

Lesson Plans



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Subject: Language Arts

Topic: – Who is Archibald Frisby? -- Stereotypes

Grade: Five

Curriculum Expectations:

Writing:

- Use writing for various purposes and in a range of contexts, including school work, including school work (e.g., to summarize information from materials they have read, to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and imaginings); (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language pg 19)
- Organize information to convey a central idea, using well-developed paragraph(s) that focus on a main idea and give some relevant supporting details; (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language pg 19)

Oral and Visual Communication:

- Express and respond to ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately; (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language pg 44)
- Analyse media works; (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language pg 44)

Objectives: Students will discover the nature of stereotypes by drawing an illustration of a scientist. Define and discuss stereotypes. Students will compare and contrast the characters of Archibald Frisby, Jimmy Jet and Alistair. Students will name and write a 'stereotypical' character description of their drawing.

Attitudes: Students will explain how that stereotypes are often harmful.

Skills: Analyzing characters, evaluating stereotypes, developing lists and descriptive writing. They will use this knowledge to enhance their ability to create their own characters.

Knowledge: The concept of a stereotype.

Resources:

1. Chesworth, Michael. "Archibald Frisby." *Mechanical Minds*. Eds. David Booth, et al. MeadowBook Press. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada Ltd., 1996. 46-53.
2. Sadler, Marilyn. *Alistair and the Alien Invasion* New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1994. 1-9.
3. Silverstein, Shel. "Jimmy Jet and his TV Set." *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. 28-29.
4. Stereotypical images worksheet
5. A large photograph of Albert Einstein
6. Definition Cue Cards

Introductory Activity: Have students draw a 'scientist' or 'computer nerd' in their notebooks.

Developmental Strategies:

- **Survey** the class to reveal stereotypical features they included in their drawings (i.e. wild hair, glasses, a male scientist, lab coat, tall and skinny figure etc.)
- Survey results may vary but there should be sufficient like-results for students to **observe** that they all included stereotypical features.
- **Explain** that these like-features are what comprise a stereotype.
- **Read** the definition of a "stereotype" from the large cue card and have students add this definition in their notebook glossary.
- **PRESENT** a large photograph of Albert Einstein. **ASK** if any student can name him. Have students think about whether Einstein, being widely recognized as a genius and a scientist, may have contributed to the development of the stereotype of scientist with wild hairdos.
- **REINFORCE** that stereotypes can be harmful. Why? Add answer to glossary. "THEY ARE HARMFUL BECAUSE THEY ARE USUALLY NOT TRUE OR A FAIR JUDGE OF CHARACTER."
- **Distribute** worksheet of stereotypical images. Ask students to add the title "Stereotypes" in their notebook and handout. Have students discuss with a partner and label the images and reasons / features of these pictures in their notebooks. Use numbers for reference to the pictures.
- **Select** a different student to describe each image. Have them provide the title of this type of person and descriptive details. Encourage them provide reasons for their response.
- On the blackboard **create a chart**. Provide the opportunity for students to brainstorm and copy information into their notebooks. Guide students brainstorming to include the following features and characteristics detailed in the example chart below.

Character Comparison and Contrast Chart			
Name	Archibald	Alistair	Jimmy Jet
Appearance / Dress			
Type of Student			
Types of Activities			
Interests			

- **Brainstorm** characteristics, interests and actions of Archibald. Get them to think about his name, dress, type of student, and activities. Provide supportive reasons from text or inference.
- **Read** the beginning of *Alistair and the Alien Invasion*. Note the use of exaggeration. Have definition on chart paper.
- **Compare** and **contrast** Alistair with Archibald.
- **Read** *Jimmy Jet and his T.V Set*. Note type, structure of verses and rhyming scheme used in the poem. Ask students to note differences / similarities of this with the structure of the verses in Archibald Frisby.
- Continue the compare and contrast chart.
- Have students **name** and **write a descriptive paragraph** about their own “scientist” or “computer nerd” drawn at the beginning of the class. Permit them to use exaggeration to add a humour to the descriptions but not to get ‘carried away’. Get them to remember to include details such as:
 - Name
 - Physical characteristics
 - Clothing
 - Interests
 - Activities
 - Friends
 - Achievement at school

Challenge students to include details that might be OPPOSITE to the stereotype.

Extra Activity: Finish drawing their character adding colour and a setting.

Methods of Evaluation: Observations: participating in discussions, critical thinking with supporting evidence, co-operation with group members. Collect notebooks for assessment. See the attached rubric for evaluation criteria.

References: Booth, David, et al. eds. *Mechanical Minds (Teachers Manual)*. Meadow Books Level 5. Minnetonka, MN: MeadowBook Press, 1997. 49-53

Character Description Rubric

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Thinking	Little understanding of the question, task or concept	Some understanding of the question, task or concept	Good understanding of the question, task or concept	Good understanding of the question, task or concept
Communication	-Very few ideas are clear -Few details and limited creativity and depth	-Some ideas are clear -Some details and some creativity and depth to the answer	-Most ideas are clear - Good details, creativity and depth to the answer	-All ideas are clear -Many details and excellent creativity and depth to the answer
Organization	- Answer is not in order - Not in sentences	- Some of the answer is in order - Some proper sentences	- Answer in order -Written in complete sentences	- Answer very organized and in order - Written in complete complex sentences

Self-Reflection: With still only a limited amount of teaching experience to date I feel that this was my most effective Language Arts lesson and one of more effective lessons all around. Throughout the lesson I was aware of a high level of interest and intrigue exhibited by my grade five class. This level of engagement greatly assisted in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to teaching. It also eased the sometimes-daunting task of classroom management. Furthermore this was the first time in my teaching experience where I felt a sudden and universal sense of understanding from most, if not all my students. To cap it off this epiphany was disseminated without uttering a single word.

My lesson was two-fold. I set out to teach my class what a stereotype was. I also had to caution my students about the potentially harmful nature of stereotypes. In doing so I had to explain that this involved pitfalls to both the students themselves as they formed unreasonable conclusions and to those at the 'other end' of the stereotype: those actually being stereotyped. Next, having discussed the use of exaggeration as an element in humorous writing I wanted to permit my students a chance to create a stereotypical character as part of developing their creative writing process.

I commenced the lesson by having students draw either a 'scientist' or 'computer nerd'. I gave them several minutes to create a quick pencil sketch encouraging them to draw an illustration large enough to be seen from a distance. I also prompted the students to create a picture that another person could immediately recognize as being either a 'computer nerd' or a 'scientist'. Once they were completed I started a series of survey questions, which the students responded to by raising their hands. I first isolated the group of students who drew a picture of a scientist. After reassuring them that there was no right or wrong answers I began a series of survey questions about what they had drawn; wild hair, lab coats, tall and skinny, male, glasses, pocket protector, taped glasses etc. The result was perfect; the student's hands remained up. The class carefully observed the phenomenon. I asked what was going on. I ruled out cheating and stated that I didn't see any students copying from each other. I quickly repeated the procedure with students who drew the 'computer nerd'. I was able to produce similar results. At this point I was able to introduce the definition of a 'stereotype'. The result was fantastic: instant understanding.

The remainder of my lesson progressed more or less according to plan. I reinforced how stereotypes could be harmful and the students appeared to follow this reasoning. I reinforced it with a personal example. Once again I surveyed the class to whether or not I was a stereotypical 'computer nerd'. My appearance does not fit the description. The consensus was that I wasn't a computer nerd. I agreed with the class that I did not look like a typical 'nerd' but shocked them by proclaiming that I in fact was a huge 'computer nerd'. I explained that I was formerly a web-designer and was very much an active user of computers. This helped reinforce my explanation about the shortcomings of stereotypes.

The students enjoyed the handout of stereotypical images I created. The students were eager to volunteer to describe the features they had determined were instrumental in defining each image. Allowing other students to add to these lists of features further helped to include many more students in the discussion.

A weak point in the lesson was challenging students to think about whether the image(s) of Albert Einstein could have contributed to the development of the stereotypical image of the 'scientist'. The students had difficulty accepting this as a possibility. I'm not certain myself whether or not this could be the case but thought it might be interesting to suggest.

Incorporating the other works by Silverstein and Sadler and comparing / contrasting it with the character of Archibald Frisby worked reasonably well. The use of exaggeration in these works was profound and it allowed the students a good opportunity to chart these features. Overall, these series of activities helped provide ample preparation for the students to create a 'name' and description about their own drawings made at the beginning of the class. When assessing the student's work I was for the most part satisfied with the degree of descriptive elements they were able to provide. I definitely hope to have the chance to teach this lesson again in the future.

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STEREOTYPE

NOUN: a narrow and very unrealistic image applied unfairly to all the members of a certain group

Stereotypes can be harmful because they are not realistic and not a fair judge of character.