

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Reading Infused Lesson

Clues to a Character through Text

Author: Dave Quicksall

Enduring Understanding

Using a text’s descriptions of characters can inform character attribute choices and guide blending body and voice.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)

Using a selected text, students will create a "Character Map" of a selected character. They fill out the Map by reading the text for clues on how that character moves, sounds, and feels. The students will explore how to blend physical and vocal choices into a complete presentation of the character using the Map as a guide. Each student will use the 21st Century Skill of perseverance to work through any challenges of sustaining his/her full characterization throughout the presentation.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Identifies a character’s personality traits from a selected text.

Criteria: Writes descriptive words about the character’s attributes on a Character Map.

Target: Incorporates physical choices to portray the character.

Criteria: Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a Character Map.

Target: Incorporates vocal choices to portray the character.

Criteria: Selects specific vocal expression (pitch, volume, tempo, and/or timbre) based on the character attributes from the Character Map.

Target: Communicates dialogue (invented or actual) using physical and vocal choices.

Criteria: Blends voice and body to present the character’s movement and speech to an audience.

Target: Demonstrates perseverance.

Criteria: Persists in adapting ideas to work through challenges.

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

- Attributes
- Character
- Dialogue
- Emotion
- Inference
- Perseverance
- Text

Reading:

Descriptive Words

Arts:

- Character Map
- Cue/Prompt
- Freeze
- Movement
- Physical Choice
- Statues
- Vocal Choice

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

- Book-It Repertory Theatre
- Living Voices
- Seattle Children’s Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials:

Selected story or nursery rhymes & copies for students (or a document camera and projector to display the story); Student Worksheet: Character Map; Pencils; Student Self-assessment Worksheets; Class Assessment Worksheet

Learning Standards

WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations

For the full description of each WA State Arts Grade Level Expectation, see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards>

- 1.1.1 Elements: Character
- 1.2.1 Skills and Techniques: Movement, Gesture, Facial Expression
- 1.2.2 Skills and Techniques: Voice
- 1.4.1 Audience Skills
- 2.1.1 Creative Process
- 2.2.1 Performance Process
- 2.3.1 Responding Process
- 3.1.1 Communicates through the Arts
- 4.2.1 Connection between Theater and Reading

continued

Early Learning Guidelines (Pre-K – Grade 3)

For a full description of Washington State Early Learning and Child Development Guidelines see: <http://www.del.wa.gov/development/guidelines/>
(Age 4-5) 3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around: Using the large muscles (gross motor skills): move with purpose from one place to another using the whole body.
(Age 4-5) 5. Communicating: Speaking and listening: use words to describe actions.
(Age 4-5) 6. Learning about my world: Arts: show creativity and imagination; perform simple elements of drama; participate in dramatic play.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA


For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade level see: <http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards>
R.CCR.1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.
R.CCR.2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
R.CCR.2. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
R.CCR.4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
SL.CCR.1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners.
SL.CCR.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented visually, quantitatively, and orally.
SL.CCR.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
SL.CCR.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

College and Career Ready Students in Writing

Demonstrate independence.
Build strong content knowledge.
Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
Comprehend as well as critique.
Value evidence.

ICON KEY:

 = Notes specific *Readers Workshop* Curriculum strategies addressed

 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

 = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

Pre-Teach

Before beginning this lesson, the teacher should comprise a list of descriptive language and character attributes from the nursery rhymes or the story being explored. Examples: fear, happy, giant, spider, anger, tiny, old, gruff, etc.

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Lead students in a warm-up, *Statues*.

2. Lead students through the exercise *I Am the Tiger*. Lead the group in saying the line “*I am the Tiger*” chorally, endowed with different vocal pitch, volume, tempo, and/or timbre. Then ask students to say the line individually given a character attribute.

3. Read aloud or review the key story elements of a selected story/nursery rhyme.

4. Introduce looking at the story itself to find clues to descriptions of characters. Introduce the concepts of attributes and inference to the students. Assign or allow students to choose a character from the selected text (individually or in a group) and fill out a Character Map.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Writes descriptive words about the character’s attributes on a Character Map.

5. Lead students to walk around the room as their characters.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment: Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a Character Map.

6. Bring the students back to a circle, and cue each student to present a line of dialogue from their character’s point of view, with vocal expression.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment: Selects specific vocal expression (pitch, volume, tempo, and/or timbre) based on the character attributes from the Character Map.

7. Guide students in moving and talking like their characters by having them move around the room, while speaking their lines of dialogue.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment: Blends voice and body to present the character's movement and speech.

8. Connect the 21st Century Skill of perseverance to the concept of sustaining a characterization. Create a walkway with a start and finish line. Model and guide students, one by one, to walk from the start to the finish as their character while they repeat their line three times or until they get to the other side.

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self and peer assessment: Blends voice and body to present the character's movement and speech to an audience. Persists in adapting ideas to work through challenges.

LESSON STEPS

▣ Pre-determine how the room will be set-up for students to move through space – desks moved to the side or students moving among the desks.

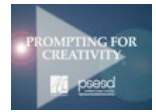
▣ Prepare enough copies of the *Character Map* for each student.

▣ Note on Grade Level Adaptability: This lesson can be adapted for use at any grade level. If the students aren't capable of working independently, the teacher can lead small groups or the whole class through the lesson. If the students can't write, the teacher can work from one large *Character Map*. The stories used can be as simple as a nursery rhyme or as complex as an entire book.

▣ The amount of reflection and self-assessment should be modified to suit the grade level of the students.

1. Lead students in a warm-up, *Statues*.

▣ Choose a word (human or animal) to call for each round of statues. The word does not have to come from the story/nursery rhyme text (e.g. rock star, parent, giant, etc). Encourage students to explore different kinds of physical choices when investigating a character.



Prompting for Creativity

- *Actors use their bodies to create a character's specific physical and emotional attributes.*
- *Walk around the room in actor neutral. When I call "Freeze!" and then a word, freeze into a statue of whatever that word looks like to you. Use your whole face and body to show how the character looks, what he is doing, and how he feels.*
- *When I say "Go!" walk around the room again in actor neutral.*

2. Lead students through the exercise *I Am the Tiger*. Lead the group in saying the line "*I am the Tiger*" chorally, endowed with different vocal pitch, volume, tempo, and/or timbre. Then ask students to say the line individually given a character attribute.

▣ Readers Workshop Connection: mini-lesson, background knowledge

- *Stand in a circle.*
- *Actors use their voices to create a character's specific vocal and emotional attributes. Say the line "I am the Tiger" when I cue you. You'll all speak at the same time.*



Clues to a Character
through Text
Step 2

▣ Cue the students to say the lines chorally. Preselect a list of different vocal pitches, volumes, tempos, and/or timbres to guide you.

- *This time you will each speak the line individually. I'll give you a character attribute. Say the line with the character attribute. So if I say "surprised," how could you say "I am the Tiger" like you are surprised? This is what I mean by descriptive words.*

▣ Refer to a list of descriptive words made before the lesson to direct the students as they speak the lines individually.

- *How would a king sound? How would a monkey sound if it could talk? What would you need to do to your voice to make it sound that way? Remember there are many different ways to do this.*

3. Read aloud or review the key story elements of a selected story/nursery rhyme.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: read aloud, re-read

- *I'll read our story. Pay attention to the characters. What does the story tell you about them?*

4. Introduce looking at the story itself to find clues to descriptions of characters. Introduce the concepts of attributes and inference to the students. Assign or allow students to choose a character from the selected text (individually or in a group) and fill out a Character Map.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: mini-lesson, using text clues to ask questions, inference, interpreting

📖 You may choose to distribute copies of the text to students or display it with a document camera and projector.

- *When actors are trying to create their character, they do it like a detective by looking for clues in the text.*
- *Let's brainstorm. What clues do you find in the text about your characters?*

📖 A group brainstorm can serve as an important assessment tool to confirm that ALL the students understand the concept.

- *Attributes are words that describe someone. What words do you read that describe your character (physically—how he/she walks, moves or looks on the outside; vocally—how he/she talks or makes sounds with the voice; emotionally—how he/she feels on the inside).*
- *If you cannot find specific descriptive words in the text, you can "infer" them: decide what attribute(s) are appropriate based on the other clues in the text.*
- *Fill out your Character Maps with information you read in the text or inferred from the text.*

☑️ **Criteria-based teacher checklist:** Writes descriptive words about the character's attributes on a Character Map.

5. Lead students to walk around the room as their characters.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: synthesizing, creating mental images, re-enact

📖 Continue this step until all students have met criteria.

- *Let's walk around the room again. When I cue you, start walking as your character would walk.*
- *Think about what you discovered on your Character Map. What words on it would describe how you might move? How would your character walk?*
- *How does your character feel? Happy? Sad? Scared? How would the way you feel change the way you move?*
- *Ask yourself, does your movement show what you discovered on your Character Map?*



Clues to a Character
through Text
Steps 5-7

☑️ **Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment:** Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a Character Map.

6. Bring the students back to a circle, and cue each student to present a line of dialogue from their character’s point of view, with vocal expression.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: synthesizing, re-enact

- *Now I want you to say a line as your character would say it. Again, use your Character Map; that’s going to be your guide.*
- *If your character doesn’t have a line in the text, you can make it up. What might the spider say to Miss Muffet, knowing what kind of spider he is? How would he sound, saying that line?*
- *Ask yourself, does your vocal expression show what you discovered on your Character Map?*

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment: Selects specific vocal expression (pitch, volume, tempo, and/or timbre) based on the character attributes from the Character Map.

7. Guide students in moving and talking like their characters by having them move around the room, while speaking their lines of dialogue.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: synthesizing, re-enact

- *We’ve written our Character Map, we’ve practiced making physical and vocal choices and you’ve made physical choices and vocal choices for your character.*
- *Now, how does your character move and speak at the same time? How does the way your character is moving affect the way your voice sounds?*
- *When I say “Go,” walk around the room as your character. Repeat your line three times and then freeze in a statue of your character. Then use your self-assessment checklist and write down how you achieved the criteria.*

☑ Criteria-based teacher checklist, self-assessment: Blends voice and body to present the character’s movement and speech.

8. Connect the 21st Century Skill of PERSEVERANCE to the concept of sustaining a characterization. Create a walkway with a start and finish line. Model and guide students, one by one, to walk from the start to the finish as their character while they repeat their line three times or until they get to the other side.

📖 Readers Workshop Connection: synthesizing, re-enact, responding

- *One of the greatest challenges an actor faces is sustaining his/her characterization throughout a performance. One way of saying it is that an actor must PERSEVERE both physically and vocally as he/she acts out the character for an audience.*
- *Perseverance means persisting in adapting or changing ideas to work through challenges.*
- *As you are working to figure out how your character will walk and talk, notice what you change to make your vocal and physical choices the same way each time.*
- *Use your whole face and body as you walk to show how your character moves. Use your vocal expression each time you say your line. Put your voice and body together so you are speaking and moving as your character all the way across the space, from start to finish.*
- *Use the rubric for blending body and voice to check how you are doing.*



The Blending Voice & Body Rubric

- *I'll demonstrate blending my body and my voice throughout my performance ("four" on the rubric). Then I'll show you a "three," in which I don't use both body and voice the whole time. Next will be a "two," when I don't use the body and voice together. Finally, I'll show you a "one", when I don't make any physical or vocal choices.*
- *Audience, how does the actor use his/her voice and body to show the character? What did you see? What did you hear?*
- *Actors, how did you use perseverance to sustain your character's voice and actions each time? What was one challenge that you faced in expressing your character the same way each time, and what did you do to overcome that challenge?*

Criteria-based teacher checklist, self and peer assessment: Blends voice and body to present the character's movement and speech to an audience. Persists in adapting ideas to work through challenges.

Extensions:

1. Divide students into groups and guide them as they act out the stories/nursery rhymes in their entirety with all the characters, using the previous steps in this lessons to create the characters; create new lines of dialogue, *Character Maps*, etc.
2. Lead a criteria-based group reflection session. Remember to keep the focus on what the students saw and the different ways they met the lesson criteria.

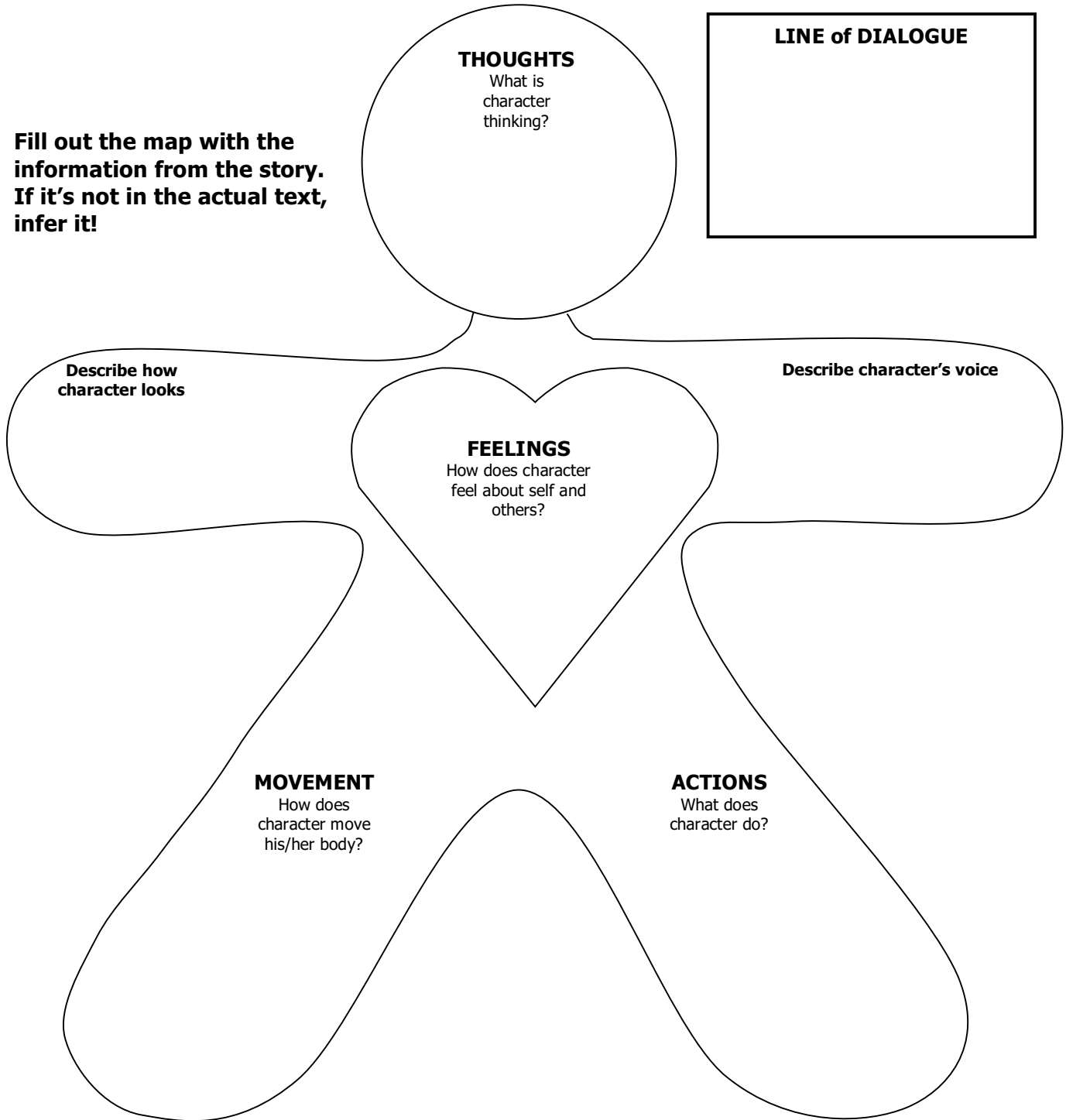
Clues to a Character through Text Character Map

Name: _____

Date: _____

Character's Name: _____

Fill out the map with the information from the story. If it's not in the actual text, infer it!



ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Arts Infusion

Clues to a Character through Text

Teachers may choose to use or adapt the following self-assessment tool.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Rubric for Blending Voice and Body in Presentation of a Character

4	3	2	1
Blends physical and vocal choices together and sustains the characterization throughout the entire performance.	Utilizes a physical choice and a vocal choice together at intervals throughout the performance.	Utilizes either a physical choice or a vocal choice exclusively without putting the two together.	Speaks and moves without making dynamic physical or vocal choices.

Disciplines	Reading	Theater	Theater	Theater	THEATER 21 st Century Skill	Total
Concept	Character Attributes	Physical Choices	Vocal Choices	Presents Physical and Vocal Choices RUBRIC Score 1-4	Perseverance	8
Criteria	Writes descriptive words about the character's attributes on a Character Map.	Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a Character Map.	Selects specific vocal expression (pitch, volume, tempo and/or timbre) based on the character attributes from the Character Map.	Blends voice and body to present the character's movement and speech to an audience (See rubric above.)	Persists in adapting ideas to work through challenges.	
Student Name						

PERSEVERANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Describe one challenge you faced in using the same voice and actions to express your character each time you performed your line.

Explain how you persevered to overcome that challenge. What did you try to keep it consistent?

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Arts Infusion

Clues to a Character through Text

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Rubric for Blending Voice and Body in Presentation of a Character

4	3	2	1
Blends physical and vocal choices together and sustains the characterization throughout the entire performance.	Utilizes a physical choice and a vocal choice together at intervals throughout the performance.	Utilizes either a physical choice or a vocal choice exclusively without putting the two together.	Speaks and moves without making dynamic physical or vocal choices.

Disciplines	Reading	Theater	Theater	Theater	THEATER 21 st Century Skill	Total
Concept	Character Attributes	Physical Choices	Vocal Choices	Presents Physical & Vocal Choices RUBRIC Score 1-4	Perseverance	8
Criteria	Writes descriptive words about the character's attributes on a Character Map.	Uses character pose/posture and movement based on the clues from a Character Map.	Selects specific vocal expression (pitch, volume, tempo and/or timbre) based on the character attributes from the Character Map.	Blends voice and body to present the character's movement and speech to an audience (See rubric above.)	Persists in adapting ideas to work through challenges.	
Student Name						
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						
17.						
18.						
19.						
20.						
21.						
22.						
23.						
24.						
25.						
26.						
27.						
28.						
29.						
30.						
Total						
Percentage						

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

What do I want to consider for the next time I teach this lesson?

What were the strongest connections between theater and reading?

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

THEATER AND READING LESSON: *Clues to a Character through Text*

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Reading** lesson. We talked about characters and their attributes.

- We created a *Character Map* by reading the text for clues on how that character looks, moves, sounds, and feels.
- We explored the different ways our voices and bodies can change when we become different characters.
- We presented our characters to the class by walking and talking like they would in the story.
- We used PERSEVERANCE to sustain our characterization throughout the performance.

At home, you could act out your own favorite stories or nursery rhymes by determining how the characters look, move, sound, and feel.

Enduring Understanding

Using a text's descriptions of characters can inform character attribute choices and guide blending body and voice.