**Character Quotes**

This is a pre-reading activity that can be used to introduce characters in fictional

literature, or it can be used to elicit discussions of real life individuals. Students

are introduced to several important facets of a character or individual’s personality

before they begin reading, and students are involved in actively predicting some of

the major themes and issues of a story or selection.

1. Preview the reading to identify several quotes by a character which illustrates

different elements of the character’s personality. Select quotes which will

encourage students to develop varying descriptions of what kind of person this

character might be.

2. Organize students into cooperative groups. Give each group a different quote to

consider. Each group then has the responsibility of generating as many words as

possible that might describe this character based on the quote they received.

3. After each group has had sufficient time to generate their descriptors, ask a

member from each group to (a) read their quote to the entire class, and (b) share

their list of character qualities and traits that they associate with that character.

At this time, inform the students that all of their quotes were uttered by the same

individual. Write the qualities and traits on the board or overhead as they are

presented by each group.

4. Involve the students in making some generalizations about this character or

individual. Have the students work again in their cooperative groups to write a

preliminary “personality profile” of this character by using the qualities and traits

listed by the entire class. Encourage students to integrate four to six qualities from

the class list into their “personality profiles”.

5. After completing the reading, students can return to their “personality profiles”

to discuss what new qualities or traits they might add and how they would change

the profile to make it better match their understanding of the character. Students

may also be asked to select further quotes that provide new information about the

character, or they could identify representative quotes that lead to understanding

a second character or individual. In addition, students could explore character

qualities through journal writing.

Created by Amy LaPierre, Howard-Suamico School District, based on a strategy from Classroom Strategies

for Interactive Learning, Doug Buehl. Wisconsin State Reading Association