

CHARACTER

**A Cooperative Unit Using Literary Analysis to Reinforce
Character Education**

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The nationwide movement for high standards has not only determined what students should learn, but also has mandated that students demonstrate what they know. The Character Education Partnership has developed *Eleven Principles of Character Education*. Many of these principles address an entire school community and go far beyond the scope of this single instructional unit. CHARACTER introduces participating students to some of these principles. The cooperation and group decision-making required in CHARACTER address Applied Learning standards.

11 Principles of Character Education

Principle 1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

Principle 2. “Character” must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

Principle 3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

Principle 4. The school must be a caring community.

California Applied Learning Standards

Standard 1: Students will understand how to solve problems through a project design process. Students will design a product, service, or system to meet an identified need.

Standard 2: Students will understand how to solve problems through planning and organization.

Standard 6: Students will understand how to apply communication skills and techniques. Students will demonstrate ability to communicate orally and in writing.

Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 8: Students will understand the importance of teamwork. Students will work in teams to achieve objectives.

Standard 9: Students will understand personal skill development and its impact on their employability and success.

STANDARDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose	1
Overview	2
Setup Directions	3
Assessment	5
Unit Time Chart	7
Daily Directions	8
Day 1	8
Day 2	11
Day 3	14
Day 3 Extension (optional)	16
Day 4	18
Day 5	20
Day 5 Extension (optional)	22
Reproducible Masters	
DEFINITIONS	23
Cyberella Story Starter	24
ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES	25
COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES	29
STORY ENDING RUBRIC	30
Monster Masks Story Starter	31
STEREOTYPES	32
DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AND PHRASES	33
The Package Story Starter	34
RESPONSIBILITY	35
Responsibility Road Signs (optional)	36
Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave... Story Starter	37
HONESTY	38
The Silver Garden Story Starter	39
CARING COMMUNITY	40
CARING COMMUNITY STAR	41
GIFT EXCHANGE INFORMATION	42

STORIES
STARTERS
CONTENTS
CO

CHARACTER provides opportunities for students to study characterization of literary figures while introducing and strengthening character education concepts that are fundamental to successful human relations.

Knowledge

- Understanding definitions and aspects of character education

Skills

- Consider literary character behavior and relate it to real life
- Determine possible outcomes of fictional situations
- Decide on a personal belief system relating to character education

Attitudes

- Seeing behavior as a personal choice
- Recognizing the results of positive and negative behavior
- Realizing the individual role in establishing a peaceful environment

PURPOSE

OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

CHARACTER includes five lessons and up to seven hours of instruction. Students work in cooperative groups and rotate role responsibilities. Literature response activities educate students about five core ethical values of character education: fairness, respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring. At the conclusion of the unit, students apply what they have learned about character attributes to recognizing the value of establishing and being a part of a caring community.

Each lesson begins with a story starter prompt.

In response to “Cyberella,” students consider whether the main character is treated with *fairness*. The lesson concludes with student-produced plans to share group work in a fair way.

“Monster Masks,” leads students to consider the characters’ attitudes and then discuss *respect* as it relates to accepting others’ differences. A picture selection activity provides a valuable lesson on looking beyond outward appearances.

After critical analysis of the story “The Package” students reflect on *responsible* choices. An optional Responsibility Road Hazard Course reinforces the consequences of unwise choices.

Students analyze choices made by the main character in “Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave...” and evaluate the *honesty* of her actions. They reflect on their own opportunities to make good choices and reinforce the lesson by creating a web of trust in the classroom.

“The Silver Garden” leads students to apply the lessons learned earlier as they discuss examples of *caring*. As an optional activity, students use information obtained in a gift exchange drawing to bestow gifts of caring on classmates.

Students write endings for each of the story starters in response to specific prompts that reinforce the various character education lessons.

Like all Interact units, CHARACTER provides differentiated instruction through its various learning opportunities. Students learn and experience the knowledge, skills, and attitudes through all domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Adjust the level of difficulty as best fits your students. Assist special needs students in selecting activities that utilize their strengths and allow them to succeed. Work together with the Resource Specialist teacher, Gifted and Talented teacher, or other specialist to coordinate instruction.

SETUP DIRECTIONS

1. Before you Begin

Read this entire Teacher Guide. Decide how you will use CHARACTER in your classroom. Throughout the Teacher Guide, Interact employs certain editorial conventions to identify materials.

- a. In preparing materials, *Class set* means *one per student*.
- b. One *Day* on the **Unit Time Chart** is the length of a normal *class period*—50 minutes to one hour.
- c. All transparency masters and student handouts are listed by name using ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.
- d. Teacher reference pages are named in **Bold**.

2. Timing Options

CHARACTER consists of five lessons on essential components of character and the creation of a caring community. Two of the lessons have optional one-day extensions. Study the **Unit Time Chart** and decide how this unit will fit into your curriculum.

3. Grouping Students

Students work in cooperative groups of four throughout the unit. They rotate roles every day, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to lead and facilitate discussions, and research and record information.

4. Materials

The lessons in CHARACTER require a minimum of extra materials. Gather these materials prior to beginning the unit.

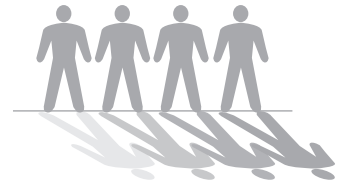
- Catalogs and magazines (age-related) — *several per group*
- Dictionaries — *two per group*
- Glue — *class set*
- Index cards — *two per student*
- Lined paper — *daily, for both groups and individuals*
- Note cards — *five per student*
- Pocket folders — *one per group*
- Scissors — *class set*
- Stapler — *one per group*
- Yarn — *one ball per class*

Additional Materials for Optional Activities

- Arts and crafts supplies — *enough for students*
- Container (box, hat, etc.) — *one (to hold GIFT EXCHANGE INFORMATION forms for drawing)*
- Index cards — *five per student*



Five–seven hours



Cooperative Groups of Four

SETUP DIRECTIONS

5. Preparing Materials

a. Catalogs and Magazines

Request that students bring in old magazines, catalogs, and sales flyers to cut up during the Day 2 activity on *Respect*. The magazines should be age-appropriate for your students.

b. Arts and Crafts Supplies

Prior to Day 5 gather the following arts and crafts supplies in quantities sufficient for students. See the Daily Directions for specific information.

- Buttons
- Faux jewels
- Gift wrap
- Glitter
- Paint
- Paper
- Ribbon

6. Reproducible Masters

Make copies of the following masters in the quantity indicated in *Italics*.

- DEFINITIONS (cut apart) — *one to post (optional)*
- **Story Starters** (all) — *transparencies (optional)*
- ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES (four) — *one of each per group*
- COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES — *one per group*
- STORY ENDING RUBRIC — *class set + one to post (optional)*
- STEREOTYPES — *one per group*
- DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AND PHRASES (cut apart) — *class set*
- RESPONSIBILITY — *one per group*
- RESPONSIBILITY ROAD SIGNS — *class set (optional)*
- HONESTY — *one per group*
- CARING COMMUNITY — *one per group*
- CARING COMMUNITY STAR — *class set*
- GIFT EXCHANGE INFORMATION — *class set (optional)*

8. Debriefing

Encourage student observations and conclusions in open class discussions.

- a. Prompts within the Daily Directions or on student handouts guide daily debriefing discussions about the lessons within each Story Starter.
- b. Daily writing assignments reinforce and allow students to apply the character education lessons of the unit.

9. Extensions

If your schedule allows, the two extension activities reinforce the basic character education lessons.

1. Individual and Group Assessments

CHARACTER provides ample opportunity to assess student learning.

- a. Individual Assessments
 - Responses to and participation in the activities
 - Responses to the Story Starter discussions
 - Story Starter endings
- b. Group Assessments
 - Responses to the activities
 - Cooperative accomplishments of daily tasks

2. Determine Assessment Standards

CHARACTER is designed for students from grades four to eight. Therefore, establish your own level of what “meets the standard” for your grade level.

- a. “Meeting the standard” on the daily activities has two parts, participation in class discussion, and participation in the actual activity.
- b. “Meeting the standard” on the written activity of completing the Story Starter prompts provides opportunity to assess student understanding. Either the students can incorporate the character lessons and devise a reasonable conclusion or they cannot.
- c. Students who do not “meet the standard” on any part of the assessment must be required to redo that section. Sometimes students need a second chance to demonstrate what they know.

3. Performance Assessments

In addition to the class discussions and participation, CHARACTER includes opportunities for students to devise their own rules of behavior and definitions of concepts and then to observe/apply them. Post class-derived rules, definitions, and Story Starter endings throughout the unit.

- a. The COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES provide an excellent guide to assess cooperative group learning using class-defined rules of behavior.
- b. Use the optional STORY ENDING RUBRIC to reinforce proper writing techniques (or devise your own to reflect local requirements).
- c. Evaluate students using the rubrics at least *twice*: after the first day and again mid-way through the unit. After the first evaluation, students generally attend to their tasks better and work to improve their rubric scores by the end of the unit.
- d. Individual students may strive to achieve a score of “4” using each of these rubrics.

4. What do Rubric Scores Mean?

When completing performance assessments, focus on “student work.” This work is *not* limited to written work. It includes demonstrated skills, oral exchanges, individual and cooperative group behavior, processes, strategies, and any other evidence that proves that the students have learned the targeted content or skill and can apply what they know.

4 — Exemplary

Generally this rating describes work that exceeds the standard for the activity. The descriptor includes words such as “consistently,” “complete,” “with detail,” “actively,” and “willingly.” Students who earn a “4” demonstrate leadership and knowledge during participation in the unit activities.

3 — Expected

Generally this rating describes work that meets the standard with quality. The descriptors lack some of the positive adjectives of a “4,” but this student has mastered the content or skill and can demonstrate his/her understanding in an application setting.

2 — Nearly There

Generally this rating describes work that almost meets the standard. Sometimes inconsistent effort or a misconception of the content will result in a “2” rating. This student needs to try a little harder, or needs to revise his/her work in order to meet the standards described.

1 — Incomplete

Generally this rating describes work that has not yet met the standard in content and/or skill. This student will require more instruction and another opportunity to demonstrate a knowledge or skill, or will require alternative instruction and assessment.

5. Building a Caring Community within your Classroom

Heighten the awareness of your students and engage them in improving behaviors and values during and after this unit.

- a. Encourage students to monitor their own thinking, feelings, and behavior.
- b. Encourage students to share and be heard in a safe environment.
- c. Conduct weekly class meetings to discuss both positive and negative behaviors and experiences
 - Encourage compliments
 - Acknowledge cooperative accomplishments
 - Brainstorm solutions for negative experiences



Such proactive discussions will reinforce the first four Principles of Character Education.

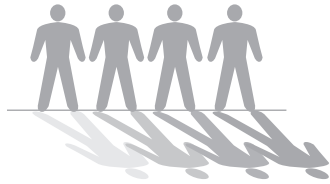
UNIT TIME CHART



DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Group Work Rules Activity • Cyberella Story Starter • ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES • COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES • DEFINITIONS: Fair Person • STORY ENDING RUBRIC (optional) 	<p>Respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypes Activity • Monster Masks Story Starter • STEREOTYPES • DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AND PHRASES • DEFINITIONS: Respectful Person 	<p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Package Story Starter • RESPONSIBILITY • DEFINITIONS: Responsible Person
DAY 3 Extension	DAY 4	DAY 5
<p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility Road Hazard Course Activity • RESPONSIBILITY ROAD SIGNS (optional) 	<p>Honesty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web of Trust Activity • Oh What a Tangled Web We Weave... Story Starter • HONESTY • DEFINITIONS: Honest Person 	<p>Caring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Silver Garden Story Starter • CARING COMMUNITY • CARING COMMUNITY STAR • DEFINITIONS: Caring Person
DAY 5 Extension		
<p>Caring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and Exchanging Gifts Activity • GIFT EXCHANGE INFORMATION 		

DAILY DIRECTIONS

DAY 1



Cooperative Groups of Four



Suggest that students store all handouts and any papers they complete during the day in these folders.

Cyberella introduces Principles 1 and 2 of the 11 Principles of Character Education. The goal is to engage your students to evaluate thinking, feeling, and behavior, first relating to the characters in the Story Starter, then relating to their own lives.

Fairness

Objectives

- Introduce the unit
- Learn about *Fairness*
- Develop class Cooperative Group Work Rules

Materials

- **Cyberella** Story Starter — *teacher reference + transparency (optional)*
- ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES (four) — *one of each per group*
- COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES — *one per group*
- STORY ENDING RUBRIC — *class set + one to post (optional)*
- DEFINITIONS: Fair Person — *one to post (optional)*
- Dictionaries — *two per group*
- Lined paper — *class set + one per group*
- Pocket folders — *one per group*
- Stapler — *one per group*

Procedure

1. Introduce the unit by explaining that students are about to explore core ethical values that help to build a humane, caring community within their classroom and their school.
2. Place students in their cooperative groups. Distribute a pocket folder and four ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES descriptions to each group. Read with the students, explaining how the cooperative groups will work and how students will rotate roles every day.
 - a. Assign student roles for Day 1 and have the students “sign in” by writing the number **1** under **Day**, and writing their own name under the **Group** role identification. Tell them that the **Character Lesson** for Day 1 is *Fairness*.
 - b. Answer any questions about procedures or expectations.
 - c. Roles rotate in the following manner:
Leader becomes **Facilitator**
Facilitator becomes **Researcher**
Researcher becomes **Recorder**
Recorder becomes **Leader**
3. Read the **Cyberella** Story Starter.

4. Begin a class discussion. Include the following points:
 - a. Using clues from the story, how would you describe Sarah's character?
 - b. Do you think Sarah is being treated unfairly? Why or why not?
 - c. How might Sarah's teacher ensure that students are treated fairly for a group work assignment?
 - d. Do students have a responsibility to treat others fairly when they are assigned to complete group work?

5. Distribute one COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES to each group. Read aloud as a class or within groups. Lead a discussion to ensure that students reflect upon the core ethical values (Principle 3) outlined on the handout. Either distribute lined paper to the students, or have students take out their own paper.

6. Tell the students that they have 10–15 minutes to complete the COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK RULES within their groups.

7. After 10–15 minutes (allow more time as necessary) call the groups together to begin a whole-class discussion of the final products of the groups. On the board or with an overhead projector, devise a set of cooperative group work rules that is acceptable to the entire class. If students need guidance, lead them to include some or all of these concepts in their rules:
 - Discuss and share responsibilities, making sure that each one of us is doing our part to complete our project
 - Share our ideas and accept without criticism others' ideas, contributions, and feelings
 - Reach decisions by consensus, and if everyone in the group does not like an idea, start over with a new plan
 - Take turns being the leader in the group so that each of us can learn leadership skills
 - Share in the responsibilities of gathering materials, writing down notes, and cleaning up

8. Read the following definition of a ***fair person***: *one who is cooperative, follows rules, takes responsibility for his or her own actions, and considers the point of view of others.* Post the definition of a Fair Person for students' reference.



By leading the discussion of the Story Starter on Day 1, you are modeling for students how to conduct such discussions for the remaining days of the unit. Guide your students to consider thinking, feeling, and behavior within their discussion.

Distribute dictionaries at this time or have students get their dictionaries while you distribute the handouts.

Suggest that the Facilitators assist the Researchers in completing their tasks today.



10–15 minutes

Devising a class set of cooperative group work rules is an excellent exercise in proactive consideration and application of core ethical values (Principle 3).