



artsNOW

Integrated learning solutions

LITERARY CHARACTERS COME TO LIFE

Grade Band: 4-5

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. 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, speak, and write 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 enact characters from stories that I read.

GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
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<p>Grade 4: ELAGSE4RL3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).</p> <p>ELAGSE4W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p> <p>Grade 5: ELAGSE5RL2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.</p> <p>ELAGSE5RL3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).</p> <p>ELAGSE5W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p>	<p>Grade 4: TA4.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. b. Use body and movement to communicate a character’s thoughts and emotions.</p> <p>Grade 5: TA5.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character. b. Use body and movement to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character.</p>
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SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: READING – Literary Text (RL) Meaning and Context (MC) Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context. 8.1 Use text evidence to: a. explain how conflicts cause the characters to change or revise plans while moving toward resolution; b. explain the influence of cultural, historical, and social context on characters, setting, and plot development.</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 3: I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.</p> <p>Anchor Standard 8: I can relate theatre to other content areas, arts disciplines, and careers.</p>



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WRITING (W) - Range and Complexity (RC)

Standard 6: Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.

Grade 5:

READING – Literary Text (RL)

Meaning and Context (MC)

Standard 8: Analyze characters, settings, events, and ideas as they develop and interact within a particular context.

8.1 Cite evidence within text to: a. analyze two or more characters, events, or settings in a text and explain the impact on the plot; and, b. explain the influence of cultural, historical, social and political context on characters, setting, and plot development.

WRITING (W) - Range and Complexity (RC)

Standard 6: Write independently, legibly, and routinely for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences over short and extended time frames.

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● <u>Perspective</u> – The unique point of view from which a character experiences and interprets the events, settings, and other characters within 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>Posture</u> – Body position; how a character sits or stands● <u>Facial Expressions</u> – The ways that the eyes, mouth, cheeks, forehead and other parts of the face convey feelings● <u>Gestures</u> – Movement of the hands and arms to give signals or convey meaning● <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



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Pace</u> – How fast or slow someone’s speech is ● <u>Volume</u> – How loud or quiet a voice is ● <u>Articulation</u> – The way sounds are shaped in speaking; how clear the speech is; also, any dialect or accent that reflects a particular place or culture ● <u>Emotions</u> – Feelings
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MATERIALS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A preselected book, story, poem, or literary excerpt with a variety of characters ● Paper & writing utensils, or devices for writing ● Box (any shape, size or color)

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy
<p>THIS IS NOT A BOX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, say, “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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reference the performance skills that actors use to transform an object including the <i>voice, body, face, mind, descriptive language, etc.</i> ● Explain that each person in the circle will take a turn. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. Be prepared with suggestions in case students can’t think of ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, depending on the size of the box, it could be a drum, a birthday present, a frisbee, 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, and as far as possible, validate student ideas.
Work Session



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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 in 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

- Model creating a character from the text. Select a character, then use voice, body, facial expressions, and gesture to become the character, introducing him- or herself to the class.
- Next, 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.
 - BODY:
 - Posture: "How do we stand as _____ [the character]? How is their posture?" 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.
 - Gesture: "How would _____ use their arms and hands? What gestures would they use?"
 - Walk: "How would _____ walk? Take a few steps in your area."
 - FACIAL EXPRESSION:
 - "Let's add our faces. How would _____'s face look? How would they use their face to express their feelings? Use your eyes, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks; use the angle of your head."
 - VOICE:
 - Pitch: "How high or low would _____'s voice be? How would it go up and down?"
 - Pace: "How fast or slow would _____ speak?"
 - Volume: "How loud or soft would _____'s voice be?"
 - Articulation: "How would _____ pronounce their words? Would they have an accent or a dialect? Would they have some special pronunciations? How clearly would they speak?"
 - Tell students to use their vocal choices to become the character and introduce themselves to their neighbors: "Hi, my name is _____."
 - EMOTIONS:
 - Tell students that 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.)



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- Discuss the feelings that the selected character experienced at different points of the story.
 - Solicit an example from the text for each emotion listed, whether drawn directly or inferred from the story. Encourage students to select examples of dialogue as text evidence, if possible.
 - Tell students to practice using body, facial expressions and voice to convey the emotion while speaking the line, either standing in place or moving, as appropriate.
 - Students can practice with a neighbor.

HOT SEAT

- Explain that the class will use an activity called Hot Seat, in which an individual actor will play a character, and the class will have the opportunity to ask the character questions.
- Generate sample questions for each character in the text. This can be done as a whole class or small group brainstorm. Or, have students write down one or two questions that they would want to ask a character. Example questions could include:
 - 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 do they feel about other characters?
 - What do 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' (e.g., "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 for students.
 - Sit in a chair in front of the class and assume the character from the story by embodying the character with posture, gestures, movements, facial expressions, and voice.
 - Speak in first person as the character saying, "Hello, everybody, I'm _____. Who has a question for me?"
 - Select students to ask questions from the group brainstorm.
 - Model strong character choices, making sure to add rich details and emotional context while answering questions from the Hot Seat. Model how to use voice and body to embody the character.
- Allow students to practice Hot Seat.
 - Assign students to work in pairs.
 - Have students decide who will go first. Instruct that student to go "into role" as the character with body, facial expressions, and voice, and to introduce themselves to their partners in character.
 - Instruct the partners to ask questions of the character. These could be from the brainstorm or from questions that students generate.
 - Have partners switch and repeat the process. *Option: Let pairs trade partners with another pair.*
- Bring the class back together to engage in a whole-class Hot Seat.
 - Select one student volunteer to walk like their character to the front of the room and sit in a chair facing the audience.



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- Start the Hot Seat questioning by asking the student/character to introduce himself/herself (if needed, remind the actor to maintain their character choices).
- Give other students the chance to ask questions from the brainstorm or their own questions.
- Be prepared to prompt students with probing questions that get to the heart of the character and the story.
- This process can be conducted using the same character throughout the process, or students can be given the option to become other characters in the story.
- *Option: After establishing the practice of Hot Seat, expand it into a panel, having several students sit 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 write from their character's perspective.
- Select or allow students to choose from the following formats:
 - A diary entry
 - A letter, social media post, or text message to someone special
 - A monologue (written to be spoken aloud – either an inner monologue spoken to oneself out loud, or a monologue that is spoken to another character)
- Encourage students to make inferences about the character's motivation and opinion or to make predictions about what might happen next in a dramatic problem.

Closing/Reflection

- Facilitate a reflection in small group discussion, whole class discussions, or written format.
 - Ask students to respond to one or more of the following reflection questions:
 - How did it feel to step into the character's shoes and embody the character?
 - What new insight(s) did you gain about the motivation of the character from the activity?
 - What are the key issues/factors affecting the character(s) you chose?
 - How did you use your body, voice, and facial expressions to play the character(s)?

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

Teachers will assess students' learning by observing students' responses to small and large group discussion, engagement and portrayal of a character in Hot Seat, and by conferencing with students during the writing process.

Summative

CHECKLIST

- Students can step inside the characters' point of view and talk, walk, and write in the first person.
- Students can include key and relevant details about the character and the story.
- Students can make creative choices in interpreting the character that are based on who the character is described to be in the text.

DIFFERENTIATION



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Accelerated:

- Students in the audience can 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.
- Have students read their reflection writings or scenes aloud while staying in character.

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 from the brainstorm. Teacher and student answer questions together.

**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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