



What Reindeer! What Characters!

Although, Rudolph is the main character in the tale and production of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, he isn't alone in the story. There are "all the other reindeer" toys and Santa! Such characters are often overlooked in their importance; called minor and supporting characters. But their presence may affect the outcome of the story, for all characters, even small ones, add to a tale worth telling.

Kentucky English and Language Arts: Arts and Humanities

Reading (1.2) Arts and Humanities (2.24, 2.25) Grades K-3

Academic Expectations:

1.2 Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.

2.24 Students have knowledge of major works of art, music, and literature and appreciate creativity and the contributions of the arts and humanities.

Ohio: Language Arts > Reading Applications > Literary Text Standard

Benchmark(s) Grades K-3

B. Use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.

Objective

Students will:

- Recognize main, supporting and minor characters in a story.

Assessment

Students will be able to:

1. Classify characters as main, supporting, or minor and explain their thinking/reasoning for decisions made.
2. Construct a hierarchal diagram/organizer to visually illustrate the degree of importance, role and impact of characters from the production, *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer: Featuring Songs from the Television Classic*.

Sample selected response items to gauge student understanding:

1. All stories have characters. True or False?
Answer: True
2. In a story, how does the reader get to know a character?
Answer: Through the character's, thoughts, words, action, and interactions with other characters.
3. How would you define the word character?
Answer: A person in a play or story.

Vocabulary

- Major
- Minor

- Supporting
- Characters
- Incidental

Material

- Blocks of three different sizes
- Handout

Activity

Building Characters

Teacher will:

1. Present students with the challenge to unscramble a mystery word-- "character."
2. Have students define, based on their prior knowledge, the meaning of the word, "*character*." Students will record their definition on a piece of paper, and share with classmates.
3. Establish a working class definition for the term "*character*" (e.g., a person or animal that has a certain set of qualities or traits as found in a story.)
4. Introduce the concept of multiple-tiered book characters—main character, minor characters and supporting characters—through the use of physical blocks.
5. Present a large block that represents the idea of a "main character." Explain the large size of the block as representative of the most important character around which a story is built. Further explain that a "main character" often interacts with other characters, those called "supporting characters."
6. Introduce a visual of *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, and/or a print version of the tale, and have students reflect upon the Children's Theatre production. Prompt students to think about and identify the main character(s) in the play.
7. Present a medium block that represents a "supporting character." Explain that this type of character interacts with the main character through dialogue and action, helping to move the story along/forward.
8. Present a small block that represents a "minor character" or "incidental character" that has a very small part and presence in a story. Explain that such a character may serve to help establish background information, setting, etc.
9. Distribute similar sized blocks to students with instruction to build a structure (hierarchical organizer) that represents the role and impact of various characters in the production of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Students will emphasize the relationship between characters.
10. Debrief the activity, have students share their structures/organizers and explain their thinking.
11. Have students consider the change in story if Rudolph had not been the main character and focus of the production, *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Have students create authentic scenarios of what would occur.