
Character Quotes

Character Quotes is a prereading strategy that extends students' insights into a character: fiction or nonfiction. Studying the quotes gives students practice in making inferences. It also increases comprehension and student motivation. If the text is especially challenging, Character Quotes helps the students focus.



STEP-BY-STEP

Teacher Prep

- Pick a fiction or nonfiction text related to your lesson. Read the material and select a number of quotes by one of the characters. If you want to have five groups of students for this activity, pick six quotes. If you want six groups, pick seven quotes.
- Save one quote to use when you model this strategy.
- Type the five or six quotes on a sheet of paper and make five or six copies. Then cut the quotes apart and mix the strips up.
- Run off the list of adjectives (see page 9) so each group has two copies.
- Gather markers and 11"x17" paper or light colored construction paper.

Explain

- Tell your students that they are going to learn about a character by studying what the character says.
- Explain that each of them will receive a quote and that they will work in groups to learn about the character.

Model

- Take the quote that you set aside and read it orally.
- Think Aloud (see page iv) as you model how to use the adjective list and pick appropriate adjectives to describe the character.

Guide

- Distribute one quote to each student.
- Ask the students to read the quote and then find all the other students in the room with the same quote.
- Designate an area in the room for each group to meet.
- Give each group a marker and large sheet of paper for recording their list of adjectives.
- Explain that each group is to study the quote and write all of the adjectives that describe the character. Remind students to pick adjectives that they understand.
- Once all groups have recorded the adjectives, call on each group to read their quote and display their list of adjectives.
- Explain to the other students that their job is to listen carefully and focus on whether they think the adjectives fit with the quote.
- Once the group has read all the adjectives, ask the class if there are any adjectives that seem not to fit. Remember there is no right or wrong answer; however, the group must support its thinking. (Why did you put ___ on your list?) The group explains its thinking and the next group presents.



Jane Says,

"I'm always amazed at the adjectives the students choose. They truly begin to play with the words. The more the students use the adjective list to study the characters, the more I hear the words used in their daily speaking."

PRACTICE

- Use Character Quotes every three or four weeks. Each time you use it, the students develop a stronger understanding of character attributes as well as the intricacies of the character.

APPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES

- Here is an example of quotes used for the character Leona in *Seedfolks*, by Paul Fleischman.

“I was thinking about her (Granny) one day, walking home from the grocery.”

“Then I studied all the trash on the ground. Don’t know why anyone called that lot ‘vacant.’ The garbage was piled high as your waist, some of it from the neighborhood and some dropped off by outside people.”

“I marched on home. I’ve got two kids in a high school that has more guns than books, so I know all about complaining to officials and such about things that need changing.”

“Next morning was Monday. At nine o’clock I drank me a tall glass of water. I knew I’d be having to say the same thing to 15 or 20 government folks.”



Mary Says,

“Finding the quotes can be tricky. I try to pick quotes that give a wide view of the character. One quote might show the character being angry, one happy, one concerned and one strong-minded. This way the students learn that characters and people are multifaceted.”

Reference

Buehl, D. (2004). *Classroom strategies for interactive learning*. Newark: International Reading Association.

Fleischman, P. (1997). *Seedfolks*. New York: HarperCollins.

Greece Central School District *character quotes* Retrieved on April 10, 2007 from <http://web001.greece.k12.ny.us/academics.cfm?subpage=916>.

ADJECTIVE LIST**happy**

blessed, blissful, captivated, cheerful, chipper, chirpy, content, contented, delighted, ecstatic, elated, exultant, glad, gratified, jolly, joyful, joyous, jubilant, laughing, light, lively, merry, overjoyed, peaceful, peppy, perky, playful, pleasant, pleased, satisfied, sparkling, thrilled, tickled, up, upbeat

determined

bent on, constant, decided, decisive, driven, earnest, firm, fixed, intent, obstinate, persevering, purposeful, resolute, resolved, serious, set, set on, settled, single-minded, solid, steadfast, strong-minded, strong-willed, stubborn, unflinching, unhesitating, unwavering

cold

aloof, apathetic, cold-blooded, cool, dead, distant, emotionless, frigid, frosty, glacial, icy, impersonal, imperturbable, indifferent, inhibited, inhospitable, joyless, lukewarm, matter-of-fact, passionless, phlegmatic, reserved, reticent, spiritless, standoffish, stony, unconcerned, undemonstrative, unenthusiastic, unfeeling, unimpassioned, unmoved, unresponsive

blah

dull, boring, dim, dreary, humdrum, lifeless, monotone, monotonous, pedestrian, plodding

genuine

honest, artless, candid, earnest, frank, heartfelt, known, natural, open, positive, real, reliable, righteous, sincere, true, trustworthy, unaffected, unimpeachable, unquestionable, up-front, well-established

boring

uninteresting, characterless, colorless, commonplace, drab, drudging, dull, flat, ho hum, humdrum, insipid, irksome, lifeless, monotonous, repetitious, spiritless, stale, stodgy, stuffy, tame, tedious, tiresome, trite, unexciting, unvaried, vapid, wearisome

energetic

forceful, active, aggressive, animated, driven, dynamic, enterprising, forcible, fresh, high-powered, industrious, kinetic, lively, peppy, powerful, snappy, spirited, sprightly, spry, tireless, unflagging, vigorous, vivacious, zippy

bothersome

troubling, aggravating, annoying, distressing, disturbing, exasperating, inconvenient, irritating, tiresome, troublesome

entertaining

amusing, absorbing, captivating, charming, cheerful, clever, compelling, delightful, enchanting, engaging, engrossing, enjoyable, enthralling, enticing, exciting, fascinating, funny, humorous, impressive, inspiring, interesting, lively, moving, pleasant, pleasurable, poignant, priceless, restorative, witty

funny

humorous, absurd, amusing, clever, comical, entertaining, good-humored, hilarious, humdinger, hysterical, joking, jolly, laughable, ludicrous, merry, playful, priceless, rich, ridiculous, silly, slapstick, sportive, waggish, whimsical, witty

benevolent

kind, all heart, altruistic, beneficent, benign, big, big-hearted, caring, chivalrous, compassionate, considerate, generous, helpful, humane, humanitarian, kind-hearted, liberal, magnanimous, philanthropic, tender-hearted, warm-hearted, well-disposed

sad

unhappy, bereaved, bitter, blue, cheerless, dejected, depressed, despairing, despondent, disconsolate, dismal, distressed, doleful, down, downcast, forlorn, gloomy, glum, grief-stricken, grieved, heartbroken, heartsick, heavy-hearted, hurting, languishing, low, low-spirited, melancholy, morbid, morose, mournful, pensive, pessimistic, somber, sorrowful, sorry, troubled, weeping, wistful

condescending

snobby, arrogant, disdainful, egotistic, lofty, lordly, patronizing, snobbish, snooty, supercilious, superior, uppity

absent-minded

unaware, absent, absorbed, abstracted, bemused, daydreaming, distracted, dreaming, dreamy, engrossed, faraway, forgetful, inattentive, lost, preoccupied, remote, removed, spacey, unobservant, unthinking, withdrawn