

**Montessori Material Lesson Plan:**  
**Simple to Complex : Character Development**

**Objectives directly from standards:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.A** Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**Dates:** Will probably need two consecutive classes

**Materials:** Movable Alphabet, Number Rods, ipads

**Procedures (steps or bullets are helpful):**

- Pull out moveable alphabet and number rods. Remind the students of how these works move from simple to complex (from letters to words to sentences/ from numbers to equations) Remind the students that this is how they have learned things in the past.
- Make the connection to character development- simple to complex = tell vs. show . The simple form of character development is the “tell”

ex:To “Tell” the reader...

Evelyn has dark, curly hair and brown eyes. She is loyal to her friends, but she only has a few. She is darkly funny and mischievous. Because her brother passed away of a childhood illness, she uses sarcasm and dry humor to keep people at a distance so that she won't have to feel the pain of another loss.

- This is the simple way, we want to move to complex character development, but how?

Ex: to “show” the reader...

To “Show” the reader...

Marcus looked at Evelyn over his wire-rimmed glasses. "You know," Marcus mumbled, "the way Shakespeare described the 'evil woman' in his play? Dark, curly hair, dark eyes and everything? That could be you."

Evelyn cocked her head to the side. Ever since her brother had passed away, Marcus was the only person she would let speak to her like this. A slow, mischievous smile spread across her face. "Well, it looks like Shakespeare got at least one thing right. Come on- I'll walk you home, that way if Bill and his friends try to mess with you again you will have an 'evil woman' to back you up."

- But how do we move from simple to complex?
- Share the "Character Builder" sheet (below).
- Explain Character builder and assign it.
- When students return with their completed character builder. Have them pair up with their 7 o'clock partner to review/discuss/critique each other's work.

### **Consideration for Differentiation:**

Students are partnered with appropriate peers, stronger students paired with those that need support. Writing assignments are tailored to the needs and abilities of each student.

### **Rationale-how it relates to adolescents, standards, society, and/or global**

**thinking:** As a language teacher, I am constantly attempting to get students to develop their writing more fully- this is a very important skill. The standards state quite clearly that the student is supposed to be able to use narrative techniques to communicate their stories, and the concept of "show, dont tell" is one of the most important techniques in narrative writing. This concept goes right to the heart of one of my most deeply held teaching beliefs- telling is not teaching. With that in mind, it was very important to give the students a tool they could use to help them show, not tell. That is why I created the character builder.

### **Means of Assessment:**

There are multiple means of assessment during this lesson. Students get a certain amount of assessment and feedback from their peers, the completed character builder sheet is assessed, and character development is assessed in the final product.

Character Builder

**Fundamentals**

Story Title \_\_\_\_\_

Character Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main character  Minor character  Protagonist/supporter  Antagonist/supporter

**1.) Physical appearance**

(Gender, age, body type, hair, eyes, facial features, dress, posture, movements, mannerisms, speech, first impression)

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Show it, don't tell it!!

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**2.) Background that may influence motivations**

(Education, religion, family, early childhood experiences, financial situation, profession, marital status, other relationships, habits, surroundings/environment, health)

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Show it, don't tell it!!

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**3.) Personality**

(Distinctive traits, self-image, yearnings/dreams, fears/apprehensions, sense of humor, code of ethics, attitude – optimistic? overly sensitive?)

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Show it, don't tell it!!

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**4.) Other details** (Hobbies, skills, favorite foods, favorite colors, favorite books, etc.)

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Show it, don't tell it!!

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**5.) Story relevance**

Positive traits:

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Negative traits (character flaws):

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Show it, don't tell it!!

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