Marsha Waldman – ELA Lesson Plan

Romeo and Juliet
Character study: Character Traits, Perspective, and Adjectives

Overview
 In this activity, student teams "become" one of the major characters in **Romeo and Juliet.** They describe themselves using lists of accurate, powerful adjectives. Classmates have to guess which character is being described. In a follow-on lesson, the student teams pretend to be one character and, from that perspective, describe another character. Once again, classmates have to determine who the characters are. Teams are required to provide evidence from the text to justify their descriptive choices.

This lesson uses **Romeo and Juliet** as an example, but the activity is effective with any work of literature in which characterization is important.

Rationale
 A successful character analysis demands that students infer abstract traits and values from literal details contained in a text. This lesson plan not only asks students to infer those traits but also to show that knowledge by applying the traits as they create their own list from the character's perspective. By adopting the traits of a main character, students "show" their understanding of that character's main features.

Additionally, the lesson plan provides an opportunity for students to explore the supporting reasons for the traits they have chosen. This process of creating lists and then discussing them as a class gives students practice in connecting detail to inference.

The activity incorporates collaborative learning, grammar, vocabulary building, and higher-level thinking on issues dealing with literature.

This lesson plan was adapted from ReadWriteThink, *Become a Character: Adjectives, Character Traits, and Perspective*

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Review the characteristics of adjectives.
- Define the literary term "character trait" and explore how to provide details that support their inferences.
- Explore perspective by writing descriptive word lists from the point of view of a character in **Romeo and Juliet.**

Instructional Plan

Resources

- Chart paper and markers
- Copies of **Rome and Juliet**
- Copies of the <u>Identifying Character Traits worksheet</u>
- Overhead projection of the <u>Become a Character Assignment</u>
- Dictionaries and thesauruses
- Copies of handouts on character traits and adjectives

Preparation

- Students have read a substantial portion of the play and have discussed the relative strengths, weaknesses, and attributes of various characters.
- Make copies of the assignment, character traits, and adjective handouts

Instruction and Activities

Session One

1. Review the adjective part of speech
2. Brainstorm a list of character traits or provide a short list on the board, to provide a sample for students.
3. Working from the information on adjectives and the sample character traits, compose a class definition of the literary term.
4. Using a character from another work that students have read, demonstrate the process of compiling a list of character traits, using resources such as a dictionary or thesaurus.
5. Divide students into pairs or small groups. Have students work through the character traits on their own for one character from the play using the <u>Character Traits Chart</u>. Ideally, the character that they focus on will be the same character whose point of view they will adopt in Session Three.
6. Once students have compiled a list of traits and support from the novel, give each pair or group a piece of butcher paper or newsprint and a wide marker.

7. Use the <u>Become a Character Assignment</u> as an overhead or handout to explain the activity to the class.
8. Give the students the remainder of the class to work on their lists.

Session Two

1. Give students 10-15 minutes to finish their lists and their charts.
2. As students finish, post their work on the wall or board until all the lists are up.
3. Number the papers and assign each list a letter, so that everyone can refer to a particular list easily.
4. Each student pair then examine the posted lists and, on a sheet of paper, attempts to identify who is being described.
5. Depending upon the time available, look at each list or a selected number of lists, discussing identities.
6. The authors of the lists under discussion finally give the "right answers." Again, depending upon time, the class can discuss the adjectives in each list and can cite specific events and details from the text which either support or call into question the accuracy of those adjectives.

Session Three

In the following session, students repeat the activity but assume the role of one character describing another character. This time classmates have to determine the identity of both characters.

Extensions

Students write a character diary entry from their adopted character's point of view.

Student Assessment/Reflections

As students work on their list, the teacher circulates among teams, observing students' use of reference books and their lists of adjectives. Teacher provides support and feedback while moving from group to group.

The ultimate assessment for this activity will be students' reaction to the lists written by their peers and their ability to provide support for the traits on the list.

NY State ELA Standards

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

1. Listening and reading for literary response involves comprehending, interpreting, and critiquing imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on

personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, and recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.

Students:
- read and view independently and fluently across many genres of literature from many cultures and historical periods
- identify the distinguishing features of different literary genres, periods and traditions and use those features to interpret the work
- recognize and understand the significance of a wide range of literary elements and techniques, (including figurative language, imagery, allegory, irony, blank verse, symbolism, stream-of-consciousness) and use those elements to interpret the work
- understand how multiple levels of meaning are conveyed in a text

2. Speaking and writing for literary response involves presenting interpretations, analyses, and reactions to the content and language of a text. Speaking and writing for literary expression involves producing imaginative texts that use language and text structures that are inventive and often multilayered.

Students:
- present personal responses to literature that make reference to the plot, characters, ideas, vocabulary, and text structure
- explain the meaning of literary works with some attention to meanings beyond the literal level

Identifying Character Traits Worksheet

Book Title:

_____

Character Name:_____

Action	Character Trait Revealed

Sample Character Traits

able	active	adventurous	affectionate
afraid	alert	ambitious	angry
annoyed	anxious	apologetic	arrogant
attentive	average	bad	blue
bold	bored	bossy	brainy
brave	bright	brilliant	busy
calm	careful	careless	cautious
charming	cheerful	childish	clever
clumsy	coarse	concerned	confident
confused	considerate	cooperative	courageous
cowardly	cross	cruel	curious
dangerous	daring	dark	decisive
demanding	dependable	depressed	determined
discouraged	dishonest	disrespectful	doubtful
dull	dutiful	eager	easygoing
efficient	embarrassed	encouraging	energetic
evil	excited	expert	fair
faithful	fearless	fierce	foolish
fortunate	foul	fresh	friendly
frustrated	funny	gentle	giving
glamorous	gloomy	good	graceful
grateful	greedy	grouchy	grumpy
guilty	happy	harsh	hateful
healthy	helpful	honest	hopeful
hopeless	humorous	ignorant	imaginative
impatient	impolite	inconsiderate	independent
industrious	innocent	intelligent	jealous
kindly	lazy	leader	lively
lonely	loving	loyal	lucky
mature	mean	messy	miserable
mysterious	naughty	nervous	nice
noisy	obedient	obnoxious	old
peaceful	picky	pleasant	polite
poor	popular	positive	precise
proper	proud	quick	quiet
rational	reliable	religious	responsible
restless	rich	rough	rowdy
rude	sad	safe	satisfied
scared	secretive	selfish	serious
sharp	short	shy	silly
skillful	sly	smart	sneaky
sorry	spoiled	stingy	strange
strict	stubborn	sweet	talented
tall	thankful	thoughtful	thoughtless
tired	tolerant	touchy	trusting
trustworthy	unfriendly	unhappy	upset
useful	warm	weak	wicked
wise	worried	wrong	young