Body Biography for Characterization with Any Text (Fiction and Nonfiction)

Teaching Pack

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Let the text paint the picture!

**Purpose:** The purpose of this lesson is to have students experience how the text can paint the picture of a character. They are also making inferences and supporting their ideas from the text. This type of activity would be excellent for either fiction or nonfiction. I have used following a reading of a play and even a nonfiction speech with a strong speaker.

**Suggestions for Use:** Have students work independently or place them in groups. Consider having several of the main characters (if using fiction), in a hat and have students draw them out randomly. This way, more characters are being covered! Students can illustrate their characters on the coordinating blank body biography. I also like to give students the color symbols chart for them to consider as they illustrate their characters. They always seem to be very thoughtful about it. I encourage them to have words and objects from the text with their character. As always, build in time to share and publish!

**Duration:** about 90 minutes

**For assessment:** Feel free to design a rubric for grading. I typically grade for completion, teamwork, text-accuracy, and creativity. For a formal summative assessment, follow with one of the constructed response performance tasks included in the bundle!

**Common Core Anchor Standards:**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.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.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.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.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Body Biography for Characterization
Objective: analyze how author reveals character

For your assigned character, you will be creating a body biography -- a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character's life within the literary work. As always, the choices you make should be based on the text; for you will be explaining (and thus, in a sense, defending) them.

Author’s Tools of Characterization
The author gives us information about the characters through:
1) What the author says; 2) what the other characters say about him/her; 3) what the character does; 4) what the character says; 5) what the character thinks

Label the following body parts with examples from the story (you can use your own words) on your body worksheet. Be sure to give your character style after you add the details (for example, color, props, symbols, clothing, etc.). Your details must be true to the character as he/she is depicted in the play. Use the space below to plan your body biography.

**Chillingworth Example** (from *The Scarlet Letter*): Heart=Green with Jealousy
Hands=Torture and Revenge

**Eyes**—(something the character knows or sees that no one else does) *one for each eye

**Ears** – (what other characters say about him/her) *one for each ear

**Mouth** – (what the character says)

**Heart** – (your character’s feelings/emotions)

**Hands** – (something he/she wants most) *one for each hand

**Feet** – (something they have done) *one for each foot
Body Biography Samples from *The Crucible*:

- "You are deceived."
  ~Francis Nurse

- "The pure in heart need no lawyers."
- Sees Abigail through rose-colored glasses.

- "You know in your black heart the girls are frauds.
  ~John Proctor

- John Proctor is combined with anti-Christ!