

Sara Hofmann
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Island of the Blue Dolphins Characterization

CCSS: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3](#) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

This CCSS fits into my lesson because the students are going to be asked to track the development of the traits of a specific character throughout the book. They will then be asked to explain how the development of the character traits also developed the novel.

Central Focus: Being able to pick up on the characterization of characters in a book, novel, or short story, is a skill that students need to be able to do in order to appropriately assess their text. Students need to know how to analyze a character to figure out which ones are the main characters or secondary characters. Finding character traits is also an important part of this analysis because students need to know the traits of the characters to be able to fully understand the text that they are reading.

Specific Learning objective: Students must be able to analyze and pick out main characterization points about the characters. Students must also be able to assess which characters are main characters and which ones are secondary, and how this plays to the plot of the text. The identification of characters should lead students to a deeper critical analysis of the text. The characterization will also lead the students into an art activity. Students will identify one of Karana's hobbies, weaving, and then create their own weaving as a way to connect to the text.

Academic Language: Students will be exposed to the idea of analyzing and critical thinking. Analyzing will be presented to the students as a way of diving deeper into a text and finding meaning beyond the surface level. The students will also be introduced to critical thinking, and how a character's traits can influence the text. The students will grow a deeper understanding of the character through the weaving project. To supplement this, students will be asked to think about what the text would be like if the character had different traits.

Materials: Copy of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Interactive Notebook, pen/pencil, smartboard for writing prompts.

Class: Mixed sixth through eighth grade. This is also an English and Art combined class. Every day there is a 15 min art class at the end that usually fits with what the students are learning about in English class.

Time Period: 60 min class

Lesson:

- Students will come into the room and grab their assigned copy of *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (5 min)
- We will read together chapters 20-23 from the book (15 min) the teacher will read aloud and the students will follow along.
- Student's attention will then be directed to the smartboard where a screen will be projecting a characterization wheel. (see worksheet)
- Teacher will go over what "round characters", "flat characters," main characters, and secondary characters are (see also worksheet for definitions). (7 min). Students will copy the definitions into their Interactive notebook
- Teacher will then describe the character wheel, and show the students the different sections of the wheel that need to be filled in with adjectives and descriptions of the main "round" character in the book (Karana). Class will spend time talking and discussing what to fill into the circle. (10 min).
- **Example discussion:**
Teacher : What does Karana's speech sound like?
Students: She is the narrator, lots of details, uses "I"
Teacher: What kinds of things do we know about how she looks?
Students: Long black hair, twelve years old, her hands are bleeding in this chapter, skirt of cormorant feathers.
Teacher: What do we know about her thoughts?
Students: We know everything, she is lonely, she is afraid of the wild dogs, she misses her family
Teacher: Alright, now what have we seen her do?
Students: She hunts, gathers food, builds her house, built weapons, made clothes
- In the last 15 min of class the students will begin their weavings.
- Teacher will talk briefly about what a weaving is and why we are doing them:
In the book Karana does a lot of weaving. She does it to pass the time and to make her own clothes. We are going to do our own mini weavings so that you all can understand what she was doing all day everyday.

-Instructions for weaving:

- Everyone gets a piece of cardboard that is roughly 7" by 8"
 - Each student will need to measure ½" marks all along the top and the bottom of the cardboard.
 - Once they measure every ½" they will cut little slits where they made the marks.
 - Once all the marks are cut the students will take a piece of string and thread it through the slits. The string will start in the first top slit (the one in the top left corner), then the string will be pulled down and threaded through the bottom slit, then pulled up and treaded through the next top slit, this will continue until all the string is threaded through all of the slits. Now the Loom is complete.
 - next the students will select colored yarn and begin to weave on their loom.
(Students will work on this the last 15 min of every class for the rest of the week. This will count as an art grade.)
- In future classes students will be asked to continually fill out the characterization chart as new character traits for Karana appear in the text. At the end of the unit, students will do some quick journaling in their notebook about how the story was developed by Karana's changing traits, and how the book would be different if she had different traits or if they stayed the same.

Assessment: The assessment for this activity is their Interactive Notebook. I will be able to look at their notebook at the end of the unit and see if they understood what a character trait is and how they change in a book. I will know they understand because they will have their characterization wheel filled in with traits of Karana. The final journaling will also help me assess their ability to understand how character traits propel a story forward.

Assessment 2: This class is unique because it is officially a combined English and art class. Because of this I will also be able to use their weavings as official art grades. I will not be grading the weavings on how good they look, but rather on two basic criteria. I will first require them to hand it in, and I will also look to see if it is completed (the whole loom is woven) and if they followed directions when making the loom and weaving. If they did not make it correctly I will deduct points.

Worksheet

Main Character: The character that is most important to the plot of the story

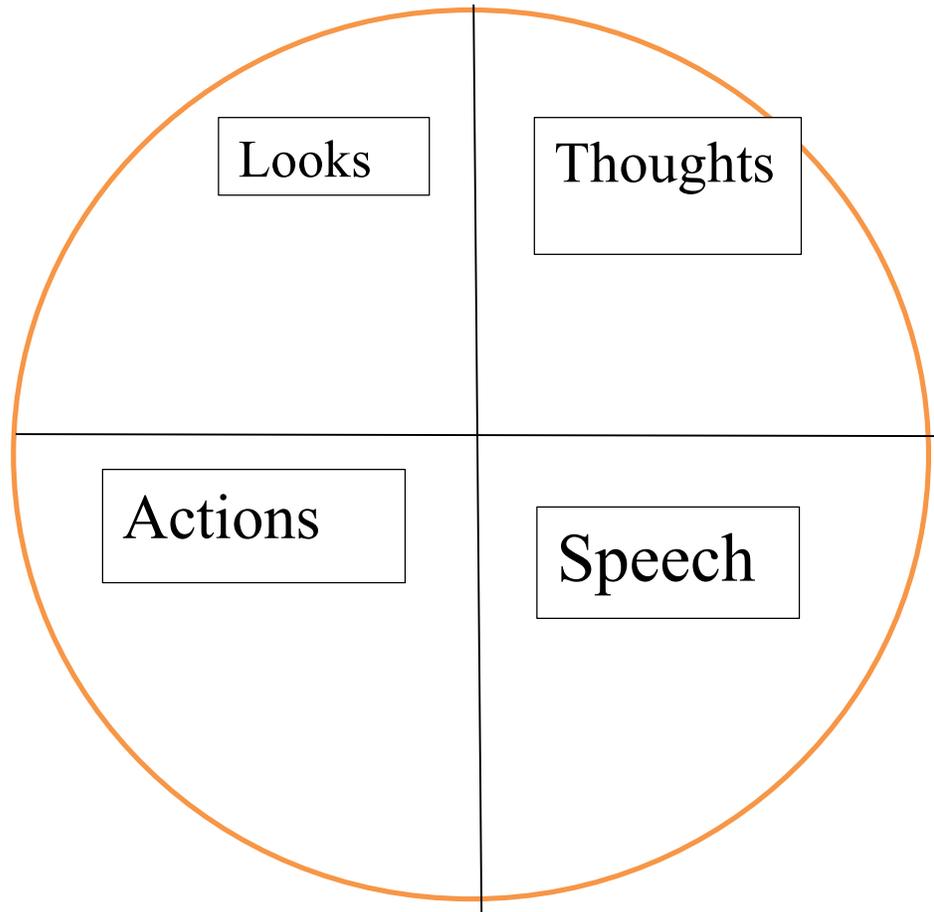
Secondary Character: A character(s) that is still important to the plot, but not as important as the main character

Round Character: A character that you know a lot about them

Flat Character: a character that you don't know a lot about

Worksheet presented on Smartboard:

Round Character: Karana



Other: