

Grade 5 Playlist: Determining How Characters in a Story or Drama Respond to Challenges

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2:

- **Determine** a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including **how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges** or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Welcome

In most stories, characters have to deal with challenges. This is a big part of what makes most stories fun to read because the reader wants to see how the characters will respond to the challenges. Also, the way the characters respond to the challenges can tell the reader a lot about the characters. Being able to determine how characters respond to challenges in a story is one of the skills a good reader must have.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- determine how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges.

Review

Key Terms

- A **character** is a person in a story.
- A **challenge** is a problem that a person has to solve.

Exploring the Standard

One of the most important things that happens in most stories is when a character has to face a **challenge**. Something will happen to the character that will test them in some way. They will have to solve a problem of some kind. The way the character responds to the challenge tells the reader something about the character and moves the story along.



Example 1

In this excerpt from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, the main character, Alice, has fallen down a hole chasing after a white rabbit.

¹Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead; before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, 'Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!' She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

²There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

³Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass; there was nothing on it except a tiny golden key, and Alice's first thought was that it might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!

In this excerpt, Alice faces several challenges. First she finds herself in a dark hallway unsure of where she is. She still sees the white rabbit she has been following, so she responds to this challenge by continuing to follow the rabbit. Unfortunately, she loses track of him after she rounds a corner.

Now she faces a second challenge. She is in another hallway, one that is surrounded by doors. She responds to this challenge by trying to open all the doors with a key she finds on a table.

She faces a third challenge when she finds that the key does not fit the lock of any of the doors. She responds to this challenge by searching the room more closely. During this search, she finds a curtain hiding another door. This time, the key fits the lock.

The way Alice responds to these challenges tells the reader something about Alice. She is in a strange situation, but she does not panic. She examines her surroundings and figures out how to keep moving. This tells the reader that Alice is a calm, persistent, and curious person.

Listen!

Listen to an audio recording of this chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Notice how calmly the reader narrates this scene. This highlights Alice's calmness. Sometimes listening to a story can help the reader understand it better.

- http://ia601406.us.archive.org/13/items/alice_in_wonderland_librivox/wonderland_ch_01_64kb.mp3



Teacher Notes: Determining How Characters in a Story or Drama Respond to Challenges

Part of the goal of RL.5.2 is for students to be able to **determine how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges** and to understand how these responses contribute to the reader's understanding of the character. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Select a different excerpt from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, or from another fifth grade text, in which the characters respond to a challenge. Have students complete a chart listing how each character responds to the challenge and what that response tells the reader about that character. Have students work with a partner to create a short presentation telling the class what they found.
2. Direct students to conduct research, finding a story in which characters respond to challenges. Divide the class into groups of four or five, asking students to discuss how the characters respond to the challenges. Ask students to discuss what the characters' responses to challenges tell the reader about the characters.

Writing Prompts

1. Ask students to write their own short story in which a character must respond to a challenge. Then ask them to write a short essay explaining how the character responds to the challenge and what that response tells the reader about the character.
2. Assign students a grade-appropriate fictional story. Ask students to think about what a character's response to challenges tells the reader about the character. Have students write a short essay explaining their thoughts. Instruct students to use at least two different stories in their explanation.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.5.2:

5th Grade Common Core Reading Literature Activities: List of resources for several Grade 5 RL standards, including 5.2.

- http://myccss.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/5/8/13581150/5th_grade_common_core_reading_literature_activities_.pdf

Common Core Standards - Resource Page: This page provides a breakdown of the RL.5.2 standard and links to teaching tips, such as lessons and videos.

- http://rpd.net/pdfs/NACS_ELA/Fifth%20Grade/Reading%20Literature/RL.5.2.pdf

