

Characterization and Relationships Using *Ender's Game*

About this Lesson

This lesson focuses on a passage from *Ender's Game*. It is designed to help students distinguish between direct and indirect characterization techniques and to understand the role these techniques play in character development. One activity asks students to write character commentary based on inference: what the character says, does, and thinks, and what others say about him or her. Students will also explain how and why the textual evidence leads to inference. It includes a character journal format to reinforce for students the practice of using textual evidence to support their assertions. The lesson ends with several composition activities to provide practice in analyzing an author's use of direct and indirect characterization.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 6: Linking Characterization to Meaning.

Objectives

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of direct/indirect characterization techniques.
- analyze diction and figurative language.
- select from several composition activities in order to write an analysis on characterization.

Level

High School

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

LTF Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	Understand	III
R.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	Analyze	III

R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	Evaluate	III
R.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Understand	II
L.6	Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	Understand	II
W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Create	III
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Create	III
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Analyze	III
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Apply	III
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Understand	II
SL.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Apply	III

Implicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Understand	I
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Understand	I

LTF Skill Focus

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Close Reading		Grammar		Composition	
<i>written, spoken, and visual texts</i>		<i>purposeful use of language for effect</i>		<i>written, spoken, and visual products</i>	
Reading Strategies Generalization Inference Literary Elements Character foil motivation Detail Plot conflict Point of View person perspective Tone Literary Techniques Argumentation cause/effect logical appeals Characterization direct indirect Dialogue Symbolism Literary Forms Forms				Types (modes) Expository analytical Narrative documentation Multiple Mode Imaginative The Process of Composition Prewriting generation of ideas organization of ideas Drafting extended time timed Structural Elements Introduction thesis Body incorporation of quotes topic sentence use of commentary use of evidence Conclusion Organization Transitions Style/Voice Selection of Detail Selection of Vocabulary	

Connections to AP*

Distinguishing between direct and indirect characterization is a skill required of students in both the free response and multiple choice sections of the AP English Language and Literature exams. In addition, analytical writing for the AP Language and Literature exams is judged on the quantity and the quality of evidence and analysis (commentary).

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Materials and Resources

- excerpt from *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card, included
- copies of Student Activity

Assessments

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- guided questions
- graphic organizers
- writing activities

Additional Assessments

- formative assessments on LTF website (grade 9)

Teaching Suggestions

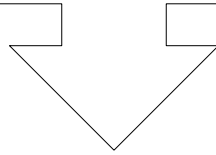
For this lesson teachers should consider using the “Three Character Analysis Chart” posted on the LTF website under Additional Materials and Resources.

Answers

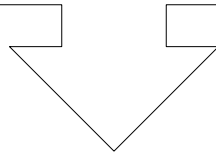
Answers for this lesson are subjective and will vary. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

Characterization and Relationships Using *Ender's Game*

What games did you play when you were a child?



Why did you enjoy these games? What do these games have in common?



What generalizations can you make about human nature based on this information?

In the following passage from *Ender's Game*, three children, all siblings, play a game. Ender, the youngest, plays the part of an alien “bugger.” His older brother Peter plays the part of an astronaut. Their sister, Valentine, is an observer.

You may or may not have read the novel *Ender's Game*, but from the excerpt you still can get an understanding of these three characters from the way they are described, what they say, and how they act toward each other. As you read this passage closely, think about how each child is characterized and how each one relates to the other two.

Ender's Game

Ender did not see Peter as the beautiful ten-year-old boy that grown-ups saw, with dark, thick, tousled hair and a face that could have belonged to Alexander the Great. Ender looked at Peter only to detect anger or boredom, the dangerous moods that almost always led to pain . . .

5 Suddenly Peter smiled and clapped his hands together in a mockery of good cheer. “Let’s play buggers and astronauts,” he said.

“Where’s Mom?” asked Valentine.

“Out,” said Peter. “I’m in charge.”

“I think I’ll call Daddy.”

10 “Call away,” said Peter. “You know he’s never in.”

“I’ll play,” Ender said.

“You be the bugger,” said Peter.

“Let him be the astronaut for once,” Valentine said.

“Keep your fat face out of it, fart mouth,” said Peter.

It would not be a good game, Ender knew. It was not a question of winning.

15 Peter opened his bottom drawer and took out the bugger mask.

[Ender] put on the mask. It closed him in like a hand pressed tight against his face. But this isn’t how it feels to be a bugger, thought Ender. They don’t wear this face like a mask, it *is* their face. On their home worlds, do the buggers put on human masks, and play?

20 Ender couldn’t see it coming, except a slight shift of Peter’s weight; the mask cut out his peripheral vision. Suddenly there was the pain and pressure of a blow to the side of his head; he lost balance, fell that way.

“Don’t see too well, do you, bugger?” said Peter.

Ender began to take off the mask. Peter put his toe against Ender’s groin. “Don’t take off the mask,” Peter said.

25 Ender pulled the mask down into place, took his hands away.

Peter pressed with his foot. Pain shot through Ender; he doubled up.

“Lie flat, bugger. We’re gonna vivisect you. . . .”

“Peter, stop it,” Ender said.

“Peter, stop it. Very good.”

30 He lifted his foot, took a step, and then knelt on Ender, his knee pressing into Ender’s belly just below the breastbone. He put more and more of his weight on Ender.

It became hard to breathe.

35 “I could kill you like this,” Peter whispered. “Just press and press until you’re dead. And I could say that I didn’t know it would hurt you, that we were just playing, and they’d believe me, and everything would be fine. And you’d be dead. Everything would be fine.”

“I’ll tell,” Valentine said from the doorway.

“No one would believe you.”

“They’d believe me.”

“Then you’re dead, too, sweet little sister.”

40 “Oh, yes,” said Valentine. “They’ll believe that. ‘I didn’t know it would kill Andrew. And when he was dead, I didn’t know it would kill Valentine *too*.’”

The pressure let up a little.

“So. Not today. But someday you two won’t be together. And there’ll be an accident.”

“You’re all talk,” Valentine said. “You don’t mean any of it.”

45 “I don’t?”

“And do you know why you don’t mean it?” Valentine asked. “Because you want to be in government someday. You want to be elected. And they won’t elect you if your opponents can dig up the fact that your brother and sister both died in suspicious accidents when they were little. Especially because of the letter I’ve put in my secret file in the city library, which will be opened in the event of my death.”

50 “Don’t give me that kind of crap,” Peter said.

“It says, I didn’t die a natural death. Peter killed me, and if he hasn’t already killed Andrew, he will soon. Not enough to convict you, but enough to keep you from ever getting elected.”

55 “You’re his monitor now,” said Peter. “You better watch him, day and night. You better be there.”

“Ender and I aren’t stupid. We scored as well as you did on everything. Better on some things. We’re all such wonderfully bright children. You’re not the smartest, Peter, just the biggest”....

60 Peter leaped to his feet and started for her. She shied away. Ender pried off his mask. Peter flopped back on his bed and started to laugh. Loud, but with real mirth, tears coming to his eyes. “Oh, you guys are just super, just the biggest suckers on the planet earth.”

“Now he’s going to tell us it was all a joke,” Valentine said.

65 “Not a joke, a game. I can make you guys believe anything. I can make you dance around like puppets.

In life we learn and make judgments about people based on the things they do and say, how they act and react. We learn about characters in literature the same way.

Characterization—The way an author helps the reader to learn about the characters.

Direct Characterization—The author directly states the character's traits.

Indirect Characterization—The author reveals the characteristics of a character through various methods, leaving it up to the reader to draw conclusions about the character based on this indirect information. Authors may indirectly characterize through any of the following methods:

- what the character says (dialogue)
- what the character does (actions)
- what the character thinks (interior monologue)
- what other characters say about him/her

The character journal below contains evidence that reveals the character of Ender, inferences about him based on the evidence, and commentary that explains how and/or why the evidence led to the inference.

1. Study the first two examples; then fill in the character journal with one more piece of evidence, an inference and commentary about Ender.

Ender

Evidence	<u>Inference</u> —Commentary
“Ender looked at Peter only to detect anger or boredom, the dangerous moods that almost always led to pain.” (lines 2-3)	<u>Vigilant</u> —Ender watches Peter cautiously. From past experience or intuition, Ender understands Peter well enough to predict his actions.
When Peter threatens Valentine, Ender ends the game and takes “off his mask.” (line 60)	<u>Protective</u> —Though Ender is willing to be a victim in Peter's game, he won't let Peter harm Valentine. Ironically, he will protect Valentine, but not himself.

2. Ender is characterized as _____, _____,
and _____.
3. While his relationship with Peter can be described as _____, his
relationship with Valentine is _____.
4. Why would Ender agree to play this game with Peter even though he knows it will not be a
“good game”?

5. Complete the character journal for Peter, adding two pieces of evidence with inferences and
commentary.

Peter

Evidence	Inference—Commentary
“Ender looked at Peter only to detect anger or boredom, the dangerous moods that almost always led to pain.” (lines 2-3)	<u>Brutal</u> —Despite his intelligence, Peter resorts to abusing Ender physically and psychologically as a way of dealing with anger and boredom. The more pain he causes Ender, the better he feels.

6. Peter is characterized as _____, _____,
and _____.

**Student Activity—Characterization and Relationships
Using Ender's Game**

7. His relationship with Ender can be described as _____ while his relationship with Valentine is _____.
8. Peter uses his size and violence to _____ Ender.
9. Although adults see Peter as _____ his brother and sister know he is really _____.
10. What motivates Peter to end the game?
11. Complete the character journal for Valentine, adding two pieces of evidence with inferences and commentary.

Valentine

Evidence	<u>Inference</u>—Commentary
“You’re all talk,” Valentine said. “You don’t mean any of it.” (line 44)	<u>Insightful</u> —Valentine recognizes that Peter uses his size and threats of violence to intimidate her and Ender. She also realizes that Peter won’t risk following through with his threats.

12. Valentine is characterized as _____,
_____, and _____.

13. Because Valentine's relationship with Ender is _____, her
relationship with Peter is _____.

14. Fill in the blanks below to illustrate the relationships between the characters. There may be
more than one possible answer for each blank.

a. _____ physically overpowers _____

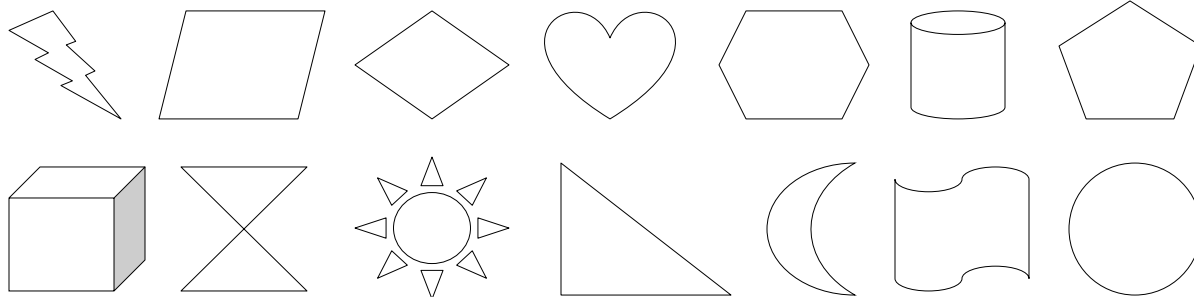
b. _____ logically manipulates _____

c. _____ threatens _____
through _____

d. _____ manipulates _____ with

e. _____ protects _____

15. Think about the three characters in this excerpt. Which symbol would best represent each
character? Justify your answers. You may choose from the symbols below or draw your own.



What is a foil?

Foil—a character designed to highlight qualities of another character

16. Are any characters foils for one another? Justify your answer.

17. Create a visual representation of the relationships among the characters. Is the relationship best depicted by puzzle pieces, gears, etc.? Explain how your visual representation illustrates the relationships.

18. In the excerpt, Ender and Peter play a literal game, “Buggers and Astronauts.” What other game(s) are the children playing?

Composition Activities

Analytical

1. Write an eight-sentence paragraph analyzing one of the characters. Incorporate evidence from the character journal to support your assertion.
2. Carefully read the excerpt from *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card. Then write an essay in which you analyze the author’s depiction of the characters and the relationships among them.

Multiple-Mode (Narrative, Imaginative)

Do you see people with these roles, playing out this same scene in

- your home?
- your school?
- your neighborhood?
- the business world?
- sports?
- politics?
- world affairs?
- the news?

From the list above select a scene and create characters. Consider the roles and relationships of the characters in this scene. Create a narrative in which the scene, the characters, and games being played are illustrated through the descriptions and dialogue.