



artsNOW

Integrated learning solutions

LITERARY CHARACTERS COME TO LIFE

Grade Band: K-1

Content Focus: Theatre & ELA



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

Students will use their bodies, voices, facial expressions, and emotions to bring literary characters to life. They will take turns in the “Hot Seat” to speak from their character’s point of view, answering questions from their classmates. Drawing- or Writing-in-Role will help students embody the character and the story as they delve into their written responses.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	“I Can” Statements
How does acting help me to understand and communicate with others?	I can think and speak from someone else’s point of view.
How can becoming a character help me learn more about a story?	I can use my whole self to create characters from stories.

GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Kindergarten: ELAGSEKRL3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.</p> <p>Grade 1: ELAGSE1RL3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.</p>	<p>Kindergarten: TAK.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use voice to communicate emotions. b. Use body to communicate emotions. c. Cooperate in theatre experiences. d. Assume roles in a variety of dramatic forms

	<p>(e.g. narrated story, pantomime, puppetry, dramatic play).</p> <p>Grade 1: TAK.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use voice to communicate emotions. b. Use body to communicate emotions. c. Cooperate in theatre experiences. d. Assume roles in a variety of dramatic forms (e.g. narrated story, pantomime, puppetry, dramatic play).</p>
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SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Kindergarten: READING-LITERARY TEXT - Meaning and Context Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context. 8.1 With guidance and support, read or listen closely to: a. describe characters and their actions; b. compare characters' experiences to those of the reader; c. describe setting; d. identify the problem and solution; and e. identify the cause of an event.</p> <p>Grade 1 READING-LITERARY TEXT - Meaning and Context Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context. 8.1 Read or listen closely to: a. describe characters' actions and feelings; b. compare and contrast characters' experiences to those of the reader; c. describe setting; d. identify the plot including problem and solution; and e. describe cause and effect relationships.</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 3: I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.</p>

KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Character</u> – A person, or an animal or object that has human qualities, in a story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Body</u> – An actor's tool, which we shape and change to portray the way a character looks, walks, or moves ● <u>Facial Expressions</u> – The ways that the eyes, mouth, cheeks, forehead and other parts of the face convey feelings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Voice</u> - An actor's tool, which we shape and change to portray the way a character speaks or sounds ● <u>Pitch</u> – How high or low a voice is ● <u>Pace</u> – How fast or slow someone's speech is ● <u>Volume</u> – How loud or quiet a voice is ● <u>Emotions</u> – Feelings
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MATERIALS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A preselected book, story, poem, or literary excerpt (preferably with a variety of characters) ● Paper & pencils ● Box (any shape, size or color.)
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INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy

THIS IS NOT A BOX

- Hold up a small box and offer an imagination challenge for the group.
 - The object of the game is to transform the box into something it is not.
 - For example, "This is not a box. This is a butterfly." (making the box open and close to fly like a butterfly.)
- Ask students to describe what you did.
 - Reference the performance skills that actors use to transform an object including the *voice, body, face, mind, descriptive language, etc.*
- Explain that each person in the circle will take a turn.
 - They will say: "This is not a box. It is a ..."
 - They will use their gestures, bodies, facial expressions, and voices to transform the object into something new.
- Pass the box around the circle so that each participant can transform it. If students repeat the same actions as their peers, encourage them to act out new ideas. Provide ideas as needed (be prepared with suggestions, in case students can't think of new ideas. For example, depending on the size of the box: a drum, a birthday present, a box of cereal, a frisbee, a box of popcorn at a movie, an old video camera, a hat, a hamster box, a shoe, etc.).
- The pace of the game is dependent on the needs of the group, but the teacher should keep the goals of spontaneity and creativity in mind.

Work Session

READ ALOUD

- Discuss how the activity activated the entire class's imagination: the actor conveyed an idea through their acting, and the rest of the class had to visualize or imagine that idea as they observed. Explain that this lesson will use a similar process to explore characters in literature.
- Read the selected text aloud. Model expressive reading by using different voices for the characters, conveying emotion through facial expressions, and employing simple gestures. Ask students to identify and visualize the characters as they listen. As

appropriate, bring students into the reading as much as possible, providing sound effects, repeating phrases or dialogue, and doing simple movements indicated in the text.

CHARACTER GROUNDING

- Ask students to imagine that they are a character from the story.
- Model creating one of the characters. Select a character, then use voice, body, facial expressions, and gesture to become the character, introducing him- or herself to the class.
- Group Character Creation: Choose a character for the entire class to enact. It can be the same one that the teacher enacted or a different one. Guide the students through a step-by-step process to depict the character from the story.
 - Teacher says, “How do we stand, move, or walk as _____ (the character)?”. Use observational language to promote student choices (“I see Olivia is standing tall; Manuel has his shoulders pulled back,” etc.)
 - Encourage a variety of possibilities – individual actors can interpret the character differently.
 - Have students stay in their spots or allow them to move, as appropriate for the class and the space.
- Teacher says, “Let’s add our faces. How would _____’s face look? How would he/she use his/her face to express his/her feelings? Use your eyes, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks; use the angle of your head.” Listen to students’ ideas, and validate various choices.
- Teacher says, “How would _____’s voice sound? Would it be high or low? Loud or soft? Would he/she talk fast or slow?” Listen to students’ ideas, and validate various choices.
- Teacher says, “Characters feel emotions, and actors use their bodies, facial expressions, and voices to convey characters’ emotions.”
 - Discuss different emotions (happy, sad, angry, frightened, nervous, excited, frustrated, brave, etc.).
 - Discuss the feelings that the selected character experienced at different points of the story.
 - Guide students to convey those emotions, modeling as needed.
 - Solicit a line of dialogue for each, whether drawn directly or inferred from the story.
 - Using body, facial expressions and voice, convey the emotion while speaking the line, either standing in place or taking a few steps, as appropriate.

HOT SEAT

- Explain that the class will use an activity called Hot Seat, in which an individual actor will play the character, and the class will have the opportunity to ask the character questions.
- Generate questions: Give a sample question or two for the character, such as:
 - How did they feel at different points in the story
 - Why did they do what they did in the story
 - What did they learn from what happened
 - How they feel about other characters
 - What did they plan to do in the future based on the events of the story
- Remind students that ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, and other questions that require some sort of description or explanation, are preferable to ‘who’, ‘when’, and ‘where’ questions, and other questions that only require a brief answer, or a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
 - For example, “Why were you so angry?” or “How did you feel when . . .?” or “What do you like about . . .?” are stronger than “Were you excited when . . .?” or “How old are you?” or “Who is your best friend?”).
- Model Hot Seat:
 - Sit in a chair in front of the class and assume the character from the story in character (with body, facial expressions, and voice). Speak in first person as the character (“Hello, everyone, I’m _____. Who has a question for me?”).
 - Select students to ask questions from the group brainstorm, reminding or prompting as needed. Model strong character choices, making sure to add details and emotional context while answering questions from the Hot Seat.

- Student Hot Seat Warm Up:
 - Assign students to work in pairs.
 - Have them decide who will go first. Instruct that student to go into the role as the character (with body, facial expressions, and voice) and introduce themselves to their partners in character.
 - Instruct the partners to ask questions of the character.
 - Have partners switch and repeat the process.
- Students in Hot Seat:
 - Draft one student to walk like their character to the front of the room and sit in a chair facing the audience.
 - Start the Hot Seat questioning by asking the student/character to introduce himself/herself (if needed, remind the actor to maintain their character choices).
 - Ask a question of the character.
 - Give other students the chance to ask questions.

Teacher note: Be prepared, if necessary, to interject or prompt students with probing questions that get to the heart of the character and the story.

- Optional variations:
 - The above process can be conducted using the same character throughout, or students can be given the option to become other characters in the story. If necessary, take time to develop questions for each different character.
 - After establishing the practice of Hot Seat, expand it into a panel, having several students sit in a row of chairs, assuming different characters from the story.

WRITING-IN-ROLE

- After participating in Hot Seat, ask all students to return to their seats and tell them that they will draw the character and, if appropriate, write something the character might think or say in a thought or speech bubble. Invite students to have the character say something that a) they said in the story, b) they said in the Hot Seat activity, or c) the student could imagine the character might say or think.

Closing/Reflection

Ask students to respond to one or more of the following reflection questions:

- How did it feel to become the character?
- What did you learn about the character from our activity?
- How did we use our bodies, voices, and facial expressions to play the character(s) and convey their feelings?

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

Teacher will assess student understanding by:

- Noting student observations and inferences about the characters.
- Listening as pairs of students ask and answer questions.
- Observing as students portray the character in pairs and in the Hot Seat.

Summative

CHECKLIST

- Were students able to step into their role and talk, move, walk, and write from their character's point of view?
- Were the students able to recall and retell a key point of the story from the character's point of view?

DIFFERENTIATION

Accelerated:

- Students in the audience take on another character from the book and speak from that character's point of view while asking questions to the character in the Hot Seat.
- Students can also pick different characters and talk to each other from their seats. They can then improvise and write a scene with the two characters.

Remedial: Teacher in the Role - The teacher becomes the character and then asks a student to copy what they are doing, so that the teacher and student are playing the same character at the same time. The teacher then invites other students to ask questions, with prompting as needed. Teacher and student answer questions together. Then, allow students, who are willing, to take turns in the Hot Seat as the same character.

**This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

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