

## THE COMMON CORE STANDARD UNIT PLAN FOR 3.RL.3

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.**

Students are often fearful when they see large bodies of text on a page. Yet picture books can be used to help students build and practice skills that they will need when they begin to read chapter books and novels. This strand of the common core is quiet complex. It asks students first to look for evidence in a story to describe and give factual evidence to support your description of a character in a story. Further, the Common Core asks students to clarify, with supporting evidence from the text, exactly how the activities and interactions of the characters move the plot of the story forward. These are essential elements to any story that the students will encounter throughout their school career.

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DEFINING A CHARACTER according to CCSS 3.RL.3

### UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR

#### Lesson One: What is a feeling?

Starting with what the students know already and have had ample practice with in their school life. Start by having students define and generate a list of possible feeling that they have had. This will help you, the teacher, not only understand that students know what a feeling is but it can also serve as an excellent lesson in building vocabulary and find synonyms. Have students describe their feelings in different situations such as:

- a) Their birthday
- b) The first day of school
- c) On their summer vacation
- d) During a rainstorm

Have students group the feelings into groups of words with similar meanings

## Definition of Feelings

A feeling is something that you sense physically in your body. Here is a list of common feelings that characters in a book may feel.

glad	happy
unhappy, sad	proud
relaxed	miserable
strong	annoyed , irritated
disappointed	mean
sorry	cranky
silly	grumpy, grouchy
ashamed	mad, angry
lonely	

## **Lesson Two: Delving into Character Types**

Making an important distinction for students so that they understand the difference between a person's feelings vs. a person's traits. A person's feelings describe how someone is feeling at a specific moment in time whereas a character trait is something that describes someone's personality or how they are all the time. This is an important distinction for student's to grasp. Can a person feel sad and still be a happy person?

### Definition of Traits

The traits of the character are the parts that make up the personality of the character. Simply put, they tell the reader the type of person the character is. They are drawn from the things that the character says and does, as well as what other characteristics say and do about/with them. Here is a list of some common traits.

- Honest
- Loyal
- Loving
- Sincere
- Ambitious
- Happy

- Selfish
- Smart
- Rude
- Smart
- Brave
- Mean

It is helpful to ask students to brainstorm a list of traits or characteristics that are easy to detect. It is also an interesting and helpful exercise to have students try to define their own character. Ask students the following questions.

- Are they the same character in all situations?
- Do individuals change their character depending on the situation they are in?
- How do the actions of one-person effect others?
- Are there ways to change a way a person acts?
- Think of famous people (past and present) and define their character traits.

Taking the lesson to the next level.

Understanding the way children think. It takes time and experience for children to progress to the stage in their development that they are able to think about abstract concepts. Skills such as logical thought, deductive reasoning (drawing conclusions, and even problem solving are beginning to develop in Third Grade.) To be able to understand the motives of a character, students need to learn how to make **INFERENCES**. Instead of relying solely on previous experiences, children can begin to consider possible outcomes and consequences of actions of characters that they read about in stories.

### **Lesson Three: Why do the characters behave they way they do?**

#### Definition of Motives

The **reason** a character has for doing (or not doing) some behavior or action. A character's motivation is the thing that gives purpose and direction to his/her actions. Some motives are stated directly in the text. (The boy ate the sandwich because he was hungry.) Sometimes the reader has to **THINK** about **WHY** the character acts in a certain and guess what the behavior **MAY** imply?

Try some examples in class to practice guessing the MOTIVATION of a person. For example:

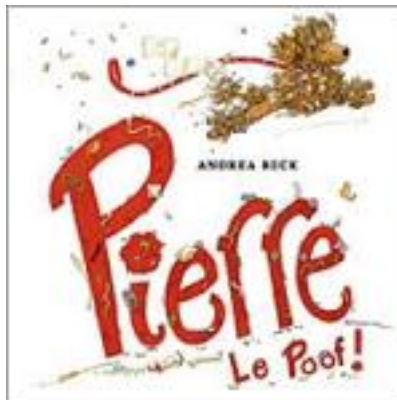
Why join a school team?

1. Make new friends
2. Explore interests
3. Develop skills and talents
4. Increase your self-confidence
5. Have fun

Ask students a question and then brainstorm possible answers.

### **Lesson Four: Putting it All Together: PLAYING DETECTIVE**

Use your TumbleBookLibrary selection



**Pierre Le Poof!** Pierre, a pampered show poodle in training, is torn between his love for his devoted owner, Miss Murphy, and his dreams of running wild in the park. One day, an open door beckons and Pierre escapes. But, this spunky little pooch gets more than he bargains for and learns that home is the best place of all.

### **ASSESSING THE CHARACTER OF POOF THE DOG**

#### Feelings

What words would you use to describe Poof at the beginning of the story?

**unhappy, embarrassed, wanted to be like other dogs in the park**

How did Pierre feel about his clothes? **Embarrassed, Hated them, hid them**

How did Pierre feel about Miss Murphy? “loved her more than he loved the park”

How did Pierre feel in the park after he escaped? Free, happy, “even made friends”

How did Pierre feel at night with Sparky and Lou? Sad, hungry, lonely, missed Miss Murphy

Did Poof’s feelings about his pom poms and clothes change? When? Why? Yes, his feelings changed after he was away from Miss Murphy. He was happy to be looked after, brushed and dressed

### Traits

How would you describe Poof’s character? Fun, loyal, caring, loving—You can see this by the choices he makes to play with his friends and then by his choice to return to Miss Murphy.

### Motives

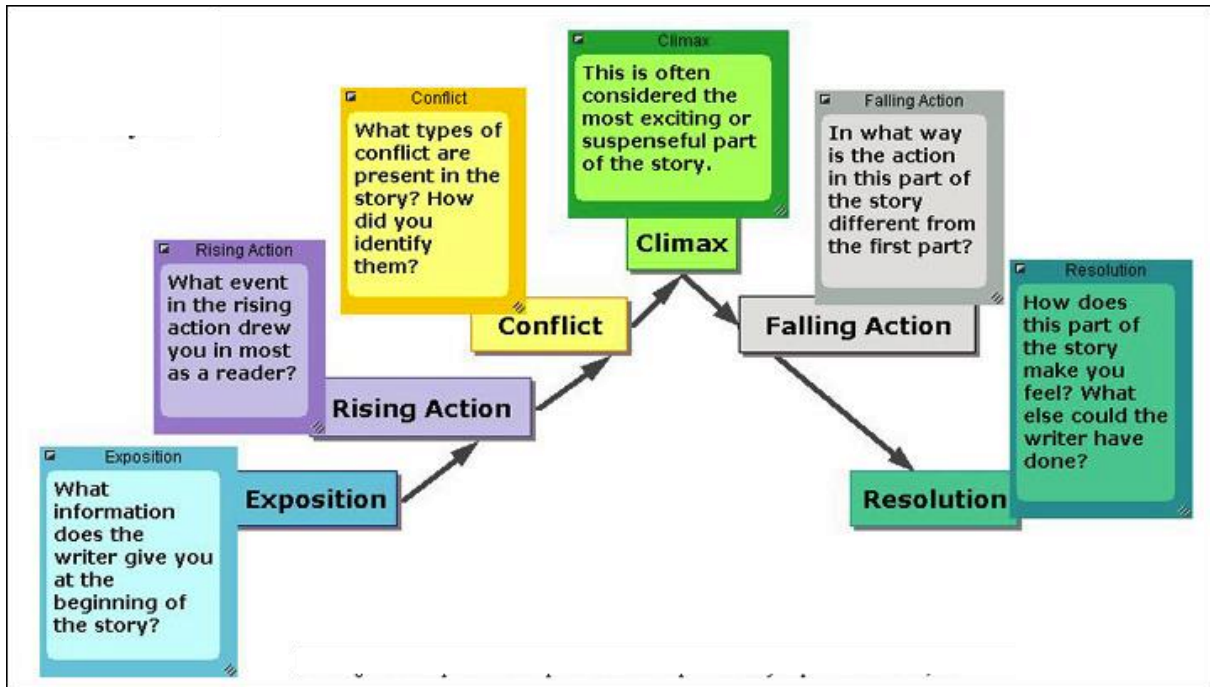
Why did Pierre run from the park? He thought he wanted to be free to fun, play, get dirty and do what all the other dogs do.

Why did Pierre feel sad even when he was free to play in the park with his friends? He missed being with Miss Murphy and all the things she did for him and gave him, even the clothes and pompoms.

## **Lesson Five: Addressing the Second Part of the Common Core Strand: How Characters Drive the Plot of a Story**

In order to get to the “how do the characters actions contribute to the sequence of events?” question, first review the elements of a simple plot graph.

Here is a one you can use.



Using Pierre, the Poof, complete the following plot graph.

**Exposition:** Pierre is pedigree, puffed, and dressed with diamond studded collars and fancy clothes, he has a trainer, he likes to do things to make Miss Murphy smile but he is embarrassed sometimes.

**Rising Action:** Pierre did well at the competition and everyone congratulated Miss Murphy.

**Conflict:** Pierre finds the open gate and runs away. Pierre is lost!

**Climax:** Pierre is dirty, cold and lonely. He goes looking for Miss Murphy and is shoed away because of his appearance. Pierre thinks he sees Miss Murphy in a cab and misses her.

**Resolution:** Pierre is back with Miss Murphy and is happy to be puffed and dressed up!

## Lesson Six

### Culminating/Assessment Activity

The following selections can be found in the Tumblebook Library and can be used individually or in groups as an assessment assignment for **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.**

Using any or all of these selections, students can watch, read along or listens to the TumbleBook and then fill out the character questionnaire (below) for select characters in the book. Some students will need to do the task with the book in front of them while others will be able to use their memory to complete the information. The most important thing is that students are able to give evidence from the book to support their answers.

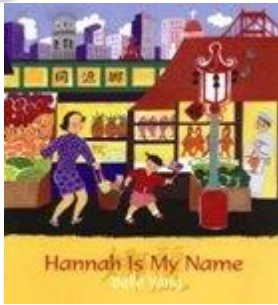
Hannah is My Name

The Patchwork Path

Oliver's Game

Pop's Bridge

These books each have multiple characters that can be looked at and the selections cover a variety of themes so that you can find something for everyone in your classroom.

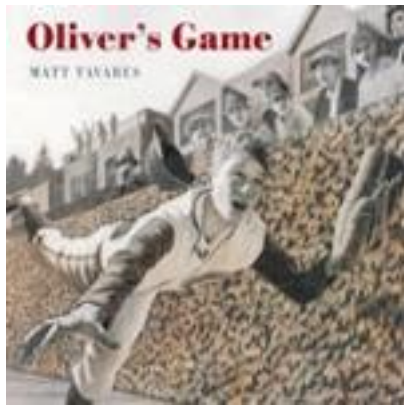


**Hannah Is My Name** Hannah is my name in this new country. It doesn't sound at all like my Chinese name, Na-Li, which means beautiful. It's a long way from Taiwan to San Francisco, but Hannah's family has made the journey because they want to make America their home. Here in America, Baba tells his daughter, people are free to say what they think, and children can grow up to be whatever they choose. And so Hannah takes a new name, begins a new school, learns a new language, and starts to adjust to a new way of life. Meanwhile, they all wait -- and hope -- for the arrival of the green cards that will assure they are finally home to stay. With Chinese-influenced paintings in jewel-like colors, Belle Yang tells an immigration tale that reflects one of the many facets of the American dream.



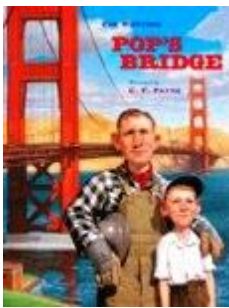
**The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom** Now that Hannah's papa has decided to make the run for freedom, her patchwork quilt is not just a precious memento of Mama -- it's a series of hidden clues that will guide them along the Underground Railroad to Canada. A fictionalized account of a fascinating oral history, THE PATCHWORK PATH tells the story of a two of the thousands who escaped a life of slavery and made the dangerous journey to freedom -- a story of courage, determination, and hope.





**Oliver's Game** Now includes full narration! Oliver Hall loves baseball. He loves the ritual of helping out in his grandfather's store, Hall's Nostalgia, and he loves listening to Grandpa Hall's innumerable baseball stories. But one day, Oliver makes a startling discovery. It seems his grandfather has kept one very special story a secret: his own. With stunning black-and-white and sepia-tone

illustrations and a heartwarming narrative, Matt Tavares portrays one man's lifelong love of the game, and the enduring legacy he passes on to his grandchild. Author-illustrator Matt Tavares hits the ball out of the park with a luminously illustrated tale about the joy of baseball, generational bonds, and the immutable power of dreams.



**Pop's Bridge** The Golden Gate Bridge. The impossible bridge, some call it. They say it can't be built. But Robert's father is building it. He's a sky walker—a brave, high-climbing ironworker. Robert is convinced his pop has the most important job on the crew . . . until a frightening event makes him see that it takes an entire team to accomplish the impossible. When it was completed in 1937, San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge was hailed as an international marvel. Eve Bunting's riveting story salutes the ingenuity and courage of every person who helped raise this majestic American icon.

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**Name of Book:**

**Character's Name:**

**Nickname:**

**Reason for nickname:**

**What does he or she look like?**

**How old is her or she?**

**Mother :**

**Father:**

**Siblings:**

**Extended family (aunts, uncles, etc.):**

**Describing your character's FEELINGS:**

**Is the character close to family? Yes/No**

**How do you know this?**

**Where does character work?**

**For how long?**

**Relationship with co-workers?**

**Like his/her job? yes/no**

**How do you know this?**

**What is the worst thing that could happen to him/her?**

**What is the greatest source of strength in character's personality?**

**What is the greatest source of weakness in character's personality?**

**Describing your character's TRAITS:**

**a) Drives and motivations**

**b) Talents**

**c)skilled at:**

**d)unskilled at:**

**e) Good characteristics:**

**f) Character flaws:**

**How do you think your character would describe him or herself?**

**How do you think your character thinks others perceive him/her?**

**Describing Your Character's Motivation:**

**Based on the story what do you think is your character's goal(s):**

**How does character plan to accomplish goal(s)?**

**How will other people around character be affected?**

**How character reacts in a crisis (calm/panic/etc.)?**

**Who would you say that your character is most influenced by:**