

Character Traits in Literature Poster

Congratulations on your purchase of this Really Good Stuff® **Character Traits in Literature Poster**—an informative, educational poster that demonstrates four methods authors use to bring characters to life and gives examples of common character traits.

This Really Good Stuff® product includes:

- **Character Traits in Literature Poster**, laminated
- This Really Good Stuff® Activity Guide

Displaying the *Character Traits in Literature Poster*

Before displaying the **Character Traits in Literature Poster**, make copies of this Really Good Stuff® Activity Guide and file the pages for future use. Or you can download it from our website at www.reallygoodstuff.com. Hang the poster where students will be able to see and interact with it easily.

Introducing the *Character Traits in Literature Poster*

Explain to students that the **Character Traits in Literature Poster** demonstrates four ways that authors bring their characters to life. The poster lists many adjectives describing traits that a character may have.

Tell students that characters' personalities are important elements of a story. Explain that understanding these qualities helps us to relate to characters and understand a story better.

Next, share the examples of the character traits listed around the outside of the poster. Discuss what each trait means or assign unknown words for students to look up in a dictionary and share with the class.

Introducing Character Traits

To simplify your discussion of character traits, use a character from a book that you are reading to the

class; a book the entire class is reading; or a familiar story, such as *Little Red Riding Hood*. Explain that a character trait focuses on a character's personality or demeanor. A character's personality traits are different than physical traits and features. When an author writes about a character's trait in literature, the author focuses on the type of person the character is.

During your discussion, focus on a character's permanent traits—those that the character demonstrates several times throughout the story. (You may tell students that characters often have several small or temporary emotions that go against the character's normal makeup. These temporary emotions last for only a short time, like within a chapter or only during a specific event in the story, and readers should not view them as main traits of the character.)

At times, an author directly states a character's traits. For example, an author might write: *His charming personality has helped him to get along with many of his peers.* However, more often, an author shows characters' traits through their actions, thoughts, dialogue, and others' reactions to the characters.

A character's **actions** are the way he or she behaves. If a character is always telling his or her peers what they should be doing and how they should be acting, readers conclude that the character is **bossy**. Or, if a character is always lying, readers think he or she is **dishonest**, as in the following excerpt: *Once again, Jim lied to his teacher about doing his homework and leaving it at home.*

A character's trait can also be determined by what the character is thinking—his or her **thoughts**. If a character is described as always thinking about the things that others have, readers deduce he or she is **jealous** as in the following example: *I looked over at Jamie during class and thought about the new*

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clothes she was wearing. It must be nice to get to go shopping and buy whatever you want all the time.

Readers also learn a great deal about a character by his or her **statements**. If a character continuously shouts out and says negative things to others, readers may decide he or she is **obnoxious**, as in this passage: *Everyone looked at Cooper and gave him a dirty look as he once again shouted out during the middle of class, bragging about himself, “Yes, I am the star! I know the answer once again.”*

These statements can also be in the form of a conversation with another character, called a **dialogue**. An example of this would be if two characters were having a conversation and one was giving advice to the other, readers infer that the character is **wise**, as in this selection: *Ellen looked at me and said, “Maybe you should just tell your parents the truth about how you are doing in school. If you do, I am sure your parents will either help you to do better or arrange for you to have a tutor.” She was always giving good advice.*

The last way readers identify a character’s traits is by paying attention to **others’ reactions** to a character, or what people around the character say or think about him or her. Discuss the dynamics of this situation: *Jasmine asked Ashleigh and Haley if she could be their partner on the science lab. Neither Ashleigh or Haley even looked up when they answered sarcastically, “Sorry, we’ve already begun the experiment, and it’s too late.” Then Jasmine heard Ashleigh mumble to Haley, “Maybe now she knows how it feels to be left out.”*

Responding on Character Traits in Literature

Copy and distribute the *Character Traits in Literature Reproducible*. Tell students that as they identify additional traits while reading to add them to the alphabetical list.

Model how to complete the *Character Traits Log* for the students with a character from a familiar story. List a trait of that character and all evidence to support it in each of the body limbs. If you are reading a common book, have students record the character’s traits and compare as a class. Look for similarities and differences in the way students view each character. Be sure students share the evidence supporting the trait from the text. Urge students to track the traits of a character in their independent or group reading book.

If students are reading a book together in a group, have each student keep track of the traits of different characters. Later, instruct students to discuss how each character’s trait is influenced by the other characters and how each trait might change if one character acted differently.

After students have become comfortable with the *Character Traits Log*, have them compare two characters who have influenced each other. Instruct students to support the characters and their traits with evidence from the text, using either a two-column data table or a Venn diagram.

Assessing for Understanding of Character Traits


Present students with new situations for a character to encounter, and have them write a narrative of the event, elaborated with character actions, thoughts, dialogue, and reactions.

Tell students to pick a character and use their list of traits to write their own description of that character. Separate students who wrote about the same character into groups. Instruct them to compare their descriptions.

Have students write a letter to the character and suggest how he or she might change specific behaviors in a situation in order to change the outcome.

Name: _____

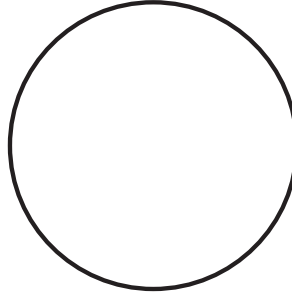
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A	adventurous aggressive assertive	B	bossy	C	calm charming childish confident courageous cowardly curious	D	demanding determined discouraged dishonest	E	easygoing energetic	F	foolish forgiving funny	G	grumpy	H	harsh helpful hot-tempered humble	I	impatient independent insensitive inventive
J	jealous	K	knowledgeable	L	leader loyal	M	mature mysterious	N	nervous	O	obnoxious	P	persistent pessimistic polite proud	Q	quiet	R	reliable responsible
S	selfish serious sly spoiled stubborn	T	talented tolerant	U	unreliable	V	vengeful	W	wise	X		Y		Z	zealous		

Name: _____

Date: _____

Character Traits Log



Trait: Evidence:	Character: Title:	Trait: Evidence:
Trait: Evidence:	Trait: Evidence:	