



What a Character!

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will learn how to analyze characters by identifying a least three character traits and providing proof of those traits in writing. Students will analyze a character and write a letter to the character about the traits the character portrays.

GRADE LEVELS

Grades 2-5

TIME ALLOTMENT

Four 45-minute sessions

SUBJECT MATTER

This lesson includes instructional goals in language arts and technology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- review the characteristics of adjectives.
- conduct research using Internet reference resources to find accurate and descriptive word choices.
- define the literary term "character trait" and explore how to recognize character traits.
- provide details that support their inferences.

STANDARDS

TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TEKS)

(11) Reading/text structures/literary concepts. The student analyzes the

characteristics of various types of texts. The student is expected to: (H) analyze characters, including their traits, feelings, relationships, and changes (1-3);

(8) Reading/vocabulary development. The student develops an extensive vocabulary. The student is expected to: C) use resources and references such as beginners' dictionaries, glossaries, available technology, and context to build word meanings and to confirm pronunciations of words (2-3); and (D) demonstrate knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and multi-meaning words (for example, by sorting, classifying, and identifying related words) (3).

(16) Writing/spelling. The student spells proficiently. The student is expected to: (H) use resources to find correct spellings, synonyms, or replacement words (1-3).

(10) Communication. The student formats digital information for appropriate and effective communication. The student is expected to: (A) use font attributes, color, white space, and graphics to ensure that products are appropriate for the defined audience; (B) use font attributes, color, white space, and graphics to ensure that products are appropriate for the communication media including multimedia screen displays, Internet documents, and printed materials.



(11) Communication. The student delivers the product electronically in a variety of media, with appropriate supervision. The student is expected to: (A) publish information in a variety of media including, but not limited to, printed copy, monitor display, Internet documents, and video;

MEDIA COMPONENTS

WEBSITES

Lists of character traits
Teacher Vision

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/page/2669.html>

Teaching Resources from the Classroom of
Laura Chandler
<http://home.att.net/~teaching/litcircl/character.pdf>

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary and
Thesaurus
<http://www.m-w.com/>

VIDEOS

Abel's Island. Weston Woods (1987). Retrieved
September 4, 2005, from unitedstreaming:
<http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>
Video clip: **Abel Tries to Get Off the Island By
Boat** (02:59)

*What is Honesty? Building Character (A Sunburst
Title)*. Sunburst. 1998. unitedstreaming. 4 September
2005 <http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>
Video clip: **When a Friend Cheats** (3:05 min)

SOFTWARE

Inspiration by Inspiration Software Inc.
<http://www.inspiration.com>
Download a 30-day trial of fully functioning
software, which allows the ability to save and
print graphic organizers, timelines, diagrams,
outlines, and concept maps. Available for both
Mac and PC users.

Microsoft PowerPoint

MATERIALS

You will need the following to complete these
activities:

PER CLASS

2 large T-charts
Computer

PER COOPERATIVE GROUP

Copy of class generated character traits web
Thesauruses
Computer

PER STUDENT

Movie camera sheet
Several sticky notes
How and Why Characters Change sheet
Computer

VOCABULARY

Adjectives
Synonyms
Character traits

PREP FOR TEACHERS

Prior lesson on using thesauruses
Download the following videos:
Abel's Island and *What is Honesty? Building
Character*
Create 2 large T-charts out of butcher paper

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STAGE

Give each student a movie camera sheet. Have
students write about their favorite movie
character and explain why they like that
character.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Session 1

1. Explain to the students that an author or a movie writer tries to create a mental picture of a character. The author reveals the character's traits through the character's thoughts, words and actions. We often describe that character in terms of their character traits using descriptive adjectives like happy or sad. These descriptive adjectives tell us the specific qualities of the character.
2. Help the students brainstorm a list of character traits/adjectives. Use Inspiration by Inspiration Software Inc. *Rapid Fire* tool to create a concept map of traits. Print a character traits map for each team of three.
3. Explain to students that they will work in a team of three to look up the character traits using an online thesaurus and a book thesaurus. (Divide the traits up among groups and determine the requirements for how many synonyms are found online and how many from the book version.)
4. When students have completed the task, come together as a whole and add to the original Inspiration document.
5. Provide a copy for each student to use as a reference tool.

Session 2

1. Explain to students that there are several ways an author can shed light on the character. An author can portray the traits of a character through the character's actions, speech, thoughts, appearance, comments and narrator's comments. Tell students that the author sometimes states these traits. At this time show the video clip, "Abel Tries to Get Off the Island" by Boat from *Abel's Island* and discuss. Explain that

sometimes the author implies the character's traits. The readers often have to draw their own conclusions or infer based on the author's description. Show the video clip, "When a Friend Cheats" from the *What is Honesty? Building Character* video (A Sunburst Title).

2. As a whole group create two T-charts to analyze the traits of the characters in the second video clip.

Session 3

1. Review the various ways an author can shed the light on characters. Explain that some characters change over time. Circumstances and situations arise and the thoughts and feelings of the character may change.
2. Place students in pairs. Tell students that they will view a video. (Select a video that portrays a character with strong traits yet changes over the course of the story.) Give each student several sticky notes. Explain to students that as they watch the video they will look for character traits and the various ways the author has portrayed that trait. They will also watch for a change in the character. As they determine a trait and a change the student writes it on the sticky note.
3. When the video is finished have the partners come together to discuss their findings.
4. Come together as a whole group and sort the sticky notes and discuss.
5. Independently students will complete the "How and Why Characters Change" sheet. See Appendix B.

Session 4

1. Have students select a book of their own to read independently.
2. Students create a T-chart of character traits for the main character in their story.



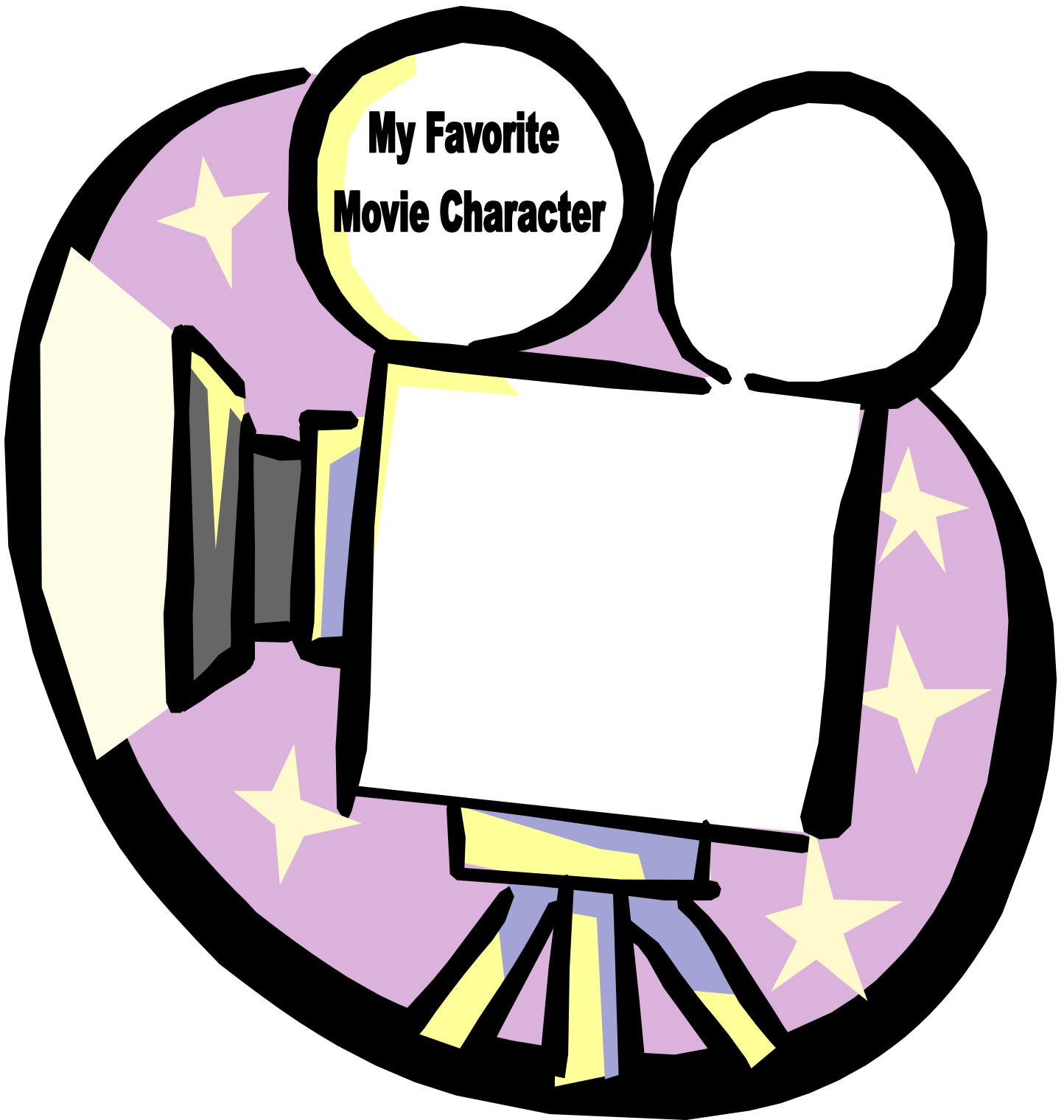
3. Using PowerPoint students will write a postcard to the main character explaining their reaction to the character's various traits. (See Appendix C for PowerPoint directions.) The student needs to include whether they agree or disagree with the character's traits and elaborate on why they agree or disagree.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

For session 2 portions of various books or other videos can be used in place of the ones suggested.



APPENDIX A: Movie Camera



APPENDIX C



How and Why Characters Change

Name: _____

At the Beginning...

At the End...

How the Character Changed

Why the Character Changed



APPENDIX B: Postcard from a Pal

1. Open a blank PowerPoint slide.
2. Use the rectangle tool to create the postcard outline.
3. Click on Insert-Picture-Clipart. Select a piece of clipart to add to the left side of your postcard. (To move the clipart around on the page go to View-Toolbars-Picture. Click on the clipart to select it. Click on the Text Wrapping tool and select Behind Text.) Clipart should be related to the story.
4. Move and resize your image so that it fits on the left half of your postcard.
5. Select the Text Box tool and click and drag to create a text box on the right half of the postcard. Be sure to leave room for a stamp.
6. Enter the greeting, body, closing and signature of your message.
7. Change the fonts, sizes, colors, etc if you want.

(To remove the line around the text box click on the Line Color button and select no line.)

