



TEACHER PAGE

ZERO THE HERO, TROUT THE LOU

CHARACTER STUDY

GRADE LEVEL: 5–8

SUBJECT: Language Arts

DURATION: One 40-minute class period

NATIONAL STANDARDS: Language Arts, Standard 3: Evaluation strategies

MATERIALS: Student worksheet, writing journals

Use this lesson to map out character traits for a character from *Holes*.

DESCRIPTION

A character sketch is a short piece of writing that reveals or shows something important about a person or fictional character. Think about the different characters in *Holes*. Some are likeable, and some are not so likeable. Students will choose one main character from *Holes* to diagram in the worksheet.

OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate an understanding of character traits
- To recall facts, characters, and events from *Holes*, and evidence for certain character traits

ADAPTATIONS

For younger students, follow the same procedures. In place of the worksheet, have students draw a picture of a character of their choice from the story. Instruct students to draw the character in the scene that best portrays the character's traits.

ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess students on their demonstrated understanding of character traits as indicated by their word choice and scene selections from *Holes*.

EXTENSIONS

- Use the worksheet as a springboard for a creative writing exercise. Have students imagine a character they want to write a story about. Using the worksheet, students can flesh out their character's personality traits and brainstorm scenes or events that they want to incorporate into their stories.
- Use the filled-out worksheets as an opportunity to discuss literary terms such as dynamic, static, round, and flat which describe the characters. Place characters into their respective category.

USEFUL RESOURCES

SparkNotes' concise descriptions of the main *Holes* characters:
www.sparknotes.com/lit/holes/characters.html

Teacher Vision's list of character traits:
www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-2669.html

The Writer's Guide to Character Traits, by Linda N. Edelstein, Writer's Digest Books, 1999.

PROCEDURES

1. Instruct students to think about the character of Trout Walker. Then work toward the idea of character traits. Start with a problem or idea and then discover the solution or answers along the way. Where in the story do these character traits reveal themselves?
2. Copy the worksheet chart on the blackboard.
3. Fill in the chart with the students. Use Trout Walker as an example.
4. Write Trout Walker's name in the center of the chart.
5. Instruct students to think of four characteristic traits of Trout Walker (see answer key). To initiate discussion: Describe Trout Walker's personality. What are some distinguishing features or traits that describe his character? What does Trout say or do in the book or movie that proves your ideas? Write the four traits in the oval shapes.
6. For each trait, ask students to return to the *Holes* book or movie and find two instances when the character displayed each trait. Whenever possible, have students find specific quotations and use them as examples of "evidence" to write in the rectangles.

ANSWER KEY: TROUT WALK-

Characteristic/trait: Rich

1. His family owned most of the peach trees and land east of Green Lake.
2. Bought a new motorboat.

Characteristic/trait: Influential

1. Gets the townspeople to help him burn down the schoolhouse.
2. Knowing that Trout's behind the schoolhouse burning, the sheriff doesn't do anything about it.

Characteristic/trait: Conceited

1. "No one ever says, 'No' to Charles Walker."
2. Can't believe that Katherine doesn't like him.

Characteristic/trait: Hateful

1. Trout kills Sam.
2. Trout calls Katherine "The Devil Woman."



STUDENT PAGE

ZERO THE HERO, TROUT THE LOU

CHARACTER STUDY

NAME _____

DATE _____

WHAT IS A CHARACTER SKETCH?

A character sketch is a short piece of writing that reveals or shows something important about a person or fictional character. Think about the different characters in *Holes*. Some are likeable, and some are not so likeable. Choose one main character from *Holes* to diagram in the chart below.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write the name of the character you choose in the center. (Draw a picture of the character if you like.) Then think of four character traits of this character (for example: loyal, brave, hostile). Write the four traits in the oval shapes. For each trait, find two instances in the book or movie when the character displayed each trait. Whenever possible, look for exact quotations by the character to use as proof. Write these examples in the rectangles.

PROOF	CHARACTERISTIC/TRAIT	PROOF
PROOF	CHARACTER _____	PROOF
CHARACTERISTIC/TRAIT		CHARACTERISTIC/TRAIT
PROOF		PROOF
PROOF		PROOF