

Character Map

Lesson Objective	(Comprehension) Students will describe the way an author portrays a character in a text.	
Vocabulary	<p>trait: a characteristic that contributes to a character’s personality</p> <p>characterization: the way an author portrays a character</p> <p>SLATE: an acronym to help students remember methods of characterization: Says, Looks like, Acts, Thinks, Effect on others</p>	
Reviewed Vocabulary	character, portray	
Instructional Materials	Teacher	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Masters • Engage Prior Knowledge—Three examples of characters from movies or television shows that are popular with your students • Timer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Booklet • Practice—Copies of text for each student or pair of students, selected from text they will read in class that day or from a text they have already read. The selection should contain information about a character (i.e., what the character says and looks like; and how the character acts, thinks, and affects others).

Teacher Note

This lesson includes passages from *Little Women*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *Holes*. The passages may be more appealing to female students than males. If this is an issue, consider using other passages, and adjust the instructions accordingly.

Preview

When authors write, they give their characters certain traits to help make the characters come alive to the reader. A trait is a characteristic that contributes to a character's personality. Recognizing the traits of characters in a text is essential in order to understand and appreciate what we read. Today's lesson will help you analyze the way writers develop characters.

Engage Prior/Informal Knowledge

1. Students complete a silent warm-up.

Display the *TM#1: Engage Prior Knowledge—Silent Warm-Up*. Direct students' attention to their copies.

Look at the silent warm-up. You are going to think about the character traits in a character from a movie or TV show. You can use your own example, or you can use one of these three examples.

Provide students with three examples of characters from movies or television shows that are currently popular.

2. Students share responses.

When 3 minutes have passed, have three students share their responses.

You already know how to learn about a character when you watch a movie or television show. Now you are going to learn

how writers develop characters in texts by giving them certain traits or characteristics.

Demonstrate

Explain the steps to complete a Character Map.

Display the *TM#2: Demonstrate—Passage*.

I am going to read this passage aloud to you, and then I'll show you a Character Map for Beth, the main character in this passage.

Read the passage aloud to the students.

Display the *TM#3: Demonstrate—Character Map*. Point to each part of the graphic organizer while you explain the steps.

Here is an example of a Character Map. First, I have written Beth's name in the oval.

Characterization is the way an author portrays a character. SLATE can help you remember five methods of characterization. S-L-A-T-E stands for: *says, looks like, acts, thinks*, or the *effect* the character has on others. This passage has all five examples, but it is unusual to find all five methods of characterization in one short text.

In the first column, you will write which method of characterization you find in the passage. Here we have one example of each. Then, in the second column, I copied phrases from the text that show what Beth says, how she looks, how she acts, what she thinks, and the effect she has on others. Notice that I copied the *exact* words from the text.

Teacher Note

Consider reviewing the use of an ellipsis in quoting text.

Finally, in the last column, I chose one word that described the character, based on each example of characterization. For example, Beth saying “my little dears” to her dolls tells me that she is motherly.

Display the *TM#4: Demonstrate—Character Traits List*, and direct students’ attention to their copies.

Use a word from the Character Traits List, or use your own word.

Teacher Note

If your students have learned the definition of *adjective*, use *adjective* to refer to the words on the *TM#4: Demonstrate—Character Traits List*.

Practice

1. Complete a Character Map with class input.

Display *TM#5: Practice—Passage*, and direct students’ attention to their copies.

I am going to read this passage aloud to you, and then we will practice completing a Character Map together as a class. This passage is from the book *Holes*, by Louis Sachar. In this passage, the main character, Stanley, has been falsely accused of a crime he didn’t commit and is being taken to a juvenile detention center called “Camp Green Lake.”

Read the passage aloud to the students.

Display the *TM#6: Practice—Character Map*, and direct students’ attention to the *SB#3: Practice—Character Map*. Point to each part of the graphic organizer while you explain the steps.

First, who is the main character in this passage? (*Stanley*)

Write *Stanley* in the circle, and ensure that students do the same on their papers.

What is the next step? (*Write which method of characterization—SLATE—we find in the passage.*)

Can anyone find an example of characterization in this passage? You are looking for words or phrases that describe what Stanley says, what he looks like, how he acts, what he thinks, or the effect he has on others. (*Answers will vary. Refer to the Practice Answer Key for possible responses.*)

Complete all sections of the *TM#6: Practice—Character Map* with class input. Have students complete their copies.

2. Students work with partners to complete the *SB#4: Practice—Character Map*.

Distribute and display copies of a previously selected passage from the text students will be reading in class that day, or refer them to a text they have already read.

Have students work in pairs to complete a Character Map about a character from that text. Remind students to use the *SB#5: Practice—Character Traits List*, as needed. Have students restate the directions and check for understanding. Set the time for 10 minutes.

Circulate among the students, check for understanding, and provide corrective feedback as needed.

3. Students share responses.

When 10 minutes have passed, ask for volunteers to share their ideas. Have students make corrections or additions to their own papers.

Independent Practice

1. Have students complete the *SB#6: Independent Practice*.
2. Collect the materials, score the work, and check for mastery.