

# CHOICES: Building Your Portfolio

## Writer's Notebook

### 1. Collecting Ideas for a Character Analysis

**Believable or not.**

When you analyze a character, you make judgments, or **evaluations**. Here are some questions to ask as you analyze a character:



- Is the character **credible** (believable)?
- Is the character **rounded** (complicated) or **flat** (one-dimensional, with only a single trait or two)?
- Is the character a **stereotype** (a **stock** character), or does the character seem unique?
- Does the character grow and change (**dynamic**) or stay the same (**static**)?

Using a chart like the one below, apply these criteria to a character from Nicol's story or from another story. Note details from the story that back up your evaluation. Save your notes for possible use in the Writer's Workshop on page 164.

## Culture/Anthropology

### 2. Taking Field Notes

Suppose you are an anthropologist who is studying village life in Nigeria at the time this story takes place. Make notes, based on the story (and Literature and Culture on page 150), detailing what you have learned about West African village life. Focus on religious beliefs; attitudes toward the dead; social structures; food; male/female roles; family life; economics; changes affecting village life.

	Sheila in "The Bass..."	Details
Credible/not credible	not believable	
Rounded/flat	flat	
Stock/unique	stock? (airhead)	
Static/dynamic	static	



## Comparing and Contrasting/Speaking

### 3. Connecting Cultures



Suppose (still as an anthropologist) you are now assigned to give an **informal speech** to a group of high school students comparing and contrasting your society and the village portrayed in the story. Focus on four of the categories cited in item two, Taking Field Notes. You might collect your data on index cards and use the cards as notes when you speak.

Economics	
Kumansenu	My society

## Art

### 4. A Diorama of the Setting

What does Kumansenu look like? Create a diorama showing Bola's village. You will have to check the text to find specific descriptive details about physical geography, houses, and roads.



See Adverbs, page 1031.

**Making Motion Pictures—Adverbs**

A modifier makes the meaning of another word more specific. An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Look at some specific meanings or shades of meaning adverbs can give to the verb *eats*.

In all these examples, the adverb specifies *how* the eating is done.

- eats sloppily      eats constantly
- eats neatly      eats daintily
- eats fast          eats well

The adverbs in the following sentence from Nicol's story show *how* two actions are performed. Adverbs can also tell *where*, *when*, and *to what extent* (*how long, how much*).

"She looked idly at Asi, as the seven-year-old brought the twisted palm-leaf rope smartly over her head. . . ."

**Try It Out**

1. Delete the adverbs from Nicol's sentence at the left. What happens to your picture of the actions?
  2. Substitute another adverb for each one in Nicol's sentence. How can adverbs change the meaning of the sentence?
  3. Find five other adverbs in the story that show how an action is performed.
- Take out a piece of writing you are working on now or your notes about a character you might analyze for the Writer's Workshop on page 164. What adverbs could you add to help your readers visualize precisely how actions are performed?

**WORD BANK**

- plaintive*
- cajoled*
- diffuse*
- complacent*

**Semantic Mapping**

Working out a simple map or chart like the one here can help you own new or challenging words.

Make a **semantic map** like this for the other words from the Word Bank. Before you work out your maps, be sure to locate the word in the story to see how it is used.

