



JANICE THOMPSON, AUTHOR

Characterization: The Four Personalities

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One way to approach [characterization](#)—to fully develop both your POV and

secondary characters—is to take an intensive look at the four different temperaments/personalities.

Understanding what makes us tick helps in the crafting of memorable [characters](#). We all have our own distinct personalities, but each of us will usually fit into one of the following four categories: *Sanguine*, *Phlegmatic*, *Melancholy* and *Choleric*.

Here's a quick look at the definitions of the four temperaments.

The Four Personalities

- ▶ **CHOLERIC**
- ▶ *Cholerics make good leaders.*
- ▶ *Cholerics know how to get the job done.*
- ▶ *Cholerics are often very hard workers.*
- ▶ *Cholerics like to be the boss.*
- ▶ *Cholerics can be a little stubborn.*
- ▶ *Cholerics can be bad-tempered at times.*
- ▶ *Cholerics are easily angered.*
- ▶ *Cholerics have a tendency to think that they are always right.*

CHOLERIC

- Cholerics make good leaders.
- Cholerics know how to get the job done.

- Choleric are usually hard workers.
- Choleric like to be the boss.
- Choleric can be a little stubborn.
- Choleric can be bad-tempered at times.
- Choleric are easily angered at times.
- Choleric have a tendency to think they are always right.

SANGUINE

- Most Sanguines are very outgoing.
- Sanguines seem to do well in crowds.
- Sanguines have the uncanny ability to make friends with absolute strangers.
Sanguines are fun, fun loving, and great to be around – most of the time.

Sanguines often like to be the center of attention.

- Sanguines often dominate conversations.

MELANCHOLY

- Melancholies make good leaders.
- Melancholies know how to get the job done.
- Melancholies are often very hard workers.
- Melancholies like to be the boss.
- Melancholies can be a little stubborn.
- Melancholies can be bad-tempered at times.
- are easily angered.
- Melancholies have a tendency to think that they are always right.

- Melancholies are very sensitive to the needs of others.
- Melancholies are deep thinkers.
- Melancholies are often organized, making lists.
- Melancholies tend to be a little withdrawn at times. Melancholies often worry about things.

PHLEGMATIC

- Like “phlegm,” phlegmatics need to be forced up or down.
- Phlegmatics are often easy going/laid back.
- Phlegmatics don’t mind not being the center of attention.
- Phlegmatics don’t mind working to help others. Phlegmatics often go along with the crowd.

- Phlegmatics are more followers than leaders.

What can I do with this information?

The four personalities can work for each other or against, depending on the situation. Take a look at [Pandora's box lesson](#) for a thorough look at how you might use these volatile personalities to create characters your readers will never forget.

By JThompson

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Characterization, Fiction Lessons

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