

(Re) Introducing A Character

This exercise is for teachers to help their students unpack and process a story that they are reading together.

- 1.) First, discuss the story and its plot and themes with the group.
- 2.) Next, divide the class into groups of no fewer than three students and no greater than five.
- 3.) Assign each group a different character from the story.
- 4.) Give the groups 10 minutes to discuss the character and his/her/their qualities and contributions to the story. For younger students especially, it could be framed in this way:
 - a.) What makes this character special?
 - b.) What do they do in the story that is important?
- 5.) Give the groups 15 – 20 minutes to come up with a “commercial” for the character in which they make the case for why the character is important and necessary for the story. (This can be a great way to help students understand the value of even relatively minor figures in a tale.) Not every student in the group has to be in the commercial, but all must be involved in the planning.
 - a.) This commercial will:
 - introduce the character
 - explain why the character is important/has value
 - make the case that the story needs the character
 - b.) Each commercial should include:
 - a prop of some kind (this could be something that is in the room that they choose to use)
 - at least one moment of music or singing
 - at least one line from the story itself

6.) Have the groups present their commercials to the rest of the class. At the conclusion of each presentation, students can ask questions and talk about what the commercial communicated.

7.) At the end of all the presentations, here are some questions for general discussion:

- a.) What was your process for creating the commercial?
- b.) Are there characters that you wish that you understood even more?
- c.) Did any of the commercials get you thinking about the story or characters in a new way? How?
- d.) Now, with a deeper knowledge of the characters and their importance, what do you think the story intends to communicate about them and people in general?