Writing a Character Sketch

Brainstorm for a main character by either using a character map or following these steps:

- write down several personality characteristics that the character exhibits
- think of ways that the character shows each of these traits
- choose one personality trait with which you could do the best job, considering your examples
- find two quotations that can be used to provide evidence for the trait you have chosen
- provide the page reference in parentheses following each quotation

Write the paragraph (number the steps in your rough draft and double-space both drafts):

**STEP #1** TOPIC SENTENCE (t.s.)
- name the character
- name the story - put quotation marks around a short story or poem; underline the title of a longer work such as a novel
- state his/her personality trait

**STEP #2** EXPANSION
- expand/define/explain the characteristic; give more information about it
- make a general reference to each quotation - outline points

**STEP #3** QUOTATION #1
- first, provide the context for your passage - who said it to whom, and what is happening at this point in the story
- note that the narrator can be quoted even though he/she may not be speaking directly to anyone
- then provide a proper lead-in for the quotation (eg. He says, “…”). Do not begin the sentence with a quotation for this assignment
- following the closing quotation marks, write the page number in parentheses

**STEP #4** EXPLANATION (at least 2 sentences in length)
- explain how a character supports the trait through words, actions, or thoughts and why this support is significant
- in this step, you will link to the expansion as well as to the topic sentence
- consider one or all of the following questions in your explanation:
  - What is revealed?
  - How is the trait supported? Segments of quotation should be linked to the definition stated in your expansion.
  - Why is this revelation significant?

**STEP #5** QUOTATION #2
- do the same as for STEP #3

**STEP #6** EXPLANATION
- do the same as for STEP #4

**STEP #7** CONCLUDING SENTENCE (c.s.)
- should echo the topic sentence while summing up the evidence for the trait