Characters with Character

Enduring Understandings:

- Seeing the world through the eyes of others, no matter how different from you they are, makes for a great writer.
- The characters come before the story. Once you figure them out and set them loose, the story unfolds on its own.
- It's important for a character, picture, place, world, to feel somehow natural regardless of the writing type.
- A good character is one that feels as real as a personal friend or enemy.
- Good stories mirror true life.
- Universal truths about human nature are found in literature.

Essential Questions:

- What makes characters in historical fiction believable?
- Why do characters do what they do and feel how they feel?
- What are the details that make a story seem realistic?
- Why can readers see their own life in some stories?
- What can a reader learn from reading historical fiction?
- What strategies could you use to see the world through the eyes of others?
Unit Title: Characters with Character
Grade: 7
Duration: 6 weeks

Critical Content:
- Historical fiction and nonfiction
- Historical context
- Textual evidence
- Audience and purpose
- Narrative elements:
  - Protagonist
  - Plot
  - Character development
  - First person perspective
  - Dialogue
  - Monologue
  - Relevant descriptive detail
  - Sensory details
  - Event sequencing
  - Pacing
  - Transition words, phrases, clauses
  - Setting (historical)
- Compare
- Contrast
- Phrases
- Clauses
- Etymology
- Relevant
- Irrelevant

Critical Skills:
- Analyze fictional text for narrative elements that students can use in their writing.
- Cite textual evidence.
- Explain the historical context of a story.
- Determine how time, place and character create a perspective.
- Compare and contrast the historical facts versus the fictional elements in a historical fiction piece.
- Write a narrative for a particular audience.
- Use relevant descriptive details in writing.
- Sequence events effectively in writing.
- Use a dictionary to find word origin.
- Select precise words and phrases
- Use a thesaurus to improve word choice in writing.
- Perform a monologue
- Summarize informational text.
### Established Goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Targets</th>
<th>Focused</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RL.7.1</strong></td>
<td>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
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<td><strong>RL.7.2.</strong></td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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<td><strong>RL.7.3.</strong></td>
<td>Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</td>
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<td><strong>RL.7.4.</strong></td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.</td>
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<td><strong>RL.7.9:</strong></td>
<td>Compare/contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.</td>
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<td><strong>RI.7.1:</strong></td>
<td>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
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<td><strong>RI.7.3:</strong></td>
<td>Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).</td>
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<td><strong>W.7.3</strong></td>
<td>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</td>
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<td>b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</td>
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<td>c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</td>
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<td>d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action</td>
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</table>
and convey experiences and events.
e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

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<tr>
<th>SL.7.1</th>
<th>Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</th>
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<tr>
<td>L.7.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.7.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</td>
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<td>L.7.4</td>
<td>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibility from a range of strategies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.</td>
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Unit Title: Characters with Character  
Grade: 7  
Duration: 6 weeks

Performance Tasks

**Task 1: Medieval Novel Lit. Circles**

**Description:**

- An introduction to the Middle Ages using informational and picture books in English class, and activities within world history class (cross-curricular connection) provides historical background.
- Teacher presents short book-talk on each novel for the unit for students.
- Students choose top 3 choices in order of preference
- Teacher creates lit circles based on student interest and reading level.
- Calendar is given to each group to determine and record page deadlines and number of lit circle meetings (at least 6 to be determined by teacher).
- Lit circle tasks are assigned (rotating so that each student completes each of the 6 tasks at least once and each task is covered during each meeting).
- Final book project will be determined by group one week prior to finishing book.
- Each of the 6 tasks and the final project will be assessed at the end of the unit.

**You will need:**

- Novel sets of the following:
  - *A Single Shard*
  - *Adam of the Road*
  - *The Midwife's Apprentice*
  - *The Hero and the Crown*
  - *The Door in the Wall*
  - *The Seeing Stone*
- lit circle tasks (see appendix)
- project ideas
- folder for each group
- blank calendars for each group

**Core Standard(s):** RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3, RL.7.4
**Task 2: "Character with Character" Story**

Description: Students will write their own well-developed "Character with Character" story. It can take place during the Middle Ages or in another time period the student chooses. Students should incorporate narrative elements and techniques learned in this unit. Characterization techniques should help develop the theme of the story. Students will be given the opportunity to talk with a partner prior to writing the first draft, and again at the end, to revise and strengthen their story. Guide students in editing their writing for phrases and clauses, as well as commas separating coordinate adjectives. Students can add visual aids or illustrations to their story once it is complete. Stories can be published on your class web page.

Core Standard(s): RL.7.2, W.7.3a-e, L.7.1a, L.7.2a

**Task 3: Reflective Essay**

Description:

Students will write a written response to this question based on the novels read and discussed in class: *What makes characters in historical fiction believable?* They should cite specific details from texts read. After teacher reviews the first drafts, students should work with a partner to strengthen their writing and edit for phrases and clauses, as well as commas separating coordinate adjectives. Students should be prepared to share their essay with a small group or as a podcast.

Core Standard(s): RL.7.9, W.7.9a,b, L.7.1a, L.7.2a
**Suggested Learning Experiences with Ideas for Differentiation**

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<th>R) = Remediation</th>
<th>E) = Extension</th>
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### Pre-teaching Activity
Use the Essential questions as short writing prompts to get students thinking about the big ideas of this unit. Student responses should be used as a springboard for a class discussion about the big ideas and to provide real-life connections with unit content and skills.

### Establishing Historical Context
With help from the world history teacher, provide historical background for the Middle Ages. Use picture books such as *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* by Laura Amy Schlitz and other activities from world history class. (RI.7.4)

### Where do words come from?
How does knowing their origin help us not only to spell the words, but also understand their meaning? This is why we study etymology. Provide students with a list of terms related to Medieval times (i.e., chivalry, feudalism, medieval, secular, serf, vassal, etc.). Have students explore word origins and meanings and create a personal dictionary of terms found, learned, and used throughout this unit. This dictionary can be used all year long to explore the semantics (meanings) of words and their origins, especially those with Greek and Latin roots. (L.7.4a,c)

### Word Stems
*You Can't Spell the Word Prefix Without a Prefix* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4).  
*Flip-a-Chip: Examining Affixes and Roots to Build Vocabulary* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)  
*Improve Comprehension: A Word Game Using Root Words and Affixes* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)  
*Internalization of Vocabulary Through the Use of a Word Map* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)

### Comic Strip of Key Events
After reading *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* by David Macaulay, outline the major steps involved in constructing a cathedral by creating a comic strip or digital slide presentation of key events. Be mindful of important details.  
Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information or mark your text with sticky notes so you can cite the text, if needed.  
Practice the MLA citation format introduced by your teacher. (RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.6)

### Citing Textual Evidence
As students read their selected novels that take place in the Middle Ages, they take notes in their journal about how the characters are (E: Create a movie about a character’s experience.)
affected by the time period in which they lived. Teach them to make notes of page numbers with relevant information or mark their text with a sticky notes, so they can cite the text during future assignments or group discussions.

- Where was that person’s place in the feudal system?
- What was his or her economic status?
- Where did the character live, and why?
- What did the character’s parents do, and what does this mean for the character?
- What was that character’s context? What was happening in the world?
- What was a typical day like for this person?

**Mini-lesson on the function of phrases and clauses**

After review of phrases and clauses, students should find five phrases and five clauses in a book they are reading in class and explain their function. Then, students should select a piece of their own writing, underline and label phrases and clauses, and ensure that there are no misplaced or “dangling” modifiers. (L.7.1b)

**Monologue**

Students to choose a monologue or dialogue from *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* by Laura Amy Schlitz that has a strong character. Students to memorize and/or recite the monologue, or work with a classmate to present the dialogue as a dramatic reading and record it using a video camera so they can evaluate their performance. (SL.7.6)

**Art as Insight into History**

Discuss as a class how art can provide insight into a historical time period. Show the Chora Church mosaics alongside the Hagia Sophia mosaics. Both sets of mosaics were created to endow the viewer with a sense of religion’s role in everyday life—since they could neither read nor write, many viewers relied on visual images. What do you see happening in these images? What events may be occurring? Do these mosaics provide a sense of power? Who is the dominant figure? What message would religious leaders want their viewers to take away? (SL.7.1a,b)

**Historically Accurate? Graphic Organizer**

Compare and contrast characters and plots from the various novels read and discuss how authors accurately portray or alter history. After class discussion, have students create a Venn that outlines the similarities and differences among three of the characters discussed.

Or

Read an historical fictional and an actual account of an event and compare and contrast using a graphic organizer.

- Immigration
- Egypt
- Possible cross-curricular assignment with history teacher
<table>
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<th>Comma Mini-Lesson</th>
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| Mini-lesson on the strategy of using and to determine whether or not a comma is needed between two adjectives of equal importance. If the word and makes sense between two adjectives, then a comma is needed. Give students examples of sentences (without commas), and have them determine whether a comma is needed or not and why. For example:  
- The winding bumpy road led to a beautiful picnic spot. (needs a comma)  
- The broken rear view mirror needed repair. (no comma)  
Then, students will choose a piece of their own writing, underline words that could use more description, and add adjectives—some with and some without commas. Have them check their work with a partner. (L.7.2a) |

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<th>Enduring Understandings</th>
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<td>At the end of the unit, revisit the Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings as a way to &quot;connect all the dots&quot; of the unit through writing prompts and class or small group discussion. This will provide good closure to unit by helping students to make connections and demonstrate relevancy of material covered.</td>
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Resources

Novels and stories:

- *A Single Shard* (Linda Sue Park)
- *Adam of the Road* (Elizabeth Janet Gray)
- *Anna of Byzantium* (Tracy Barrett)
- *Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess* (Richard Platt and Chris Riddell)
- *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* (Avi)
- *Favorite Medieval Tales* (Mary Pope Osborne)
- *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* (Laura Amy Schlitz)
- *Old English Riddles: From the Exeter Book* (Michael Alexander)
- *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Djibril Tamsir Niane)
- *Sundiata: Lion King of Mali* (David Wisniewski)
- *The Midwife’s Apprentice* (Karen Cushman) (easier to read but excellent)
- *The Seeing Stone* (Arthur Trilogy, Book One) (Kevin Crossley-Holland)
- *The World of King Arthur and His Court: People, Places, Legend, and Lore* (Kevin Crossley-Holland)
- *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354* (James Rumford)

Nonfiction:

- *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* (David Macaulay)
- *How Would You Survive in the Middle Ages* (How Would You Survive... Series) (Fiona MacDonald, David Salariya and Mark Peppe)
- *Joan of Arc* (Diane Stanley)
- *Manners and Customs in the Middle Ages* (Marsha Groves)
- *Outrageous Women of the Middle Ages* (Vicki Leon)
- *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (Mark Twain)
- *The Horrible, Miserable Middle Ages: The Disgusting Details About Life During Medieval Times* (Fact Finders: Disgusting History Series) (Kathy Allen)
- *The Medieval World* (Philip Steele)
- *The Middle Ages: An Illustrated History* (Oxford Illustrated Histories) (Barbara Hanawalt)
- *The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay: Life in Medieval Africa* (Patricia and Fredrick McKissack)

Art, Music and Media

- Art
  - Byzantine
    - Mosaics at Chora Church, Istanbul, Turkey (1315-1321)
    - Mosaics at Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey (562–1204)
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<th>Islamic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Textile art of the Caucasus, Persia</td>
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<td>The Islamic Art Collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)</td>
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<th>Western Europe: Gothic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France (1193-1250)</td>
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<td>Notre Dame de Paris, Paris, France (1163-1250)</td>
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<th>Western Europe: Medieval</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attributed to Jean de Touyl, Reliquary Shrine (ca. fourteenth century)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child's Suit of Armor, French or German (ca. sixteenth century)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giotto di Bondone, Madonna di Ognissanti (1306-1310)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herman, Paul, and Jean de Limbourg, The Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc du Berry (1405-1408/1409)</td>
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<td>Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi, Annunciation (1330)</td>
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- Music
  - Gregorian chants and madrigals

Other:
- Building Big (PBS)
- Middle Ages for Kids (Kidipede: History and Science for Middle School Kids)
- Middle Ages (Tolt Middle School, Carnation, WA)
- Glimpses of Medieval Life (The British Library)
- Multiple Texts: Multiple Opportunities for Teaching and Learning (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.2)
- Analyzing and Comparing Medieval and Modern Ballads (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.5)
  (This is a lesson for grades 9-12, but could be modified for seventh grade.)