



**2007-2008
Eisenhower Project
Talk Show Interviews
Based Short Stories
By
George Edler
West New York Middle School
8th Grade Reading Teacher**



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2007-2008
Eisenhower Project
Interviews with Short Story Characters

Participants:

West New York Middle School
8th Grade Language Arts Students
George Edler, Reading Teacher
Dawn Cardona, Writing Teacher
Memorial High School
Alex Polynice, Audio Visual Teacher

Purpose: Collaborating with the Reading/ Writing Language Arts teachers, and the Audio Visual teacher at the high school, students will read seven short stories focusing on the elements of characterization. The students will write interview questions and responses pertaining to the characters they choose and will role play those characters. The answers can be ad-libbed but also must be directly stated from what the characters say or do in the story. The students will learn about audio visual equipment and the process people go through to put on a talk show. The students will then produce and record their own T.V interviews, edit film, and add music to their interviews. The project will have the students reading critically, writing creatively, and learning about state- of- the- art programming equipment. Then students will apply this knowledge into a culminating activity and develop their own talk show. We may even have some fun!

Academic and Technological Objectives:

Reading

- Students will read a variety of short stories with comprehension and critical analysis.
- Students will read critically for information and identify elements of plot in a short story.
- Students will increase their vocabulary.
- Students will analyze aspects of character by identifying major and minor characters, round or flat characters, and distinguishing character traits.
- Students will be able to identify or connect with a character.
- Students will write open-ended responses to questions when given.

Technology:

- Students will visit the Media Center at Memorial High School and learn to operate state-of-the-arts programming equipment.
- Students will actually film and edit a segment of a news broadcast.

Writing and Technology:

- Students will write interviews and responses.
- Students will revise drafts by rereading for meaning.
- Students will revise and edit work for spelling, usage, clarity, organization and fluency.
- Students will use Microsoft Word.

Technology:

- Students will use a video recorder.
- Students will edit and add music to tape by using the computer program iMovie.

Standards:

Reading: 3.1.8d1, 3.1.8e1, 3.1.8f1, 3.1.8g1, 3.1.g2, 3.1.8g3, 3.1.8g5, 3.1.8g7, 3.1.8g9, 3.1.8g10, 3.1.8h1, 3.2.8d9

Writing: 3.2.8a1, 3.2.8a2, 3.2.8a3, 3.2.8a5, 3.2.8b1, 3.2.8a4, 3.2.8c1, 3.2.8d1, 3.2.8d2, 3.2.8d4, 3.2.8d5, 3.2.8.13

Computers: 8.1.8a5, 8.1.a8, 8.1.8a10, 8.1.8b2, 8.1.8b4, 8.2.8b5

Materials:

- Seven short stories from various books
- List of literary terms
- Chalk or markers
- Blackboard
- Colored markers
- Poster board
- Lined White Paper

- Interest Grabber Videos (If using Prentice Hall Reading Series)
- Audio CD of short stories (for special needs students)
- Camcorder with Tripod
- Film of tape
- Microsoft word
- Computers
- Costumes for Characters (The story characters will dictate the materials needed to make the costumes)
- iMovie (software for editing the film)
- An area to conduct interviews
- Two comfortable chairs

Lesson Plan 1

Interviewing Short Story Characters
 Eisenhower Project 2007-2008
 Reading/ Language Arts Component: Lesson 1

George P. Edler/Dawn Cardona
 Time Period: 6- 40 Minute Periods

Main Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with short stories.
- Students will read, comprehend, analyze and respond to literature.
- Students will identify literary elements i.e. plot, exposition, rising action, climax.
- Students will be able to identify major characters.
- Students will know the difference between flat characters, round characters, dynamic characters, and static characters.
- Students will be able to identify character traits by examining their actions and statements.
- Students will develop vocabulary, word analysis skills and fluency.
- Students will familiarize themselves with the 8th Grade New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK).

Days 1&2 2-40 Minute Periods/ Review is Ongoing

Objectives:

- Students will recall vocabulary words and their meanings dealing with the elements of plot.
- Students will take notes.

Activity:

- ❖ Before any of the lessons can commence, the students need to have an understanding of the terminology being used when identifying the elements of plot. These terms were given in the 7th grade but need to be reviewed and reinforced in the 8th grade. Usually, during the first week of classes, at the beginning of the new semester, I give the students a list of literary terms they must learn. I review each term with them so that they have an understanding of each definition. They must be able to identify the terms in a story. During the course of the next couple of days students are given short quizzes on the definitions of each term. I find by doing this right away in the beginning of the school year, the students get into the habit of studying and settling down into a new semester. **40 min.** See a list of terms at the back of this paper under **Additional Resources**.

Materials:

- List of Literary Terms
- Blackboard
- Chalk or markers
- Paper or pencils

Evaluation: Students are evaluated by taking periodic quizzes on the literary terms. The quizzes given are short; no more than 15 definitions should be given on a quiz. The quizzes can be matching or fill in the blank. This helps the special needs students and all the students to help build the confidence needed to succeed. Remember, it's the beginning of the school year.

Homework: Study Terms

Day 3 1-40 Minute Period The Drummer Boy of Shiloh**Objectives:**

- Students will improve listening skills.
- Students will develop vocabulary.
- Students will write on a given subject.
- Students will identify aspects of character i.e. the character, the characters traits, round or flat characters, dynamic characters and static characters.

Activity:

Pre Reading Activities: Students are given the vocabulary words for the short story **The Drummer Boy of Shiloh**. Students will look up the definitions for homework. The vocabulary is written on the board and reviewed by the teacher. Give special needs students their handouts with the definitions already filled in. Give them a fill-in sheet with a word box to assist in memorization. **Time 5 min.**

Next, have students write on a particular topic: **“When did the words of someone you admire help get you through a difficult time?”** The reason for this is to have the students connect with the story as they read. Have students read some of their individual works out loud. Later, this exercise will help the students with their open-ended response. It also helps students to think and write quickly. **Time, 15 minutes to write. Time, 15 minutes to read.**

Last, students will be shown an Interest Grabber Video by Prentice Hall, **Life During the Civil War.** **5min.**

Materials:

- Blackboard and chalk
- Pen, pencil, paper
- Interest Grabber Video Prentice Hall, “Life During the Civil War”
- Vocabulary Definition Fill-in sheets

Note: Videos are optional. These materials are not used for each of the stories; other supplemental materials will be mentioned.

Evaluation: Student’s writings, class participation

Homework: Have students read **The Drummer Boy of Shiloh**

Day 4&5 2-40 Minute Periods.

Objectives:

- Students will read, comprehend, analyze and respond to literary text.
- Students will critique literary work.
- Students will familiarize students with the elements of plot, with an emphasis on Character, flat and round character, dynamic and static character, character traits.
- Students will develop word analysis skills

Activity:

Give the students a 5 question quiz on the story to insure that students did the required reading and to check comprehension. **Time 10 min.**

After the quiz, begin discussing the story. Up on the board should be a diagram of Frey tag's Triangle (Plot Diagram). As the teacher reviews the story, all the elements of plot should be labeled, for example exposition, conflict, type of conflict, rising action (events), climax, falling action, and conclusion. This is a review of the 7th grade curriculum. This should be done with the first two stories, after that, the students should be able to do the diagrams on their own for homework. **Time 30 min.**

The next component is very important to the project. The students must have an understanding that the characters' actions and dialogue dictate those characters' personalities. In order for the students to role play their characters later in the project, they must identify specific details in the story that examine those traits. The students need to take notes on these qualities and record what the characters are saying and doing. How does the character dress? The teacher needs to discuss how the characters develop and grow in the story. Are they static or dynamic characters, round or flat? Discuss how a character's trait can lead to the theme of a story. Write these traits on the black board and discuss them in detail. This will lead to more vocabulary enrichment. **Time 30-40 min.**

Note: The other six stories were **Charles, The Hitchhiker, The Tell Tale Heart, and Flowers for Algernon, The Retrieved Reformation, and Hamadi.** The other six lessons stayed relatively the same with vocabulary, pre-reading exercises, and the reading assignments with quizzes, emphasis on character and a writing component as a part of the evaluation.

Materials:

- Textbooks
- Markers/Chalk
- Blackboard

Evaluation: Students are evaluated on class participation and quizzes.

Day 6 1- 40 min. period

Objectives:

- Students will write on a particular topic.
- Students will use the techniques taught for developing an open-ended response.

Activity: Students will write on the following open-ended question.
How did the drummer boy change from the beginning of the story to the end?
What character traits did the drummer boy or the General possess? Support your answer with information from the story.

Materials:

- Paper and Pencil

Evaluation: Using the New Jersey open –ended response rubric, students’ open-ended responses will be graded on a scale from 0-4. I do use a .5 for grades, for example 2.5 = C+. This helps in grading.

Lesson Two (2)

1 Day or 1-40 Minute Period

Objectives:

- Students will visit a multi-media center.
- Students will use state- of- the- arts media equipment.
- Students will understand the importance of proofreading.
- Students will be shown how film can be edited.
- Students will put on a newscast.

Activity: This is a collaborative effort by the language arts teacher and the audio visual teacher in the high school. An appointment needs to be made as to when to the students can visit the media-center. Students are given an introduction to producing a newscast.

5min. Students are shown how the scripts are written and the importance of proofreading. **5min.** Students are given a class on editing. What you see on T.V. may not have really happened. **10min.** Students are then introduced to the equipment, given jobs on the set, and then actually put on a production. **15min.**

Materials:

- Collaboration with audio visual teacher
- Audio visual equipment
- Students’ notebook w/pen or pencil

Evaluation: Class Participation

Homework: None

Lesson 3

Lesson three (3) is picked up by the Language Arts Teacher (Writing). See Activity section below for details on her responsibilities.

Lesson 4

Time Period: 2 Days +

Objectives:

- Students will use the interviewing skills they learned.
- Students will use a video camera, tape and edit a program using iMovies.
- Students will roll play the personalities of characters read in short stories.
- Students will read dialogue.

Activity: Once the groups are picked, the stories are chosen, the dialogue is written and proofread and the groups decide on their costumes, they are ready to start taping the interviews. Both Language Arts Teachers, the writing and the reading teacher, work together in the directing of the interviews. First, a professional looking location must be found. There should be a desk and two chairs or a couch. **This needs to be done before filming.**

Next, the students will need time to get into their costumes and put on their makeup. Costumes are made at home. Basic makeup is rouge, eyeliner, lipstick. One can go to a costume store for these items and more. **10min.**

The interviewer sits in one chair while the characters are introduced individually. Some groups memorized their lines, one group used cue cards, most of the groups read off their dialogue sheets. Remember the special needs students may have difficulty memorizing their lines. Two students are used to operate the digital camera with tripod. Each interview takes about **15min.** **Two groups were able to perform in a 40 minute period.**

The final part to this lesson is to have at least two students work on editing the interview. Students use iMovie to edit the film and add music to it. The music should be in character with the story. For example, in the “Hitchhiker” the girl is a country girl, so country music during her scene is appropriate.

Materials:

- Written Scripts
- Backgrounds for interviews
- Two comfortable chairs
- Costumes/Props
- Makeup
- Cue cards
- Digital Camera

- Tripod
- Film
- The program iMovie for editing
- Music

Evaluation: Teacher made Rubric

Additional Resources

Literary Terms

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Plot | 16. Point of View |
| 2. Exposition | 17. Narrator 1st and 3rd person |
| 3. Setting | 18. Climax |
| 4. Character | 19. Falling Action |
| 5. Antagonist | 20. Conclusion |
| 6. Protagonist | 21. Resolution |
| 7. Dynamic Character | 22. Tone |
| 8. Static Character | 23. Mood/atmosphere |
| 9. Flat Character | 24. Subplot |
| 10. Round Character | 25. Sensory Language |
| 11. Conflict | 26. Irony |
| 12. Internal Conflict | 27. Figurative Language |
| 13 External Conflict | 28. Simile |
| 14. Types of conflict | 29. Metaphor |
| a. Man vs. Man | 30. Idiom |
| b. Man vs. Himself | 31. Foreshadowing |
| c. Man vs. Nature | 32. Flashback |
| 15. Rising Action | 33. Imagery |
| | 34. Personification |

The following is vocabulary that can be given with the story.

The Drummer Boy of Shiloh

1. BENEDICTION: blessing
2. RIVETED: fasten or make firm
3. COMPOUNDED: mixed or combined
4. RESOLUTE: determined

Charles

1. RENOUNCE: gave up
2. INSOLENTLY: boldly disrespectful in speech or behavior

3. SIMULTANEOUSLY: at the same time
4. INCREDULOUSLY: with doubt or disbelief

Flowers for Algernon

1. PSYCHOLOGY: Science dealing with the mind and with mental and emotional process.
2. SPECTER: a ghost, frightening image
3. REFUTE: give evidence to prove false
4. ILLITERACY: inability to read and write
5. OBSCURE: Conceal or hide
6. SYNDROME: a number of symptoms occurring together and characterizing a specific disease or condition.
7. INTROSPECTIVE: inward looking, thoughtful
8. RORSCHACH TEST: psychological test involving inkblots that the subjects describe.

A Retrieved Reformation

1. ASSIDUOUSLY: carefully and busily
2. VIRTUOUS: moral, upright
3. UNOBTRUSIVELY: without calling attention to one's self
4. ANGUISH: great suffering from worry
5. RETRIBUTION: punishment for wrong doing

The Tell-Tale Heart

1. ACUTE: sensitive
2. DISSIMULATION: hiding of ones feelings or purpose
3. PROFOUND: intellectually deep, to get to the bottom of
4. SAGACITY: high intelligence and sound judgment
5. CREVICE: narrow opening
6. GESTICULATION: energetic hand and arm movements
7. DERISION: contempt, ridicule

Hamadi

1. FORSAKEN: abandoned
2. BRITTLE: stiff and unbending
3. LAVISH: showy, more than enough
4. REFUGEES: people who flee from their homes in a time of trouble
5. MELANCHOLY: sad, depressed

The Hitchhiker

1. ASSURANCE: a guarantee or pledge
2. LARK: A carefree adventure
3. NONDESCRIPT: lacking in distinctive qualities, drab
4. SINISTER: suggestive of evil, misfortune
5. ACCELERATOR: a device, especially the gas pedal of a motor vehicle for increasing speed
6. PROSTRATED: in a state of mental collapse

Video - Talk Show : Interviews With Story Characters

Teacher Name: **George Edler**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Costume & Props	All students wore costumes and the group used some props.	Some students wore costumes and the group used some props.	Students wore no costumes, but the group used some props.	No costumes and no props were used.
Knowledge	All students showed excellent knowledge of content, needing no cues and showing no hesitation in talking or answering questions.	All students showed excellent knowledge of content, but 1-2 students once needed note cards to talk or answer questions.	Most students showed excellent knowledge of content, but 1-2 often needed note cards to talk or answer questions.	Most students needed note cards to talk and to answer questions.
Questions & Answers	Excellent, in-depth questions were asked by host and excellent answers supported by facts were provided by all talk show members.	Questions requiring factual answers were asked by the host and correct, in-depth answers were provided by all talk show members.	Questions requiring factual answers were asked by the host and correct answers were provided by several of the talk show members.	Answers were provided by only 1-2 talk show members.
Videography-Interest	Many different "takes", camera angles, sound effects, and/or careful of use of zoom provided variety in the video.	Several (3-4) different "takes", camera angles, sound effects, and/or careful of use of zoom provided variety in the video.	One or two different "takes", camera angles, sound effects, and/or careful of use of zoom provided variety in the video.	Little attempt was made to provide variety in the video.
Writing&Editing Scripts	Q & A are effective, vivid, explicit and pertinent. Script has few errors in usage, few errors in sentence construction	Q & A are appropriate and varied, few errors in usage or sentence construction.	Repetitious or poor Q & A, errors in usage, errors in sentence structure, errors in mechanics.	Q & A inappropriate poor usage, Incomplete / incorrect sentence structure, errors so severe in mechanics they detract meaning.

Works Cited

Prentice Hall Literature Series, *Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes*, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Pearson Educational, Inc., 2002 Silver Edition

McDougal Little, *The Language of Literature*, Illinois, Boston, and Dallas: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002

www.rubistar.com

<http://www.sd84.k12.id.us/shs/departments/language/edaniels/journals/interview>

Narrative

When I began this project I wanted to find a way to incorporate the language arts with the theatrical arts. I noticed last year when my students were in 7th grade that they enjoyed acting. Knowing that character analysis is a priority in the 8th grade, I thought it would be interesting to have the students produce interviews with the story characters they were reading about. The students would have to read the stories, examine plot, identify the main characters and read critically to analyze those characters. Next, a visit to the high school's audio visual room was arranged so that the students could use the state-of-the-arts equipment and learn how a news broadcast is produced. Following the visit to the high school, the students were broken down into story teams. Each team had to pick a story. The teams had to decide who was going to be the interviewer and who were going to play the characters. During this time the language arts teacher was working on scripts. The interviewers would have to develop questions relating to the story characters, and the students who play the characters would have to write responses to those questions. Finally, a location was picked to film or record the interviews. The students had to dress up as their characters and try to take on the personality of their characters. What follows is a detailed summary of each component of the project. I will describe what aspects of the project were successful and where there were some shortfalls. One thing for sure, to accomplish this activity the students had to utilize all facets of the language arts, technological arts and theatrical arts.

West New York, New Jersey is an urban school district where the majority of the student population is of Latino origin. If you factor into this equation that many of my students are special needs, then one can understand that with this diverse population lessons need to be able to reach all academic levels. I began this project by giving vocabulary, literary terms that are a review from 7th grade. Literary terms are very important so that the students will understand the terminology used in discussing the plots of stories. **See the addendum for a list of terms.** Also, many of the terms are used in test questions on standardized tests. The students do very well on these tests.

Once I have reviewed the vocabulary, I introduce pre-reading activities so that the students can make a connection with the stories. This connection becomes important for two reasons. First, good readers connect to the stories they read. Connecting gives the students a purpose for reading. They share something with the characters or understand what the characters are going through. Second, when students write open-ended responses for the standardized tests, they need to show that they can connect with the story in some way, either by writing a provocative thought, relating to the story by experiencing a similar situation or discussing what they have learned from the story. I find these exercises to be very successful.

The students then read the following stories for homework: **The Drummer Boy of Shiloh, Charles, Flowers for Algernon, The Tell Tale Heart, The Hitchhiker, A Retrieved Reformation and Hamadi.** After each story is read, the next day the students get a five question basic comprehension quiz. After the quiz the teacher discusses the stories using a plot diagram. For the most part the students read the stories. They usually do well on the quizzes. I believe the students must be held responsible for their work, so I do assign most of the readings for homework. For the special needs students I will use audio tapes of the story. This is part of the accommodations on the students' IEPs. After the class reviews the stories we analyze the characters. We discuss what the characters say and their actions. I write the words of the personality traits on the board. We analyze what clothing the characters might be wearing that might tell the students about the characters personality. For example, in the story "A Retrieved Reformation" Jimmy Valentine comes across as being very dapper. What does dapper mean? What does dapper look like? This information the students will need for when they will have to act out their characterizations for the interviews. The students enjoyed this activity especially when they knew they were going to dress up like the characters.

The second stage of this project was to visit the Audio Visual Center at the local High School. I set up the initial appointment with Alex Polynice, the audio visual instructor and producer of Tiger Television. Unfortunately, the classes had to be split between two days. I collaborated with him on what the students were doing and that one of their requirements was to put on an interview with the characters in the story. The interviews were going to be taped just like a real television program. I wanted the students to have an appreciation for the work that had to go into putting on a television program. He was very receptive to the idea and went out of his way to help set up the appointments. By having the eighth grade students visit the center, they develop an interest for programming and hopefully decide to take Mr. Polynice's course. Each lesson was 40 minutes long. First he started by showing the students how editing can change what really happened in the live shoot. Then he explained the importance of writing and proofreading. The eighth grade students observed how the high school students were

writing the stories that were going to be used for the Tiger T.V. Newscast that week. The students were definitely impressed. Then he introduced the different equipment used in producing a television show such as teleprompters and cameras. He taught them how to use the equipment; then had the students actually put on a two minute segment of Tiger T.V. themselves. The students really got a kick out of the lesson. Finally, as time was running out he culminated the experience by showing the students themselves on T.V. The students got a lot out of this experience. If I were to do this program again I would want to have all my classes scheduled for the same day instead of two separate days. Also, in order to really do justice to the lesson, more time needed to be allocated on instruction, forty minutes was not enough.

Both the Reading Teacher and the Language Arts Teacher work together in the directing of the interviews. The first problem was in finding a location that was conducive for the interviews. I started filming in the teacher's lounge, which was a good place. The room had a desk, two couches and a phone. It looked very professional. But one of my classes met during the teacher's lunch hour and, as luck would have it, it was my biggest class. So I had to find another location. After searching around for a day, I decided to borrow two single arm chairs from the teacher's room and put them in my classroom. The classroom was the best place to be. I didn't lose any time going to another location and the students could get dressed into their costumes without disturbing the rest of the school. Also, I could decorate the background of the set however I wanted. The students did this for each interview.

The second problem had to do with securing the audio-visual equipment. Because I was filming different days, it was imperative that I be able to secure the equipment when needed. The dates that one is filming should be scheduled with the audio-visual teacher so that there is no conflict down the road with other classes. A second part of the problem was that state testing was moved from early March to late April. Usually, right after state testing I can concentrate on my Eisenhower Project because all the intense instruction for it is over. My supervisor gives the teachers the leeway to do special projects. But this year was different. The Eisenhower Project had to be done in conjunction with the pre-testing instruction, so I could only work with the classes once or twice a week. Instead of filming all the groups in two days it took six periods on different days. I was also pressed for time. If I couldn't finish the filming on the scheduled day I would have to reschedule for the use of the equipment. This took away from the continuity of the project. I found myself more concerned with time and equipment than with the project.

The third problem was with the costumes and the makeup. It was difficult for me to get the groups to find the costumes needed. I could not find a police uniform. I asked the police for a used uniform but they could not come through. I needed the police uniform for the stories "The Tell Tale Heart" and "A Retrieved Reformation".

For the most part the makeup was terrific. One of the substitute teachers did makeup work in college so many of the characters looked great. However, on the last day of filming, the sub, did not remember that I was doing interviews and forgot the makeup kit. So she had to improvise using lipstick and eyeliner for the old man's eye in "The Tell Tale Heart" and for the mustache for Jimmy Valentine in "A Retrieved Reformation". Really, you could not tell the difference.

Another problem was with the memorizing of the characters lines. As mentioned the student population that I was working with was made up of the general population

students and special needs students. So some students memorized their lines while others read right from the script. Obviously, this is noticeable in the filming and takes away from the professionalism of the activity. One group did make cue cards for themselves but this takes a lot of time and money. The cue cards are expensive.

The last problem I encountered was with the filming of the interviews. It was hard to keep the camera on each character as they talked because the students talked so fast the camera couldn't move fast enough to cover the interviewer and the character. A decision was made to only film the character answering the question. This was a mistake. It took away from the purpose of the interview. All I needed to do was move the camera back a couple of feet; at least I would have gotten both the interviewer and the characters talking. This problem was corrected but I did not have the time to redo the interviews affected.

In conclusion, I accomplished what I set out to do, to conduct interviews of a story's characters. The students enjoyed the activity. The students read the stories, visited the audio-visual center, develop questions and answers for the production, which took critical reading and analysis, used their interviewing skills, videoed the interviews and acted out their character's traits. However, I felt with a little more time I could have tried harder to get the costumes needed. I also could have redone the interviews that were affected by not knowing how to operate the camera. But if we didn't make mistakes then there would be nothing to learn.