

Grade 4 Playlist: Describe Character, Setting, Events

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3:

- Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Welcome

The details in a text can tell a lot about a story. From the beginning to the end, the things the characters say and do move the story forward. The place where the story happens is important, too. Examining details about a story's characters, events, and setting can help the reader have a greater understanding of the text.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- understand how the characters, setting, and events in a story can help the reader understand a text.
- draw on specific details in a text to help describe a story, such as characters' thoughts, words, and actions.

Review

Key Terms

- The **characters** are the people or animals in the story. The story surrounds the characters and the details of a tale are told through the characters' words and actions.
- A **setting** is the time and place of a story. A story may take place in the past, present, or future. It may take place anywhere, such as on a farm, on a boat, or under a rock. Settings can change throughout one story.
- The **mood** of a story is the way it makes the reader feel. Settings can contribute to a story's mood. A story that takes place at a circus might have a lighter mood than one that takes place in an office building.
- An **event** is something that happens in a story. Story events may happen in order from beginning, to the middle, to the end. The events start with a problem and the events eventually end with a solution.
- A **drama** is a play. Dramas may be read or performed. They tell a story through the characters' dialogue, or words, and their actions.



Exploring the Standard

Looking for details about the characters, setting, and events will help the reader describe the story in greater detail. It also will give the reader a deeper understanding of the story. Stories and dramas include specific details that the reader can use to understand the text. The details tell about *where* the story is happening, *who* is doing things, and *what* is happening.

“Little Red Riding Hood” is the story of a young girl who goes into the woods to deliver food to her sick grandmother. However, she finds that a wolf is trying to trick her, disguised as her grandmother. Take a look at the following selection from the story.

¹In a great wide forest, full of beautiful trees, and green glades, and thorny thickets, there lived a long time ago a wood-cutter and his wife, who had only one child, a little girl. She was so pretty, and so good, that the sun seemed to shine more brightly when its light fell upon her rosy little face, and the birds would seem to sing more sweetly when she was passing by.

²Her real name was Maisie; but the neighbors round about all called her “Little Red Riding-Hood,” because of a scarlet riding-hood and cloak that her kind old grandmother had made for her, and which she nearly always wore.

³She was a happy, merry little child, with a smile and a gentle word for everybody, and so you may easily believe that everybody loved her, and was glad to catch a glimpse of her golden curls and her scarlet cloak as she tripped along, singing, under the green boughs.

⁴Now, this, let me tell you before I forget, was at the time when all the birds and beasts, or very nearly all, could speak just as well as you or I; and nobody was surprised to hear them talk, as I suppose one would be nowadays.

⁵Well, as I was saying, Little Red Riding-Hood lived with her parents in a little white cottage with a green door and a thatched roof, and red and white roses climbing all over the walls, and even putting their pretty heads in at the latticed windows, to peep at the child who was so like them.

⁶It was on a bright spring morning early in May, when little Red Riding-Hood had just finished putting away the breakfast-cups that her mother came bustling in from the dairy.

⁷“Here’s a to-do,” she said. “Farmer Hodge has this very minute told me that he hears your Grannie isn’t quite well, and I can’t leave the cheese-making this morning for love or money! Do you go, my dear, and find out how she is—and—stay—take her this little pot of sweet fresh butter, and these two new-laid eggs, and these nice tasty little pasties. Maybe they’ll tempt her to eat a bit. Here’s your basket, and don’t be too long away, honey.”

...

⁸The path wound along through the trees, and, as it grew wider after turning a corner, Red Riding-Hood saw that she was likely to have company on her walk; for, where two cross-paths divided, there sat a big gray wolf licking his long paws, and looking sharply about him. And “Good morning, Red Riding-Hood,” said he.

⁹“Good morning, Mr. Wolf,” she answered.



Teaching Notes: Describe Character, Setting, Events

The goal of RL.4.3 is for students to understand how to **describe** the characters, setting, and events in a story to see how they **contribute** to the overall understanding of the text. Students should be focusing on using specific details from the text to help them pinpoint what is important. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Select a scene from the story “Little Red Riding Hood,” and have students work in pairs to complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Little Red Riding-Hood’s character with another character. They may choose to compare her with her mother, with the Wolf, or her grandmother. Have the pairs share their organizers with the class.
2. Direct students to fill in a story map of “Little Red Riding Hood.” They can use the one shown here (<https://www.teachervision.com/reading/graphic-organizers/4308.html>) or come up with their own. Encourage them to fill in the organizer with **details** from the text and not general statements. This should include listing characters’ thoughts, words, or actions.
3. Direct students to work in groups and look at the ending of “Little Red Riding Hood” for practice describing and analyzing setting. Provide them with following example: the event that takes place in the woods might have a much scarier mood than the one that takes place in Little Red Riding Hood’s home. They should discuss their answers to the following question: How can the mood in the grandmother’s house be described based on the setting?

Differentiation Ideas

1. If students become confused about covering three separate parts of standard RL.4.3, divide students into three groups and have each group cover just one aspect of the standard: character, setting, or events. Each group should then make a presentation to the other groups to explain the concepts they learned about.
2. For students who have a firm grasp on how to analyze a text for characters, setting, and events, have them work in pairs to analyze a new story. Provide them with a short story and have them fill out a character sheet, story map, and setting description for the story. Their analysis should use specific details from the text.

Answer Key to Practice! Activity:

Are there any more details in this selection that could be used to describe a character or setting? Find two and add them to the chart. What do these details reveal?

