

# Minnesota Writing Project

## Demonstration Lesson Template

**Title of lesson:** Show Some Character!

**Suggested grade/age:** Created for grades 6-8, Adaptable for any grade.

**Approximate time needed to complete lesson:** 45 minutes

**Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:**

**Objective:** Students will purposefully select rich details in order to show a character's personality and emotions. Students will revise their own stories to show their characters.

**Significance:** The significance of this lesson is that it provides one way to help students add richness to their writing. Although this lesson was originally created for use with narrative texts, it could be adapted for other types of writing. My school district is looking for ways to improve students' scores on writing tests, and one thing many students lack is an element of richness.

**Brief summary/outline of lesson:**

**1. Introduction:** Show silent video clip to class. Have students list the traits/emotions/personality of the character in their notebooks. Have students consult the "Character Traits" list for vocabulary ideas. Discuss as a group how the students knew what the character was like without anyone telling them. Show examples from texts of writers using showing. Have students identify how the writing is enhanced by the showing.

**2. Character charades:** Hand out "Show Some Character" charades cards to groups. Explain that one at a time, group members will draw a card from the envelope and then act out that emotion. The actor may not use any words but may use sounds. When the group guesses correctly, pass the envelope to the next group member. If needed, demonstrate to the class. The goal of the game is for each group to successfully get through all the cards in the envelope. If a group gets really stuck, the actor can give them the first letter of the word as a hint.

**3. Show some character writing practice:** The teacher begins by modeling and "thinking aloud" before students are asked to participate in the writing together as a group. Eventually students move to independent work, responding to the prompts by showing the characters. Students share with their writing group or with the class. (For active groups, try having students act out examples while the writer shares). Notebook examples can be used as quick formative checks.

**4. Independent work:** Students revise their own stories, looking for the moments where they are telling what their character is like, rather than showing. The revised story will be turned-in as a summative assessment.

**Related Resources:**

*Crafting Writers K-6*, Elizabeth Hale

*Writers in Training*, Rebekah Caplan

*How Writers Work*, Ralph Fletcher

**Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:**

This lesson can be slowed down and presented over several days for younger grades. In younger grades, the concept of showing can be specified into different categories (showing with dialogue, showing with body language, showing with actions, etc.) In addition, the vocabulary for the character traits can be modified depending on student ability. In upper grades, this lesson can be applied to non-fiction writing. Finally, different video clips could be showed to demonstrate character as the opener for this lesson.

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