

Lesson: Characters, Settings, and Main Events

Lesson Topic: Identify character traits

Question 1:

An Excerpt from Joy Kita's "Ghost Hunters: the Case of the Rumpled Sheets"

My name is Bobby Trax. I am the President of Ghost Hunters Inc., the best professional hunters of the supernatural in the area. To be fair, we live in Minten, Michigan. It's the dullest town in the collective United States. Claiming to be the best ghost hunters in Minten is like saying my unicorn is prettiest in the land. There are no other ghost hunters. There is no need for any, according to most of our naysayers, and we do have our share of critics.

There is a surprising amount of people who do not like fifth graders messing around in their business, especially when said fifth graders put you out of business or in prison like our last case. Whether people call us detectives, ghost hunters, or nosey brats, it will never stop us from doing what we do best: hunting ghosts. The fact that we have yet to find a ghost means nothing. We will be even more prepared when the time comes. Minten is thriving with otherworldly beings. I just know it

Which details from the text reveal that Bobby is proud of the Ghost Hunters?

Check all that are true.

- Minten is thriving with otherworldly beings. I just know it.
- There is a surprising amount of people who do not want fifth graders messing around in their business.
- I am the President of Ghost Hunters, Inc., the best professional hunters of the supernatural in the area.
- Whether people call us detectives, ghost hunters, or nosey brats, it will never stop us.

Question 2:

Olivia woke to the sound of shovels scraping against the asphalt of the driveway outside. For a moment, she snuggled back into the warmth of her bed, but then a thought popped into her head, "I wonder why Dad hasn't woken me up for school yet." Suddenly, she realized, "It must be a snow day!" Olivia always enjoyed school, but she also loved adventure. She raced down the stairs, grabbing her coat, and pushing her feet into boots before tumbling out the door.

From this passage, we can tell that Olivia has a sense of fun and adventure. Which of the following sentences shows this through *direct* characterization?

- Suddenly, she realized, "It must be a snow day!"
- Olivia woke up to the sound of shovels scraping against the asphalt of the driveway outside.
- Olivia always enjoyed school, but she also loved adventure.
- She raced down the stairs, grabbing her coat, and pushing her feet into boots before tumbling out the door.

Question 3:

Olivia woke to the sound of shovels scraping against the asphalt of the driveway outside. For a moment, she snuggled back into the warmth of her bed, but then a thought popped into her head, "I wonder why Dad hasn't woken me up for school yet." Suddenly, she realized, "It must be a snow day!" Olivia always enjoyed school, but she also loved adventure. She raced down the stairs, grabbing her coat, and pushing her feet into boots before tumbling out the door.

From this passage, we can tell that Olivia has a sense of fun and adventure. Which of the following sentences shows this through *indirect* characterization?

- She raced down the stairs, grabbing her coat, and pushing her feet into boots before tumbling out the door.
- Olivia woke up to the sound of shovels scraping against the asphalt of the driveway outside.
- Olivia always enjoyed school, but she also loved adventure.
- Suddenly, she realized, "It must be a snow day!"

Question 4:

Read this excerpt and then answer the questions that follow.

**An Excerpt from *The Secret Garden*
by Frances Hodgson Burnett**

She walked back into the first kitchen-garden she had entered and found the old man digging there. She went and stood beside him and watched him a few moments in her cold little way. He took no notice of her and so at last she spoke to him.

"I have been into the other gardens," she said.

"There was nothin' to prevent thee," he answered crustily.

"I went into the orchard."

"there was no dog at th' door to bite thee," he answered.

There was no door there into the other garden," said Mary.

"What garden? He said in a rough voice, stopping his digging for a moment.

"The one on the other side of the wall," answered Mistress Mary. "There are trees there—I saw the tops of them. A bird with a red breast was sitting on one of them and he sang."

To her surprise the surly old weather-beaten face actually changed its expression. A slow smile spread over it and the gardener looked quite different. It made her think that it was curious how much nicer a person looked when he smiled. She had not thought of it before.

He turned about to the orchard-side of his garden and began to whistle—a low soft whistle. She did not understand how such a surly man could make such a coaxing sound. Almost the next moment a wonderful thing happened. She heard a soft little rushing flight through the air—and it was the bird with the red breast flying to them, and he actually alighted on the big clod of earth quite near to the gardener's foot.

"Here he is," chuckled the old man, and then he spoke to the bird as if he were speaking to a child.

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Question 5:

Based on the excerpt you just read, the old gardener seems _____ toward the girl, but _____ toward the bird.

- warm ; uninterested
- trusting ; affectionate
- gruff ; affectionate
- uninterested ; annoyed

Lesson Topic: Identify and describe a first person narrator

Question 1:

What is the name of the narrator in this passage?

With the team in tow, I headed back into the locker room, a towel slung over my shoulder. "It's okay. We'll get them next time, Sarah."
"There might not be a next time," Sarah said. "With this loss, the Gators will have to lose for us to have any chance of getting into the playoffs."
I put my arm around her shoulder. The noise of the crowd disappeared as the locker room door closed behind us. "Listen to what Coach Griffin said. So long as we tried our best, we can say that we've won. Ignore Kathy. It's not all about winning."
"You're right, Clarice," Sarah said. "I can understand why you're team captain."

- Coach Griffin
- Clarice
- Sarah
- Kathy

Question 2:

What is the name of the narrator in this passage?

I didn't always want to be in student government, but I had to be so that I could get into a good high school. I still remember my first speech. It must've been four months back.
Amy, Brandon, and I were seated at a long table, in the middle of which was Mrs. Andrews. Hundreds of students sat in the bleachers before us. To keep my attention off them, I fiddled with the placard place before me. It read "Thomas" in fancy lettering.
Mrs. Andrews cleared her throat and spoke into the microphone. "Let us now begin the panel discussion on eating healthy. I would like to call on Brandon to speak first."

- Thomas
- Amy
- Brandon
- Mrs. Andrews

Question 3:

What characteristic does the passage reveal about the narrator?

The flight attendant guided me to my seat. It was a window seat. I read somewhere that window seats are more dangerous than aisle seats. I spoke up, "Mam, I would prefer an aisle seat."
"I'm sorry, sir. But you registered for a window seat, and this flight is fully booked."
Reluctantly, I sat in my dangerous window seat. I buckled up and gripped the armrests. Then I checked below my seat to make sure the flotation device was there.
A woman and her son sat down beside me.
I thought of asking them to trade seats, but I was too paralyzed by fear to move. I pictured the need for an emergency landing, with me unable to get out because I was stuck by the window.

- He tends to argue with strangers.
- He is superstitious about travel.
- He does not like children.
- He is prone to nervousness.

Question 4:

Based on this passage, what is the narrator's most striking physical characteristic?

No matter where I went, people always looked up and asked me if I played basketball. I always said, "I don't play basketball. Why should I?" They would always start, "Because you're—" "Amazing at everything," I would say. "That I am. I should play basketball, become president, and cure cancer, all before I graduate from high school. What are your plans?" That response always got people to leave me alone, and that's just the way I liked it.

- his height
- his handsomeness
- his weight
- his eyes

Question 5:

What characteristic does this passage reveal about the narrator?

Ryan always pushed me whenever he saw me walk down the hall. It was not a complete shove, but more of a mean nudge. Whenever he did, I did my best to keep walking, lest I provoke him more. One day, I had had enough. Right as he outstretched his arm, I grabbed it and told him not to touch me. I said, "Not today, Ryan." He looked completely shocked that I had stood up for myself. He said, "And what are you going to do about it?" "I'm not going to tell you twice," I said, releasing his arm but giving him a stern look. "Leave me alone." "Sure thing, weirdo," he said, clearly scared. I watched him as he walked away, proud that I had finally stood up for myself.

- He is fearful.
- He is assertive.
- He is argumentative.
- He is exhausted.

Lesson Topic: Compare and contrast characters

Question 1:

Read the passage.

Adapted from **How the Camel Got His Hump**

By Rudyard Kipling

In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all, and the Animals were just beginning to work for Man, there was a Camel, and he lived in the middle of a Howling Desert because he did not want to work. So he ate sticks and thorns and milkweed and prickles, most excruciating idle; and when anybody spoke to him he said 'Humph!' Just 'Humph!' and no more.

Presently the Horse came to him on Monday morning, with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth, and said, 'Camel, O Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us.'

'Humph!' said the Camel; and the Horse went away and told the Man.

Presently the Dog came to him, with a stick in his mouth, and said, 'Camel, O Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us.'

'Humph!' said the Camel; and the Dog went away and told the Man.

Presently the Ox came to him, with the yoke on his neck and said, 'Camel, O Camel, come and plough like the rest of us.'

'Humph!' said the Camel; and the Ox went away and told the Man.

At the end of the day the Man called the Horse and the Dog and the Ox together, and said, 'Three, O Three, I'm very sorry for you (with the world so new-and-all); but that Humph-thing in the Desert can't work, or he would have been here by now, so I am going to leave him alone, and you must work double-time to make up for it.'

Which of the following is the most accurate and best supported comparison of the Animals and the Camel?

- The Animals and the Camel have many differences and few similarities.
- The Animals and the Camel are very different. The Animals work hard for man, while the Camel hides in the middle of a Howling Desert to avoid work.
- The Animals and the Camel are mostly similar. They all live in the Howling Desert, wearing gear that helps them work for Man.
- The Animals and the Camel have many similarities and few differences.

Question 2:

An Excerpt from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*

"A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"¹

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled; and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that. I am sure."

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

¹ a sham or phony; used as an expression of disgust

Mr. Scrooge's attitude toward Christmas is _____, while his nephew's is _____.

- negative...disapproving
- positive...hopeful
- warm...cold
- resentful...optimistic

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Which of the following details from the text shows you that Scrooge and his nephew have different ideas about what should make a person happy?

- "Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"
- His face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.
- "What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

- "Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice.

Question 4:

Everyone in the boat was silent.

James, who was quickly beginning to love fishing almost as much as his father, gazed out at the point where his fishing line met the water. He was waiting for the tug that would tell him that there was more than a lure and hook at the end. The early morning sunlight glinted off of the line, reminding him of a spider's web.

A few feet away, James's brother, David, sat holding a rod, too. James and their dad had dragged him out of bed before the sun was even up. David let out a sigh that caused his dad to look over and his brother to glare at him. For David, the quiet was too heavy. He just wanted to yell or jump in the water, anything other than to sit one more minute without talking. He couldn't wait for the moment when his dad would stand up, stretch, and say, "Well, let's head in, boys."

Which excerpt from the passage tells us that James and his father have a shared passion for fishing?

- For David, the quiet was too heavy.
- James, who was quickly beginning to love fishing almost as much as his father, gazed out at the point where his fishing line met the water.
- The early morning sunlight glinted off of the line, reminding him of a spider's web.
- A few feet away, James's brother, David, sat holding a rod, too.

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What sentence shows us that James and his father probably know that David is not having a good time?

- He couldn't wait for the moment when his dad would stand up, stretch, and say, "Well, let's head in, boys."
- Everyone in the boat was silent.
- He just wanted to yell, or jump in the water, anything other than to sit one more minute without talking.

David let out a sigh that caused his dad to look over and his brother to glare at him.

Lesson Topic: Identify setting

Question 1:

What is the definition of setting?

- the place where the action occurs
- the time when the action occurs
- the place and time of the action
- none of the above

Question 2:

Alex walked cautiously up the wooden stairs. Each one creaked underfoot, startling him even though he knew that he was the one making all of the noise. The attic itself was silent. Alex couldn't help peering into the corners and behind old pieces of furniture to make sure that he was really alone. From the window, he looked down into the garden, which seemed especially bright compared to the dimly lit attic. As he watched, a bird landed on the tree in the center of the garden.

What is the setting in this passage?

- a garden
- an attic
- a basement
- none of the above

Question 3:

An Excerpt from Joy Kita's "Ghost Hunters: The Case of the Rumpled Sheets"

Eager to investigate a real ghost mystery, we all quickened our steps. The street was mostly deserted, although there were a few people out walking their dogs. It was quiet and dark enough for shadows to emerge and tease our imaginations.

The bed and breakfast that Nancy and her mom lived in was an old red brick house. It was old enough to be considered a mansion and run down enough to not be admired. Shutters were dingy and barely hanging on. The picket fence was gray and more decayed than decorative.

"If I were a ghost, I would absolutely pick this place to call home," Liam whispered.

What detail does **not** describe the physical setting?

- The bed and breakfast Nancy and her mom lived in was an old red brick house.
- Shutters were dingy and barely hanging on.
- Eager to investigate a real ghost mystery, we all quickened our steps.

- It was quiet and dark enough for shadows to emerge and tease our imaginations.

Question 4:

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

An Excerpt from "The Pirate's Predicament"

by Kimberly Myers

The pirate ship glided through the water. Small waves lapped against the hull, but the water was calm. It gave the crew time to think about what might lie ahead on the sandy beaches they were approaching.

Killian's thoughts drifted back to the day he became a pirate. Even though he now considered the men aboard the Jolly Roger his family, he hadn't joined them of his own free will. He'd been taken from a merchant ship. He had been hiding below deck, but one of the men, the one he now knew as "Bones," scooped him up and carried him to the Jolly Roger.

From Killian's right, Bones said, "We're about to make landfall, kid." Killian looked up and saw that the boat was now in the shallows just off the island.

Moments later, Killian splashed onto the beach. He paused a moment and waited for his shipmates and their captain to assemble. The sun shone brightly, and the jungle at the boundary of the beach promised adventure for Killian and his pirate family.

The pirate ship glided through the water. Small waves lapped against the hull, but the water was calm. It gave the crew time to think about what might lie ahead on the sandy beaches they were approaching.

Killian's thoughts drifted back to the day he became a pirate. Even though he now considered the men onboard the Jolly Roger his family, he hadn't joined them of his own free will. He'd been taken from a merchant ship. He had been hiding below deck, but one of the men, the one he now knew as "Bones," had scooped him up and carried him to the Jolly Roger.

From Killian's right, Bones said, "We're about to make landfall, kid." Killian looked up and saw that the boat was now in the shallows just off the island.

Question 5:

What are the two settings in the passage you just read?

Check all that are true.

- a merchant ship
- a pirate ship
- a harbor
- an island
- Killian's hometown

Lesson Topic: Compare and contrast settings

Question 1:

Read the passage.

The Black Forest: The Swamp Monster

By Joy Kita

Chapter 1: Into the Cursed Forest

The entrance to the Black Forest was guarded by two willows bent over so far that their leaves swept at the ground. Tommy and Joseph had been forbidden by their mother to ever set foot in the cursed forest, but they could not resist an adventure.

The brothers had made a few friends in the forest, but they also had enemies. The Bridge Troll would eat them on the spot if he ever caught them sneaking around again. It was because of him they stayed far away from the bridge.

The two boys crept along the path, careful not to touch any flowers or bushes. They knew from the legends that their grandfather had told them that anger might be hiding in any shape or form. Only the majestic oak trees could be trusted.

"Look at the tree over there," Joseph whispered. "It has feet."

Tommy peered at the strange little tree. He jumped back in surprise when it scurried down the path in front of them on crooked twig feet. The boys chased after it, eager to see more of its kind.

The chase led them to an unfamiliar part of the forest. They looked around and realized there were no friendly oak trees at all. Hulking pines were above them, giants sunning themselves on rays only they could see and feel.

"I do not like it here," Tommy muttered.

"Look over there. Beyond the swamp I see it."

The Enchanted Forest

By Lindsey Crowe

Chapter 2: Entering the Forest

The entrance gate to the Enchanted Forest was masked by two weeping willows, one on each side. The ornamental trees had long, delicate branches that danced in the wind. Jayden and Ethan entered through the gate, moving the flowering branches to the side. When they entered, a stone pathway was beneath their feet. Outlining the path was blooming bushes and flowers. Beyond the bushes and flowers were towering trees, protecting anyone who entered the Enchanted Forest.

"Look over there! A hummingbird is sipping nectar from the flowers near the crystal clear water," Jayden called to Ethan.

The boys skipped down the stoned path, smelling the aroma of the flowers, as they went to get a closer looking of the hummingbird.

What is similar about the setting in Passage 1 and the setting in Passage 2?

- The setting in both passages is identical.
- Both settings seem tranquil to the characters because of the fragrance of flowers.
- Both settings seem frightening to the characters because of unexpected situations.
- Both settings describe forests with willow trees, plants, pathways, and bodies of water.

Question 2:

Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

An Excerpt from "Snow Battle"

by Daniel C. Beard

Passage 1

It was a year when the Indian-summer had been prolonged into the winter. Christmas had come and gone and a new year begun, but no snow had fallen on the riverbank or neighboring hills.

Such was the condition of things one January morning, in a Kentucky town, upon the banks of the Ohio river, where I and some sixty other boys were gathered in a little frame schoolhouse.

We had made up our minds that old Jack Frost was a humbug, and winter a myth; but when the bell tapped for recess, the first boy out gave a shout which passed from mouth to mouth, until it became a universal cheer as we reached the playground, for, floating airily down from a dull, gray sky came myriads of white snowflakes!

Winter had come! Jack Frost was no longer a humbug! Before the bell again recalled us to our study, the ground was whitened with snow, and the school divided into two opposing armies. That night was a busy one. All hands set to work manufacturing ammunition sleds and shields for the coming battle. There was not a boy late next morning—in fact, when the teachers arrived to open the school, they found all the scholars upon the playgrounds, rolling huge snowballs. All night the snow had continued to fall, and it was now quite deep. When we went out at noon, a beautifully modeled fort of snowy whiteness stood ready for us, and from a mound in the center floated the battle flag.

Our company took their places inside the fortifications. We could see the enemy gathered around their captain at their camp, some two hundred yards distant, their ammunition sleds loaded with snowballs. The lieutenant bore their battle flag.

Our teachers showed their interest by standing shivering with wet feet in the deep snow to watch the battle. At a blast from a tin horn, on rushed the foe! They separated, and came in two divisions, approaching us from the left and right.

"Now, boys!" cried our captain. Don't throw a ball until they're within range."

Passage 2

The school-bell called us, fresh and glowing with exercise and healthful excitement, to our lessons. The battle was left undecided, and our fort was soon captured by a force stronger than any our companions were able to bring against it, for a warm south wind sprang up from the lowlands down the river, our fortification quickly yielded to its attack and the snow campaign was over.

Question 3:

The settings of Passage 1 and Passage 2 are not the same. What are the two settings in the excerpt?

- before the snow battle and after the snow battle
- the past and the present
- the narrator's childhood and the narrator's adulthood
- the beginning of the school year and then end of the school year

Question 4:

How do the two settings differ?

Check all that are true.

- in time
- in characters present at each setting
- in location
- in level of anticipation

Question 5:

In the last problem, we determined that the settings of Passage 1 and 2 from "A Snow Battle" change mostly in terms of time, with Passage 1 being set before the battle and the end of Passage 2 being set after the battle.

How do the moods or atmospheres of the two passages differ as a result of the different settings?

- Passage 2 has a greater sense of conflict than Passage 1.
- Passage 1 has a greater sense of reflection than Passage 2.
- Passage 2 has a greater sense of excitement than Passage 1.
- Passage 1 has a greater sense of anticipation than Passage 2.