

Character Analysis and Interviews: A Framework

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Here is a general framework for exploring stories and gauging students' comprehension of text through characters in a story.

Roadrunner's Dance by Rudolfo Anaya

Appropriate Grade Levels: 3-5+

Language Arts Core Content Standards (specifically from Grade 4):

Reading Standards for Literature K–5

Key Ideas and Details

2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Craft and Structure

6. Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

NM Fine Arts Standards/Theatre

Standard 1: Learn and develop the essential skills and meet technical demands unique to dance, music, theatre/drama & visual arts.

K-5 Benchmark 1A: Use body and voice to portray character.

Standard 2: Use dance, music, theatre/drama and visual arts to express ideas.

K-5 Benchmark 2B: Develop classroom dramatizations that express various moods or emotions (e.g., happy/sad, funny, scary, mysterious, etc.).

Materials:

- Character-driven story (*in this case, Roadrunner's Dance* by Rudolfo Anaya)
- Inference and Synthesis Questions—copies for student groups
- Chart paper (or a method to record student responses)
- Character Profile (as an extension/assessment)
- Students grouped as characters from the story—at least three students per character
- Room for students to work in groups

Procedure:

- Read the story.
- Discuss with students who the characters are—focus on the main characters.
- In many stories, main characters play certain roles:
Protagonist—who the story is about **Antagonist**—the character who keeps the protagonist from what he/she wants
- Discuss/record character traits for each main character—identify protagonist and antagonist.
- Divide students into character groups (for *Roadrunner's Dance*, three groups—Roadrunner, Rattlesnake, Other Animals).
- Give each group a copy of the questions you will ask during the interview—allow time for groups to discuss possible answers.
- Bring groups together and begin the interview—**NOTE Listen carefully to the answers and be ready to improvise questions related to those answers.**
- Debrief—record details to add to what students know about the characters.

Modifications: Rather than whole class, do in small, guided reading groups.

Assessment /Evaluation:

Teacher observation

Character Profiles