricking him.
  - D. old man’s heart is beating.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage, reach each question, and choose the **best** answer.

### SISTER CARRIE LEAVES FOR CHICAGO

1 When Caroline Meeber boarded the afternoon train for Chicago, her total outfit consisted of a small trunk, a cheap imitation alligator-skin satchel, a small lunch in a paper box, and a yellow leather snap purse, containing her ticket, a scrap of paper with her sister's address ... and four dollars in money. It was in August, 1889. She was eighteen ... and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth. Whatever touch of regret at parting characterised her thoughts, it was certainly not for advantages now being given up. A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in her throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked ... a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed ... and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken.

2 To be sure there was always the next station, where one might descend and return. There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily. Columbia City was not so very far away, even once she was in Chicago. ... She gazed at the green landscape, now passing in swift review, until her swifter thoughts replaced its impression with vague conjectures of what Chicago might be. ...

3 Caroline, or Sister Carrie, as she had been half affectionately termed by the family, was possessed of a mind rudimentary in its power of observation and analysis. Self-interest with her was high, but not strong. It was, nevertheless, her guiding characteristic. Warm with the fancies of youth, pretty with the insipid prettiness of the formative period, possessed of a figure promising eventual shapeliness and an eye alight with certain native intelligence, she was ... two generations removed from the emigrant. Books were beyond her interest. ... In the intuitive graces she was still crude. ... She could scarcely toss her head gracefully. Her hands were almost ineffectual. And yet she was interested in her charms, quick to understand the keener pleasures of life, ambitious to gain in material things. A half-equipped little knight she was, venturing to reconnoiter the mysterious city and dreaming wild dreams. ...

9. The details in the first sentence of paragraph 1 reveal that Caroline Meeber **most** likely

- A. travels extensively.
- B. has important connections.
- C. comes from a poor family.
- D. visits her sister often.

10. Carrie has mixed emotions as she leaves Columbia City. Which statement **best** describes her feelings?

- A. She loves the land but recognizes the need to earn a living elsewhere.
- B. She believes she is too sophisticated for small-town life and is happy to leave.
- C. She is devoted to her parents but welcomes Chicago's educational opportunities.
- D. She is somewhat sad to leave but curious about living in a big city.

11. Which word **best** characterizes Carrie?

- A. discourteous
- B. unformed
- C. talented
- D. charming

12. The narrator describes Carrie as a "half-equipped little knight ... venturing to reconnoiter the mysterious city" to show that Carrie is

- A. a small but heroic crusader about to embark on an important adventure.
- B. unskilled, uneducated, and foolish about the work she chooses to do.
- C. ambitious but poorly prepared to face the challenges of city life.
- D. an accomplished woman who, despite humble beginnings, will succeed in her ventures.

13. On the basis of the details in paragraph 3, Carrie probably will

- A. feel overwhelmed by Chicago and return home.
- B. start a successful business with her sister.
- C. become deeply committed to a worthy cause.
- D. learn social graces and use them to her advantage.