5 *Character Development*

Read It, Write It, Tell It Episode: "Jesse Owens"

Lesson Overview

The purpose of the lessons in this unit is to help Ohio students in grades 3-7 learn the characteristics of the literary text Character Development indicators that they must master for their respective Ohio achievement tests. Special care has been taken to dovetail the lessons with the indicators and the types of questions commonly asked on Ohio tests.

Ohio Academic Content Indicators

2001.EL.S05.G04-07.BA.L**05**.I01   Explain how a character's thoughts, words and actions reveal his or her motivations.

2001.EL.S05.G04-07.BA.L**06**.I01   Analyze the techniques authors use to describe characters, including narrator or other characters' point of view; character's own thoughts, words or actions.

2001.EL.S05.G04-07.BA.G**07**.I01   Explain interactions and conflicts (e.g., character vs. self, nature or society) between main and minor characters in literary text and how the interactions affect the plot.

Ohio Achievement/Proficiency Tests
Character Development Question Types

General
- List *x number of* characteristics of Character *X*. Use details from the selection to support your answers.

Emotions
- Quotation *XXX* from the selection describes Character *Y*. From a list of feelings, choose the one which tells how Character *Y* feels.
- Character *X* feels Emotion *Y*. Give details from the story that show why the character was feeling Emotion *Y*.
- Quotation *XXX* from the selection describes Character *X*. Which word from the quotation tells how Character *X* is feeling?
- How does a Character *X* feel (at the time of, about, after) Event *X*?

Conflict
- Given a list of feelings, choose how Character *A* feels about Character *B*?
- How does Character *A* feel about Character *B*? Give examples that support your answer.
- Why did Character *A* have a problem with Character *B*?

Thoughts/Actions/Behaviors/Attitudes/Motivations
- What does Character *X* think about Event *Y*?
- List *x* number of reasons why Character *Y* says Quotation *Z*.
- Given a list of reasons, choose the reason why Character *X* acts or behaves in the way she/he does?
- Why does Character *X* behave (or not behave) in Manner *Y* at Point *Z* in the selection.
- Given one or more quotations from a selection, explain why the character who spoke the words said them.
- Given Quotation *X*, what does the quotation suggest about Character *X*'s behavior?
- What does Character *X* believe or think?

- Describe Character *X*'s attitude at the beginning of the selection and at the end.
- Given Quotation *XXX* made by Character *X* in a selection and a list of possible attitudes (motivations/character traits/etc.), which attitude would best fit the character?
- Given Quotation *X* from the selection, explain why the character who was quoted made the statement and whether the statement holds true throughout the selection. Support your explanation with specific details from the selection.

1 *Jesse Owens*

Episode Overview

This episode is about the life of Jesse Owens. It interweaves fact, fiction, and tall tale. The episode begins when Jesse was a boy living on a farm and briefly tells of his move to Cleveland, joining a track team and becoming a champion runner at Ohio State University. The tall tale portion of the episode takes place during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany.

Teachers will need to need to briefly build a background with their students if they have never been exposed to the United States' history of the time period in which this episode takes place. Major historical events occurring during this episode are listed below.

Fact:
- Jesse (1913-1980) lived at a time when blacks were faced with segregation and "No Blacks Allowed" signs.
- His family originally farmed for a living (before moving to Ohio) and Jesse did work as a delivery boy.
- He lived during the Great Depression.
- He was a star runner for Ohio State University and he won four gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics when Adolph Hitler was in power touting the superiority of the white German Aryan race over all other races.

Fiction:
- Jesse saved the lives of his prejudiced boss's wife and children from the speeding truck the boss was heedlessly driving.

Tall Tale:
- Jesse defeated a time machine ray gun Hitler's scientists developed to slow Jesse in his Olympic races and destroyed the lab where the time machine weapons were made so that Hitler cannot use them in war.

Vocabulary

The following words used by the storyteller in the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Jesse Owens" may be unfamiliar to some students.

athlete	Great Depression	nationality
conquer	laboratory	Olympics
dictator	Melting Pot	prejudice
disintegrated	modesty	separate
	mysterious	

②Before Viewing

1. Say: Who's your favorite character from (name a reading section with which the students are familiar and which most of the students seemed to like).
2. Say: Describe what the character looked like physically.
3. Say: Describe the character's behavior when s/he faced a major problem.
4. Ask: Have you heard Dr. Martin Luther King's statement "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character?"
5. Ask: How should the characters in fictional stories be judged – by their physical attributes or by the content of their characters? Explain why you feel as you do.
6. Say: As we view the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Jesse Owens," evaluate the character the protagonist (Owens) and the antagonist (Hitler).

③After Viewing

Pre/Post Questions: If the students cannot easily answer the following questions, your may wish to use the Lessons (Section 4) and/or the Extensions (Section 5) about character development.

1. How does Jesse feel about his delivery business boss? Justify your answer with details from the episode.
   Jesse knows that he is not liked by the boss but he doesn't let that bother him. The storyteller said "His boss did not like him much, but Jesse did not mind. He said…'I'm here to do a job, the very best that I can do; just like any other man'."

2. How does Jesse's boss at the delivery business feel about Jesse? Give an example from the story that supports your answer.
   Jesse's boss doesn't like him. The storyteller said "His boss did not like him much," "Jesse's boss sent him on deliveries and scheduled very little time to make all the stops," and "The boss, who had hoped Jesse would fail, was furious."

3. Why did Hitler have a problem with Jesse Owens winning gold medals at the Olympic Games? Give an example from the story that supports your answer.
   Hitler was prejudiced against anyone who wasn't white and a German. The storyteller said "Anyone, other than white Germans, Hitler thought were unacceptable people the world would be better off without."

4. Jesse says, "I'm here to do a job, the very best that I can do; just like any other man." Explain why Jesse made the statement and whether the statement holds true throughout the story. Support your explanation with specific details from the selection.
   Jesse was determined to succeed even if others were prejudiced against him. He never gave up and just kept on doing his very best and he never sought to treat others as he was being treated. When he did not have enough time to make all of his deliveries, he dug deeper and ran even faster. He saved the prejudiced boss's family even though the man did not like him. When Hitler turned the time machine ray gun on him, Jesse just worked all the harder and won the race anyway.

5. The storyteller (J. D. Williamson) has Hitler say, "This will keep Jesse from winning and Germany will be VICTORIOUS!" Based on this quote and on the events of the "Jesse Owens" episode, which attitude would best fit Hitler?
   a. Hitler was patriotic. His motivation was his love of Germany and his desire to make the country a world leader.
   b. Hitler was exploitive. His motivation was to promote German superiority without regard to who was harmed in reaching that goal.
   c. Hitler was scientific. His motivation was to support German industry in the creation of technological advances that could be sold to bring money into the country and improve the country's economy.
   d. Hitler was idealistic. His motivation was to make his citizens feel good about themselves and to create an age of hopefulness, justice and fair play.
   The best answer based on the story and the quote is b. Hitler was exploitive. His motivation was to promote German superiority without regard to who was harmed in reaching that goal. The storyteller said "He wanted to make everyone obey his commands. His goal was to be a world dictator. Anyone, other than white Germans, Hitler thought were unacceptable people the world would be better off without."

4Lesson

Materials:
- Student Handout "Henderson Appleway Matrix"
- Student Handout "Character Development Matrix"

Procedure:
1. Group Activity:
   a. Give your students the completed copy of the handout "Henderson Appleway Matrix" that profiles the character Henderson Appleway. Have the students read through the matrix.
   b. Discuss with the class whether or not they feel that Henderson Appleway is believable and lifelike. *Students will probably feel that Henderson is not a believable character as he is just too nice to be real.*
   c. Have the students suggest specific changes that would make the character more believable.
   d. Challenge the students to create a more believable character than Henderson.
   e. Display the handout "Character Development Matrix" for the students. The handout may be displayed via computer or each student may be given a blank copy. Brainstorm with the students the attributes of the person based on the matrix.
2. Individual Activity:
   a. Assign the students to develop a new character from their own imaginations and write a character sketch about the character.
   b. Students may use the Character Development Matrix handout as they see fit. They may simply refer to it for ideas, jot notes on it, or fill it in completely.
   c. Write a character sketch once they have finished the pre-writing personal brainstorming and organizing.
   d. Information and samples of character sketches can be found at the following sites.
      - "The Character Sketch"
         o http://lchs.k12.il.us/writeonlchs/CHARSKET.htm
      - "Writing a Character Sketch"
         o http://www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/04-1/lesson017.shtml
      - "Character Sketch or Analysis"
         o http://sd67.bc.ca/irp/docs/charactersketch.html
      - "How to Write a Character Sketch"
         o http://www.engl.niu.edu/wac/personass.html#char
      - "Character Sketch" Key Points

- o http://www.easttroy.k12.wi.us/hs/dept/english/theusch/soph/Character%20Sketch.htm
- "Grandma Atkinson" A Character Sketch
  - o http://www.engl.niu.edu/wac/grandma.html
- Examples of character sketches written by students
  - o http://cw.mariancollege.edu/jburns/Comp05/descriptionstudent_example.htm

3. Share the students' work orally, in a class book, or online.

Character Development Matrix

Name: **Date:**

Character's Name:

Physical Description

Type of Being: *human being, dog, etc.*
- Face and head:

- Body:

- Clothing and/or equipment:

- Other:

Attitudes and Attributes

Primary attitude(s) about life: *Examples: cheerful, thinks everything is a joke, serious, sad, friendly, etc.*

Greatest strength:

Things hated:

Things loved:

Things feared:

Biggest secret:

Greatest hope or dream for the future:

Greatest flaw, fault, or blind spot:

Actions and Behaviors

Describe the action this character would take in each of the following situations:
- An event most feared happens (or appears).

- The thing most loved is taken or destroyed by someone or something.

- His/her greatest strength is greatly increased.

Sample Character Matrix: Henderson Appleway

Name: Mindy Sampson	Date: April 30, 2008

Character's Name: Henderson Appleway

Physical Description

Type of Being: *human being, dog, etc.*   Henderson Appleway is a human being.

- **Face and head**: Henderson has a slightly egg-shaped head with small ears that lay close to his skull. His hair is light brown and cut long, just brushing his collar. He has dark brown eyes that seem to sparkle with flecks of gold. His nose is strong and straight while his smile, when it does suddenly appear, is slightly crooked.
- **Body**: Henderson has the body like a pro linebacker. He is muscular with not a trace of fat. He looks like he could lift three cheerleaders at one time and still have the strength to easily run a 100 yard dash. He is a bit shorter than most other boys his age.
- **Clothing and/or equipmen**t: Henderson is always dressed like he just stepped out of the latest copy of the most popular teen magazine. Count on Henderson to wear awesome clothes.
- **Other**: Henderson is 15 years old. He doesn't sit on a chair, he oozes onto it. He's very bright but his grades are mostly Bs. Henderson likes to go to the mall and the movies with his friends, Tyrell, Tommy, CeeCee, and Britney.

Attitudes and Attributes

Primary attitude(s) about life: *Examples: cheerful, thinks everything is a joke, serious, sad, friendly, etc.*
Henderson is friendly to everyone and believes that all people should be given a fair chance.
Greatest strength: His greatest strength is his ability to see what really makes people act the way they do. He is able to read the real person beneath some of his classmate's strange choices of clothes and their actions.
Things hated: prejudiced people, unfair teachers, Cracker Jacks, anything with a paisley print, and station wagons.
Things loved: hanging out with his friends, his dad and sister, chemistry, and just about every sport
Things feared: the dentist, suicide bombers, losing his dad to the cancer that killed his grandfather
Biggest secret: Henderson can solve complex mathematics equations in his head and loves math.
Greatest hope or dream for the future: He wants to develop a formula for a cheap medicine that will cure the kind of cancer that killed his grandfather.
Greatest flaw, fault, or blind spot: Henderson thinks he can help everyone. He refuses to believe that there are people that no amount of understanding and friendliness will change.

Actions and Behaviors

Describe the action this character would take in each of the following situations:

- **An event most feared happens** (or appears). Henderson's yearly checkup at the dentist showed that he had 7 cavities. He had to make 3 more trips to the dentist to get all the teeth repaired. Henderson shivered every time he had to go in the dentist's door but he kept repeating to himself, "I will not give in to fear."
- **The thing most loved is taken or destroyed by someone or something**. Henderson's dad got the same type of cancer as his grandfather. He stopped hanging out with his friends as often so he could be with his father and help his sister. When his dad died, Henderson and his sister went to live with an aunt who lived close by. Henderson decided to change the way he looked at getting good grades and started working to earn a scholarship to a college so that he could join the scientists fighting against cancer.
- **His/her greatest strength is greatly increased**. Henderson learned how to make his friends and classmates see the people in their class who did not fit in as he saw them. He started inviting some of these kids to join his friends when they went to the mall. When he and his friends accepted these kids, others in Henderson's class also began to see that "different" doesn't mean "bad".

5 Extension Activities

Character Development · Activities

- Role play:
  - News reporter interviews story character and asks the character to explain why s/he choose specific actions and how s/he feels about events and other characters in the story.
  - Adopt a character's personality and interact to a new event in a manner that is consistent with the character developed by the author.
- Write journal entries as a character. The writer is to imagine feelings and actions that might have occurred before the story took place – or after the story ended.
- Create masks for characters where the facial expression on the mask suits the characters' dominant personality trait.
- Write a poem about a character's actions and what kind of character s/he was.
- Design an imaginary résumé for one of the story's characters showing his/her experience and qualifications.
- Write riddles or jokes that reflect a character's personality.
- Compare and contrast the problem solving abilities of two different characters in the story.
- If a character changed by the end of the story, list reasons that explain why and how the character changed.
- Use a graphic organizer to create a web of a character's physical and personality traits.
- Character Trading Cards:
  - http://readwritethink.org/materials/trading_cards/
  - This interactive online site prompts users to type in a character's appearance, personality, thoughts, feelings, major problem, goal, outcome, actions, interactions, and the student's likes, dislikes, and personal connections to the character.
  - After entering the information the "card" can be printed in full color, cut out, taped together, and a picture of the character may be added to the front of the card.

Character Development • Online Resources

Ohio Instructional Management System

- https://ims.ode.state.oh.us. Use the IMS Quick Search:
- Chose ⊙ Lesson Plans, Content Area: English – Reading ⩔, Grade Level: as desired ⩔, Keyword: type Dialogue. Click Search.

"Punctuating Dialogue - Grade Six"
- In this lesson, students create and accurately punctuate dialogue necessary to help the plot progress, reference setting and develop character.

Ohio Resource Center • Reading http://www.ohiorc.org/search/search_adv.aspx

- Advanced Search: Choose Free Text and ORC Number from the drop down menus and type the ORC Lesson number in the center box. Scroll down and click Submit. For example:
  Search for resources that…contain Free Text ⩔ 2773 in the ORC Number ⩔

"Charlotte is Wise, Patient, and Caring: Adjectives and Character Traits," Grades 3-4
- ORC Lesson# 2773
- In this activity, students apply their knowledge of adjectives as they study characterization. Students locate examples of adjectives in a text, then describe one of the major characters.

"Cinderella Folktales: Variations in Character," Grades 3-4
- ORC Lesson# 1068
- Although the Disney version is the most popular in America, hundreds of versions of the Cinderella story exist. This resource provides lessons, in which students define the major differences in the characteristics of the heroine (e.g., meek, assertive) in a variety of Cinderella tales.

"Planning Story Characters Using Interactive Trading Cards," Grades 3-5
- ORC Lesson # 6440
- This lesson uses trading cards of fictional characters to support students' literacy development in writing narrative texts. Students begin by exploring popular picture books, noting how authors develop the characters in these stories.

"Bright Morning: Exploring Character Development in Fiction," Grades 4-6
- ORC Lesson# 1337
- This lesson teaches characterization through *Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell; however, any fictional text (even picture books) that all students have read or heard can be adapted to fit the lesson. Thinking about how an author writes to make a character "come alive" in a piece of literature is the focus of this lesson.

"What a Character!" Grades 4-6
- ORC Lesson# 2305
- This lesson features methods in which students learn strategies for developing strong characters in their own writing. Students are guided through a series of pre-writing activities as they complete a character sketch.

"Lights, Camera, Action: Interviewing a Book Character," Grades 4-7
- ORC Lesson# 2838
- During a novel study, students closely examine the different characters in the text by keeping journal entries, meeting for group discussions, and using graphic organizers. This extensive character examination is designed to help them to prepare a final project that involves creating an interview-style television show.

"Beyond the Story: A Dickens of a Party," Grades 6-8
- ORC Lesson# 2758
- To complete this lesson, students are invited to attend a 19th Century party playing the role of a character from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. To play this role, students must understand the values and customs Dickens' characters represented in Victorian society.

"Story Character Homepage," Grades 6-8
- ORC Lesson# 1389
- This lesson effectively combines collaborative work, deep analysis of a character, and integration of technology. Working in small groups, students analyze a character from a piece of fiction and create a website to represent their interpretation of that character.

"Truman Capote: Other Voices, Other Rooms," Grades 6-8
- ORC Lesson# 1189
- Character development is the primary focus of this lesson, which uses Truman Capote's short story, "A Christmas Memory," as the basis for a character study. Teachers initiate the activity by leading a discussion about the plot and the main character of the short story.

"Press Conference for *Bud, Not Buddy*," Grades 6-8
- ORC Lesson# 3814
- This lesson can be used after the reading of *Bud, Not Buddy*, by Christopher Paul Curtis. The lesson encourages students to use higher-level thinking skills, and asks them to examine different character perspectives. Students demonstrate comprehension of the story by actively involving themselves in group and whole-class discussions. Information about the author contributes to their understanding of historical fiction. By further analyzing the characters in preparation for a class "press conference," students better understand the characters' impact in the story. The development and responses to critical-thinking questions leads to deeper understanding of the story.

Other Internet Resources

- "Using Picture Books to Teach Characterization in Writing Workshop" Grades 3-5
  - http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view_printer_friendly.asp?id=101
- "Characterization" by Manning, Maryann. Look Smart Article, May 2001, Teaching PreK-8
  - http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3666/is_200105/ai_n8935272
- "Language Arts: Writers Invent Character and Point of View" Grades 6-12
  - http://www.howard.k12.md.us/langarts/Curriculum/character.htm
- "Primary and Derivative Attitudes and Ideals" – Leland L. Bernard
  - http://spartan.ac.brocku.ca/~lward/Bernard/1926/1926_27.html
- "Character"
  - http://www.wakakirri.com/waka_storyguide_character.html
- "Understanding Character" This site has downloadable PDF files:
  - Character Analysis Graphic Organizer
  - Character Analysis T-Shirt Project Instructions
  - Character Analysis T-Shirt Rubric
  - http://content.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=39
- "The Art of Storytelling: Who Are Your Main Characters?" *Because of Mama: Creating a Short Film*
  - http://www.dartmouth.edu/~shortflm/process/characters.html
- "Creating Original Characters, Themes, and Visual Metaphors for Your Digital Short Film"
  - http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.asp?p=174318&rl=1

Jesse Owens Follow-up Activities

Research these historical figures:
- Adolph Hitler
  - Where is Berlin, Germany?
  - What happened to Berlin during World War II?
  - How did Hitler's Germany treat athletes who were non-Ayran during the 1936 Olympics?
- Jesse Owens
  - Did Jesse Owens ever work as a delivery boy?
  - Does the tall tale reflect Jesse Owens's true feelings about being an Olympic athlete?

Categorize figurative language from the "Jesse Owens" episode:
- Jesse kept running even though his feet felt like heavy rocks and his arms like metal sledge hammers.
- Jesse moved so fast he was able to pick up each member of the boss's family and take them out of harms way.
- Jesse moved like a blur, then like wildfire, he rocketed out like a missile. [He] picked up speed and moved like lightening.