



Creative Writing Lesson

Step 2- Describe your Character

Objective

Students will understand the following:

1. How to use interesting descriptive words and strong verbs to give a main character personality.
2. The beginning of the story should introduce the main character and basic plot.

(Note: This lesson follows our lesson plan: [Creative Writing Step 1- Creating a Story Idea](#), however it can be used independently.)

Grade Level

Grades 3-7

Standards

Supports common core standards in Language Arts.

1. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (CCS.ELA.Literacy.W.X.3 - Where “X” is the grade level.)

Materials

1. [Describe your Main Character Worksheet](#)
2. [Awesome Adjectives List](#)
3. [Vibrant Verbs List](#)
4. [Adverbs List](#)
5. [Creative Writing Prompts for Kids Worksheet \(optional\)](#)

Vocabulary

This lesson is based on our Super Easy Storytelling Formula. For a full explanation of the formula, visit our [website](#).

Super Easy Storytelling Formula: **Who** wants **What** but **Why Not** = A Fun Story

Additional Terms (Optional):

Protagonist – The main character. Who the story is about. (See [What is a Protagonist](#) for full definition and a printable poster.)

Antagonist—The person or force working against the main character. (See [What is an Antagonist](#) for full definition and a printable poster.)

Procedures

1. Start with a story idea

Every story needs a main character (protagonist) and a plot. In the beginning of the story we introduce the main character and his basic problem (The WHO, the WHAT and the WHY NOT from our super easy formula). This introduction sets the tone for the story and helps the reader understand who your character is including what he looks like, what his personality is like, and how he would normally act.

We'll use this basic story example throughout the lesson:

(WHO) A Fairy + (WHAT) Wants to go to the gnome village + (WHY NOT) but a dragon gets in the way

2. How we describe a character

The words you use to describe your character help paint a picture for the reader. Help them see and feel with your five senses. (Use the [Awesome Adjectives List](#) and [Vibrant Verbs List](#) for ideas.)

- What does the character **look like**? Think body type, size, skin, hair, clothes.
- **Sound like**? Think about its voice, any sounds it makes (or doesn't make) when it moves. This could be a twinkling voice, a rumbling growl, a thudding tail, a silent ninja.
- **Move like**? This is a great place to use descriptive action verbs. How would the character walk (lope, crawl, creep, stomp, slither)? How would it eat (chomp, slurp, devour, nibble)?
- **Act like**? This is about personality. Is the character kind/cruel, gentle/aggressive, brave/timid?
- **Feel like**? Is texture significant for your character? Consider a scaly dragon, a puffy marshmallow man, a wrinkly old witch.
- **Smell like**? Is smell important for your character? Does he have rotten breath or hair that smells of flowers?

✓Class Activity

Let's turn this basic story idea into two completely different stories by choosing different describing words.

1. Start with the basic story idea:

A Fairy + Wants to go to the gnome village + But a dragon gets in the way

2. Let's add just a couple words to describe our protagonist (the fairy) and the antagonist (the dragon) and see how these stories differ.

Option X: A **charming, young** fairy + wanted to go to the gnome village + but a **baby** dragon got in the way.

(Ask students what type of story they think this will be? Their answers should be something like: A cute story with some heartwarming adventures.)

Option Y: A **combat-boot-wearing-** fairy + wanted to go the gnome village + but a **ferocious** dragon got in the way.

(Ask students what type of story they think this will be? Their answers should be something like: An action adventure with battles and fire.)

3. Build out the character some more by using our five senses.

Ask students for adjectives or strong action verbs that describe the characters introduced above. (Use the [Awesome Adjectives List](#) and [Vibrant Verbs List](#) for ideas.)

Option 1: A charming, young fairy

Looks like: (ex: *sparkling skin, delicate wings, elegant arms and legs*)

Sounds like: (ex: *melodic, excited*)

Moves like: (ex: *graceful, quick*)

Acts like: (ex: *adventurous, curious, friendly*)

Smells like: (ex: *flowery, fresh*)

Feels like: (ex: *soft, smooth*)

Option 2: A combat-boot-wearing- fairy

Looks like: (ex: *grungy, tattered, muscular*)

Sounds like: (ex: *gruff, menacing*)

Moves like: (ex: *deliberate, forceful*)

Acts like: (ex: *intense, serious*)

Smells like: (ex: *sweaty, woody*)

Feels like: (ex: *hard muscles, slick skin*)

✓Student Activity

Using your own main character idea, complete the [Describing your Character Worksheet](#). (Use the [Awesome Adjectives list](#), [Adverbs List](#), and [Vibrant Verbs List](#) for ideas.)

(Need a character idea? Use a story idea from [Step 1: Story Ideas Lesson Plan](#), or use the [Creative Writing Prompts Worksheet](#).)

3. Write your introductory paragraph

Now that you know what your character is like, it's time to introduce him/her to your reader.

In the beginning of a story, you'll introduce the character and his/her basic problem (the WHO + WHAT+ WHY NOT.) Think about where the character is and what the character is doing as a way to show what he looks, feels,

acts like.

Include details about clothes, appearance, smells, textures, personality as they fit with the picture you are painting of where they character is and what he/she is doing.

✓Class Activity

Let's take the story idea above and write an introductory paragraph.

Story idea:

A **charming, young** fairy + wanted to go to the gnome village + but a **baby** dragon got in the way.

Intro Paragraph Example:

Fluttering from petal to petal, a young fairy giggled as she spun through the air and gently landed on a bright yellow rose. The fairy's dewy skin and flowing dress nearly blended in with the yellow rose, but the sparkling magenta slippers gave her away to the bees hovering nearby. She leaned in, cupped her pointy fingers around her petite pink lips and whispered merrily to the rose, "I'm going to the gnome village today. They are having their annual wagon races and I can't wait to cheer on my friends." Poised to twirl away once again, the fairy suddenly froze. A huff of hot air ruffled her spiky hair. A peculiar sound floated through her garden, one she felt she must investigate.

Example for younger students:

A cute, young fairy with pointed ears and small pink lips was excited to go to the gnome village. She danced around on the flowers and whispered to each one, "I can't wait to get to the gnome village today." Just as she was ready to twirl away, she felt a hot puff of air ruffle her spiky hair. A strange sound was in her quiet garden, and she had to investigate.

Ask students, what are some of the descriptive words (adjectives, verbs, adverbs) that help us to know:

- What the character looks like: *dewy skin, flowing yellow dress, magenta slippers, petite pink lips, pointy fingers, spiky hair*
- How the character moves: *fluttering, gently landed, poised to twirl away*
- What kind of mood/personality the character has: *giggled, danced, whispered*

✓Student Activity

Using your own main character, complete the write and introductory paragraph for your story. Remember to use where your character is and what he/she is doing to show details about what the character looks, acts, feel, smells, moves like.

More resources to extend the lesson

- [Writing Paper](#)- Printable lined paper that includes the super easy storytelling formula at the top
- [Picture + writing paper](#) – Printable lined paper with a box to draw a picture
- [Main Character Worksheet](#)- Create main character ideas
- [Story Planning Worksheet](#)- Create a story idea and add describing words
- [Creative Writing Step 3: Add Action Lesson Plan](#) – Continue the lesson by adding rising and falling action