



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 1: Unit 1: Lesson 11

Character Analysis: How Do Personal Possessions Reveal Aspects of Characters?



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

- I can analyze how specific dialogue or incidents in a plot propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (RL.8.3)
- I can cite text-based evidence that provides the strongest support for my analysis of literary text. (RL.8.1)
- I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about eighth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.8.1)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can make inferences to deepen my understanding of *Inside Out & Back Again*.
- I can cite evidence from the poems “Choice” and “Left Behind” to explain how this incident reveals aspects of Ha and her family members.
- I can participate in discussions about the text with a partner, small group, and whole class.

Ongoing Assessment

- QuickWrite 5 (from homework)
- Students’ annotated text
- Write-Pair-Share
- Jigsaw recording form

Agenda

1. Opening
 - A. Engaging the Reader: How Do Possessions Reveal Something about a Person? (10 minutes)
 - B. Review Learning Targets (2 minutes)
2. Work Time
 - A. Jigsaw, Part I: Focus on Different Characters in “Left Behind” (20 minutes)
 - B. Jigsaw, Part II: Small-Group Discussion: What Do Their Possessions Reveal about Ha and Her Family? (10 minutes)
3. Closing and Assessment
 - A. Debrief (3 minutes)
4. Homework
 - A. Complete QuickWrite 6 and read independent reading book

Teaching Notes

- This lesson uses a “Jigsaw” structure that students were introduced to in Lesson 7. Students work in “expert groups” to draw inferences about characters based on those characters’ possessions, then meet in their “home groups” of four to share what they learned. Note here that the second part of the Jigsaw takes place in small groups, not whole class.
- Pre-plan your home groups of four students. Students will move to expert groups based on the character that they choose to study more deeply.
- This lesson challenges students to infer about characters based on the symbolic significance of their possessions. Part A of the Opening makes this concept more concrete for students. But do not worry if students do not immediately grasp symbolism; it is an abstract concept that they will continue to work with as they analyze texts throughout the year.
- Encourage students if they are finding this challenging. There are several scaffolds in place to support students: a model and a recording form. They also get to write about their lingering questions as a part of their homework. Remind students that they will continue to develop inferring and drawing-conclusion skills throughout the module. Also reinforce the real-world connections for students: every day, we regularly come to conclusions or judgments about people based on what they have and how they describe those possessions. Throughout the lesson, remind students that often these judgments, or inferences, are correct, but sometimes they are not.
- Review Jigsaw protocol (Appendix 1)



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
evidence, incident, reveals, aspects, infer, symbol, symbolize; palm (of rice) (55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i> (book; one per student) • Jigsaw recording form (one per student) • QuickWrite 6 (one per student; for homework)

Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Sharing Annotations of “Doc-Lap at Last” and Review Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to sit with their small “home” groups (from previous lessons). Welcome students and continue to give them specific positive feedback on ways you see them persevering as close readers. • Tell them that today they will be closely reading a poem that will help them learn more about Ha’s family members by reading about the possessions that are important to them. Ask students, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What object is so important to Ha that she writes about it more than any other object in her diary?” • Listen for students to mention the papaya tree. Ask students, * “Why does she write about it so much?” • Allow students to turn and talk to discuss this question; when partners have an answer they may signal with thumbs up. Call on several students to respond. Ideally students will say it is important to her, she takes care of it, she has watched it grow from a seed, and she loves the papaya fruit. • Invite students to turn to page 55 and the poem “Choice.” They will notice that this is the poem where Ha describes the possessions she chose to pack for her escape. Reread the poem aloud for students to get the gist. Invite students to reread the poem and pay special attention to Ha’s one item she chose to pack in stanzas 2 through 4. • After students have reread these stanzas ask, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What makes this doll so special?” Provide students an opportunity to turn and talk before sharing with the class. Listen for students to notice that the doll is an important part of Ha’s childhood. Connect back to the concept of symbolism, which students briefly touched on in an earlier lesson. The doll symbolizes childhood for Ha. • Follow up with the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What does Ha mean when she writes, ‘I love her more for her scars?’” • Again, invite students to turn and talk with a partner and share with the whole class. • Back up to clarify one key vocabulary word in this poem that students may not understand from context: palms (stanza 1). Tell students that in this context, a palm is describing an amount of rice: a palm of rice is the amount of rice one can hold in the palm of one’s hand. Explain to students that Ha gave us a glimpse into what is important to her and that today’s work will show what is important to other members of her family. 	



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Review Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have the learning targets posted to review. Read aloud the first learning target: “I can make inferences to deepen my understanding of <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i>.”• Remind students that they have practiced this target a lot. But in today’s lesson, it will be harder: they will have to <i>infer</i> what certain objects mean to Ha or other members of her family.• Ask a volunteer to read the second target out loud:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “I can cite evidence from the poems ‘Choice’ and ‘Left Behind’ to explain how this incident reveals aspects of Ha and her family members.• Students should be familiar with this target from previous lessons. Ask students to briefly turn and talk with a partner about the words that seem most important in this target. Listen for students to mention <i>evidence</i>, <i>incident</i>, and <i>reveals aspects</i>. Clarify as needed.• Tell students that they just worked as a class to carefully analyze the poem “Choice” to think more about what the papaya means to Ha. They will now do something similar with a small group to examine another poem to help them understand Ha’s brothers and her mother as characters. Emphasize to students that as they keep reading the novel, it will be important to understand Ha’s mother and brothers, because they are the main people with whom Ha interacts.	



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Jigsaw, Part I: Focus on Different Characters in “Left Behind” (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students that today they will be doing a “Jigsaw,” much like they did with sections of the article “The Vietnam Wars. For this activity, they will begin in their “home groups” of four. In their home group, each person chooses a different character on which to focus. Students then leave their home groups to join a new “expert group” (with other students who focused on the same character). With that new expert group, students discuss their specific character. Then in Part II of the Jigsaw, students return to their original home group to share their learning. • Distribute the Jigsaw recording form. In their “home groups,” ask students to decide who will focus on which character in this poem: Brother Quang, Brother Vu, Brother Khoi, and Mother. (Point out that they can of course still pay attention to Ha as well, and that they can actually learn a lot about her from the way she describes her family and what matters to them.) • Tell students that in a moment, they will reread the poem “Left Behind” with their character as a focus. Direct them to look at the top of the recording form, and read aloud the example about Ha. Explain to the students that we already talked about how important the papaya tree is to Ha, and here is what we can <i>infer</i>, or conclude, about Ha based on this prized possession. Focus students on pages 57–59, “Left Behind.” They will need to locate the stanzas that refer to the character they are focusing on. • Ask students to transition to sit with their “expert” group: peers from other small groups who were assigned the same character. • Once they are settled into these new expert groups, ask students to reread the poem silently while focusing on their character. • Then ask students in these expert groups to share details they noticed, and work together to complete their graphic organizer. Be sure students know that in the next part of the lesson, they will be going back to their own small group, and will need to be ready to explain what they talked about with their “expert” group. • Circulate to support groups as needed. Commend students who are citing textual evidence and explaining their thinking. Probe to push students back into the text and to elaborate their inferences (e.g., “What do these items represent to the character? In what way are these items important? How do these items reflect the character’s interests, values, and beliefs? What can you infer about this character’s personality? What might these objects <i>symbolize</i>?”). • Encourage students if they are finding this challenging. The expert group arrangement and the model example on the Jigsaw recording form will scaffold this learning. Remind them that they will continue to develop inferring and drawing-conclusion skills throughout the module. Students will have an opportunity to write questions they still have as part of their homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students needing additional supports, you may decide to assign them to a particular expert group (or character) and provide them with a partially filled-in Jigsaw recording form for their assigned character.



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Jigsaw, Part II: Small-Group Discussion: What Do Their Possessions Reveal about Ha and Her Family? (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to return to their “home” small group. Tell them that in a moment, they will share their expertise. Give directions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose someone in the group to be a timekeeper. Each person has two minutes to share the character they studied, the objects that were mentioned about that character, what the possessions told them about the character, and how they know this. Be sure to record the information your peers share on the Jigsaw recording form. If you have time, discuss the question at the bottom of your Jigsaw recording form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may benefit from being given sentence starters for sharing out with their home groups. For example, “My character was _____. He/she left behind _____.” I infer these possessions tell us _____ about my character. The evidence I found to support my inference is _____.” For students who struggle with following multiple-step directions, consider displaying these directions using a document camera or Smartboard. Another option is to type up these instructions for students to have in hand.

Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Debrief (3 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite students to conclude their discussions and to refocus on today’s learning targets. Tell them that this was a very challenging thinking day in terms of making inferences based on textual evidence. Name specific behaviors you saw students doing that supported them in this work (e.g., citing specific lines, asking probing questions of their peers, etc.). Invite a few groups to share out their insights related to the synthesis question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What can you learn about Ha from the way she describes her family members?” Frame the homework, including the QuickWrite prompt. Review the word <i>symbol</i> as needed, reminding students about how they determined, in a previous lesson, that the papaya tree was a symbol of hope. This homework prompt is a challenge to them: what might the object <i>symbolize</i>? Be sure they notice the model paragraph about the papaya tree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing self-assessment and reflection supports all learners, but research shows it supports struggling learners most.

Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QuickWrite 6: Explain the more <i>symbolic</i> aspect of what the character you studied was forced to leave behind. Use specific evidence from your reading to support your thinking. Please continue reading in your independent reading book for this unit at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may benefit from having paragraph frames as a scaffold for QuickWrites.



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Supporting Materials



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Name:	
Date:	

Character	Possessions left behind + specific details from the text about that possession	What do these possessions tell you about this character?	How do you know?
Ha	<p>Papaya tree</p> <p>It has grown twice as tall as Ha (page 8)</p> <p>She wants to be the first one to see the fruit ripen (page 9)</p>	<p>This tells me that Ha values living things, is patient regarding things she loves and cares for, enjoys a reward for her time and care of something, and is hopeful.</p>	<p>I know this because she writes about the papaya tree so much, is careful about watching it grow, notices all of the small changes as it grows, and is eager for the delicious fruit. We also talked about how the papaya tree is a symbol for hope.</p>
Brother Quang			
Brother Vu			
Brother Khoi			
Mother			

What can you infer about Ha from how she describes her family members?



The title of the poem you just studied is “Left Behind.” For the specific character you studied during our Jigsaw activity today, explain the more symbolic aspect of what that person had to leave behind.

Write a complete paragraph in which you use specific evidence to support your thinking. You may use your text and the notes you collected in your journal or note-catchers to help you write this paragraph. A complete paragraph will meet all criteria:

- Answer the prompt completely
- Provide relevant and complete evidence
- Paragraph includes the following:
 - * A focus statement
 - * At least three pieces of specific evidence from the text
 - * For each piece of evidence, an analysis or explanation: what does this evidence mean?
 - * A concluding sentence

This QuickWrite is hard! Give it a try. Read the example below. This may help you get started.

Example:

Remember that in a previous lesson, we talked about the papaya tree being a *symbol* of hope. Below is a paragraph explaining what the papaya tree *symbolizes* for Ha.

When Ha had to say goodbye to the papaya tree by her house, it’s like she had to say goodbye to hope. In one of the very first poems, Ha said she likes to get up early in the morning to see the dew on the tree. She said, “I will be the first one to witness its ripening” (page 9). The word ripening makes it sound like something very good is happening with the tree: it is healthy and growing. In the poem “Two More Papayas,” she keeps watching for new papayas to grow on the tree, and is excited. She says, “I will see them first” and will eat their “thrilling chews” (page 21). But then when things get really dangerous and they decide to leave, they decide to cut the papaya tree down. It is “wet and crying.” It’s almost like Ha is crying too.