Exploring the Writing Process with Primary Source Materials
Lesson Topic: Drafting - Character Development

Lesson Plan Created By:
Elaine Temel

Grade Levels:
6th - 8th, High School

Primary Source:
Sagan, Carl. *Contact: A Novel: Draft.* 1984. Manuscript/Mixed Material.
https://www.loc.gov/item/cosmos000023/.

Compelling Question:
What narrative techniques do writers use to develop characters?

Supporting Question:
How can students use narrative techniques to develop a character in their writing?

Objective:
In this 50 minute lesson, students will examine Carl Sagan's *Contact* draft to understand character development.

Standards - Common Core:
Lesson Standards 6th - 8th
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Lesson Standards 9th - 10th
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

<u>Lesson Standards 11th - 12th</u>
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.B
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Lesson Activity Instructions
Whole Group Class Discussion Question: (5 - 10 minutes)
Explain that in this lesson students will be thinking about how writers develop characters. Ask students to share some of their favorite fictional characters and what makes those characters memorable. Explain that writers use a variety of narrative techniques including dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop characters.

Lesson Activity: (25 - 30 minutes)
Ask students to locate and read the second paragraph on image three that begins with "Go ahead, Ellie,".
Ask:
What do we learn about the character Ellie from this paragraph?
What narrative techniques does Sagan use?

Ask students to locate and read the first paragraph on image four that begins with "When she was two years old…".
Ask:
What do we learn about the character Ellie from this paragraph?
What narrative techniques does Sagan use?

Ask students to locate and read the second paragraph on image four that begins with "So now she was up all right…".
Ask:
What do we learn about the character Ellie from this paragraph?
What narrative techniques does Sagan use?

Next, using Carl Sagan's draft as a model, ask students to write a paragraph introducing a character. Encourage students to use a variety of narrative techniques including dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop their characters.

Closing Summary (5 - 10 minutes)
Summarize by sharing student work as time allows. Review the concept that writers use a variety of narrative techniques including dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop characters.

See accompanying activity handouts for students.

Credits
The creation of this lesson plan was funded by a grant from the Library of Congress *Teaching with Primary Sources* program.