

Name That Character Trait!

Analyzing Literary Characters to Determine Traits

Skill Level

Intermediate (7-8)

Learner Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Analyze literary characters to determine author's view.
- Create a list of traits a literary character possesses.
- Create a 4-H persona complete with traits.

Educational Standard(s) Supported

7.L.VAU.5

8.L.VAU.5

Success Indicator

Learners will be successful if they:

- Accurately identify traits of a literary character.
- Use new skills to create a 4-H persona.

Time Needed

45 minutes

Materials List

Computer access or other resources for character research

Pencil

Student Handout

Flipchart Paper

Introduction to Content

When authors create characters, they take great care in naming them. There is much more to the name of a character than just what we call them; the name in many ways describes them. This lesson explores the traits that help make characters in literature come alive.

Introduction to Methodology

This lesson begins by having students analyze a literary character for traits that contribute to their persona. Students then create an assessment of that character's name in relation to their persona. Students then create their own 4-H persona and name and visually depict their newly created person.

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Terms and Concepts Introduction

Persona — The aspect of someone's character that is presented to or perceived by others.

Setting the Stage and Opening Questions

Say to the students: **“What is in a name? There are literally hundreds of ‘apps’ for determining what your name means, or maybe your name is from family heritage, or maybe your name is unique to you. There is typically a reason for names given in families and even in literature. Today, we are going to research some popular literary characters and determine the traits they possess. By the end of class today, you should be able to analyze a character to determine the traits they possess and list those traits, and then create a 4-H persona complete with traits.”**

Begin by asking the students to list their favorite literary character. Capture the responses on the board and briefly discuss the character’s name and how it fits with their personality.

Experience

Separate the class into five groups and say, **“Each group is going to be assigned a literary character. In your group you are to list five traits that character possesses and write those on your handout. After you have identified five traits, discuss among your group how your character’s name is reflected by the traits they possess. After your discussion, write a two-sentence assessment of how the character’s name is fitting or not fitting based on the traits of that character you listed.”**

Separate the students into groups and assign each group one of the following characters:

- Prince Charming from Sleeping Beauty (http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Charming)
- Humpty Dumpty from the nursery rhyme (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46951/humpty-dumpty-sat-on-a-wall>)
- Cruella De Vil from 101 Dalmatians (http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Cruella_De_Vil)
- Little Bo Peep from the nursery rhyme (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46966/little-bo-peep>)
- Ichabod Crane from The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Ichabod_Crane)

Tips for Engagement

As students are working in their groups, rotate from group to group to ensure that all students are engaged and participating in the activity. If you notice that a student is not engaged, ask them probing questions to allow them to be more engaged in the activity.

Share

After students have had a chance to share their assessment of the character's name, ask each group to share their assessment with the class and defend why they chose to say what they did in their assessment. Keep in mind, there are no right or wrong answers.

Process

Say to the students, **“Now, we are going to look at the 4-H pledge and determine the traits that are needed for someone to ‘live the pledge.’ These traits are often referred to as someone’s ‘persona’ In your groups, discuss the traits and create a list of those on your handout.”**

Allow students to discuss and list traits in their groups, and then have the groups share their responses with the class. Capture the responses on the board for the students to refer back to for the remainder of the class.

Generalize

Say, **“ Now that you’ve identified the traits needed to live the 4-H pledge, you now need to come up with an appropriate name for your person. Keep in mind, the name should be reflective of that person’s persona.”**

Allow the students to discuss and come up with a name in their groups. Have the groups share their names with the class and explain their rationale.

Apply

Say, **“Now that you have the persona and name of your ‘4-H Superstar,’ you are going to create a visual image of what this person looks like. Each group is going to get a piece of flipchart paper to create a visual depiction of their person.”**

Pass out the flipchart paper and allow each group to draw their new person. After students have finished, have the groups share their drawings and discuss why certain aspects were included.

Life Skill(s) from TIPP's for 4-H

7th Grade

Learn to form ideas, make decisions, and think critically. (Head, Thinking)

Take initiative — the steps necessary to begin or follow through with a plan or task (Hands, Working).

8th Grade

Support the efforts of others to learn. (Head, Thinking)

Communicate accurate information on a given topic to someone else. (Head, Thinking)

Use personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goal. (Hands, Giving)

Supplemental Information

Educational Standards Met

7.L.VAU.5 When reading, listening, writing, and speaking, explain the function of figurative language, word relationships, and connotation/denotation and use them correctly and effectively.

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Tennessee 4-H Youth Development



My Character's Name:

Five traits of my literary character:

In the space below, write your two sentence assessment of your literary character.

Traits needed to "live the 4-H Pledge":

My 4-H persona's name:
