

Using Picture Books to Teach Plot Conflict

Character vs. Character Conflict

1. Introduce the story *The Ugly Duckling* to the students. Many of them may already be familiar with the story.
2. Read the story aloud to the students, asking them to listen carefully for character vs. character conflicts.
3. After the story, have the students, as a team, comprise a list of character vs. character conflicts from the story. Post these lists on the board.
4. As a class, answer the following questions:
 - What is the major problem in this story?
 - How does another character cause conflict?
5. After the discussion, review what a conflict is.
6. Revisit the chart created by the class to see if *The Ugly Duckling* was placed in the correct category.

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Character vs. Nature Conflict

1. Ask the class to review what they have learned about character vs. character conflicts, using the chart from the previous session. Explain that this lesson's focus will be on character vs. nature conflicts.
2. On chart paper, record oral responses of "nature" encounters the students have had. Encourage students as they discuss animals, weather, and other nature conflicts.
3. Read *The Lorax* to the class. Ask them to carefully listen to the character vs. nature conflict in this story.
4. After the story, in teams, have the students discuss what they feel the conflict was. Share the team's responses with the class. Again, post their responses.
7. As a class, answer the following questions:
 - What is the major problem in this story?
 - How does nature cause conflict?
8. After the discussion, review what a conflict is.
9. Revisit the chart created by the class to see if *The Lorax* was placed in the correct category.

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Character vs. Society Conflict

1. Post the charts paper from Sessions Two and Three.
2. Begin with a discussion of what a “society” is. During the discussion, make sure that the students understand that in a society, there is a set of laws, as well as “rules” that a group of people abides by.
3. Explain that the focus will be on character vs. society conflicts.
4. Read *The Island of the Skog* to the class while they focus on identifying the conflict.
5. Following the story, have a discussion, which invites the students to share their thoughts about the story.
6. Ask the students to discuss in teams what makes this a character vs. society story as well as what they feel the conflict was. Once group discussions are complete, ask students to share their observations.
7. As a class, answer the following questions:
 - What is the major problem in this story?
 - How does society cause conflict?
8. At the end of this session, again, refer to the class chart to see if the students placed *The Island of the Skog* in the proper category.

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Character vs. Self Conflict

1. Post the chart papers from the previous sessions.
2. Explain that the focus will be on character vs. self. This might be a tricky concept, so I recommend sharing a personal conflict to begin this lesson.
3. Read *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine*, asking students to focus on identifying the conflict.
4. As a class, answer the following questions:
 - What is the major problem in this story?
 - How does the character react to the conflict?
5. After discussion, ask students to write for five minutes in their reading response/writing journals about conflicts of their own.
6. Invite students to share after five minutes have elapsed.
7. At the end of this session, again, refer to the class chart to see if the students placed *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* in the proper category.