

Cricket®

THEME

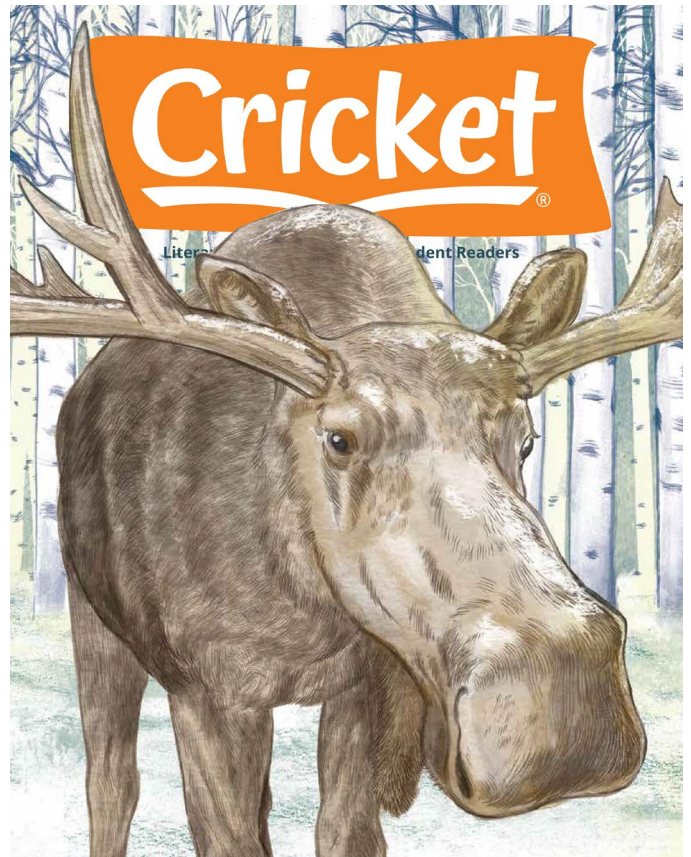
Use the stories covered by this Teacher Guide to analyze characters in depth and explore their internal and external transformations.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How are characters transformed through their relationships with others?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will analyze the cultural characteristics of places.
- Students will conduct short research projects.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

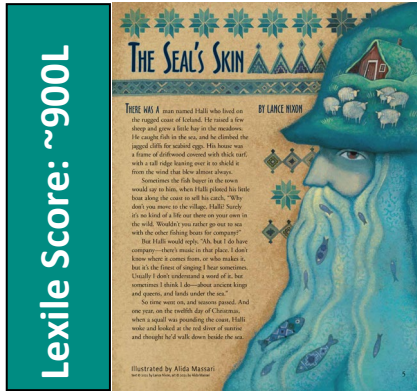
- **The Seal's Skin**
Folktale, ~900L
- **Snow Angel Mittens**
Historical Fiction, ~860L
- **Old Tom's Thanksgiving Dinner**
Adventure Story, ~940L

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The Seal's Skin

pp. 5–9, Folktale

Use this story about a fisherman who marries a selkie—a mythological seal person—to help students analyze characters' perspectives.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text.
- Students will analyze the cultural characteristics of places.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **piloted** (p. 5) steered or guided a ship/boat
- **grotto** (p. 6) a small cave
- **prospered** (p. 7) became very successful
- **poorly** (p. 8) somewhat ill

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How are characters transformed through their relationships with others?

Point out that story characters have all kinds of relationships, just like real people. Brainstorm a list of different types of relationships: friends, enemies, parent/child, spouses, siblings, co-workers, teammates, bully/victim, employer/employee, hero/rescuer. Discuss ways people or characters might be transformed, or changed, by each. Finally, tell students to note the relationship in this story and how characters are transformed by it in different ways.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions. Then challenge pairs of students to write a very short story using all of the vocabulary words correctly. Give pairs five minutes to write. Then have them share stories. Remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Why do you think Halli takes the seal skin?
2. How does the Seal Woman change over time?
3. How does the Seal Woman affect Halli's life?
4. Is the Seal Woman truly happy on land? Explain.
5. Was Halli wrong to hide the seal skin?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characters' Perspectives

INSTRUCT: Explain that a character's perspective is the way he or she thinks about something. Paying attention to characters' words, thoughts, and actions can help readers understand their perspectives. Have students work in pairs to highlight the thoughts, words, and actions of Halli and the Sea Woman, using two different colors. Then have them use sticky notes to note what these details reveal about the characters. Next, have students work in small groups to share their ideas. Then have groups discuss the characters' perspectives on their relationship and on their lives.

ASSESS: Tell students to imagine that Halli and the Sea Woman write letters to each other explaining the choices they've made and their feelings about each other. Have students choose either character and write a 2- to 3-paragraph (or longer) letter from his or her perspective. Remind students to use first-person pronouns in their writing.

EXTEND

Social Studies Explain that "The Seal's Skin" is a selkie tale. Have students conduct research to learn more about selkies and selkie tales. Students can find out where the tales come from, how the tales have traveled to different places, and the powers selkies have. Have students read another selkie tale and compare it to "The Seal's Skin."

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Snow Angel Mittens

pp. 23–28, Historical Fiction

Use this story about a holiday party during the Great Depression to help students analyze character motivation.



RESOURCES

- Character Motivation

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **stoic** (p. 23) showing no emotion, especially when something bad is happening
- **necessities** (p. 26) things that you must have
- **befuddled** (p. 28) very confused

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How are characters transformed through their relationships with others?

Share a story of how you were transformed in some way—big or small—by a relationship. For example, you may have been inspired by someone. Then invite students to share stories from their own lives. Finally, tell students to think about how the characters in this story are transformed by their relationships.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. For each word, have students write a sentence that uses it correctly. Have students share their sentences with a partner. Then remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How does the setting affect the characters and the plot of this story? Find a quote from the story to support your answer.
2. What does the narrator mean when she says, “It was an easy thing to climb on [Betsy McClure] to raise our own status a little”?
3. Why does the narrator say she hates Betsy McClure? Does she truly hate her?
4. How does Betsy feel when she opens her present?
5. Why does the narrator say she “suddenly felt very small” when she opens Betsy’s gift?
6. What is your opinion of the narrator? Does she change in the story? If so, how?
7. Write one theme for this story.

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Character Motivation

INSTRUCT: Explain that a character usually has a goal or desire that he or she wants to attain—this is the character’s motivation, or the reason why the character thinks, feels, or acts in a certain way. Tell students that they can infer a character’s motivation by paying attention to his or her words, actions, and interactions with other characters. Tell students that a character’s motivation may change over the course of a story. Discuss the motivations of characters in popular movies and books.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Character Motivation* worksheet to each student and have them work in pairs to complete it. Then have students share their ideas with the class.

EXTEND

Social Studies Point out that during the Great Depression, many people lost jobs and could not afford to buy food. As a result, grocery stores could not afford to be fully stocked. Have students conduct research to learn about the foods that adults and children ate during the Depression. Students should create short presentations to share with the class.

Character Motivation In the chart below, record your ideas about Maxine’s and Betsy’s motivations for the actions they took in the story. Note story details that support your inferences about their motivations. Then choose two other character actions, words, or interactions from the story and record your inferences and supporting details.

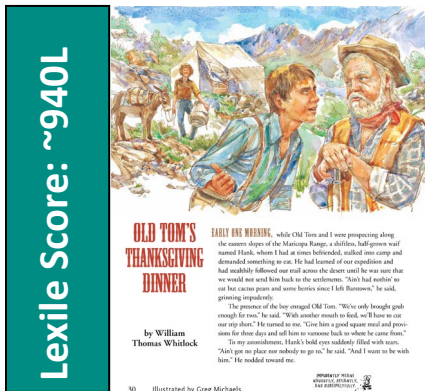
Character’s Action, Words, or Interaction	Character’s Motivation	Story Details That Support My Inference
Maxine gives her new mittens to Betsy.		
Betsy gives the mittens to Delores.		

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Old Tom's Thanksgiving Dinner

pp. 30–36, Adventure Story

Teach students to analyze characterization using this narrative about an unusual Thanksgiving celebration.



RESOURCES

- Characterization

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **shiftless** (p. 30) lacking ambition and energy
- **dejected** (p. 31) sad because of failure, loss
- **haggard** (p. 31) looking very thin and tired, especially from great hunger, worry, or pain
- **rude** (p. 32) made or done in a simple or rough way

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How are characters transformed through their relationships with others?

Invite students to share books and movies in which a character changes as a result of his or her relationships with others. Remind students that the change may be positive or negative. Then tell students to notice how characters are transformed by their relationships in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud. Have students work in groups of four to write sentences using these words, with each group member taking on a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What is your first impression of Hank?
2. How can you tell this story is set in the distant past?
3. Describe three ways the setting creates problems for the characters.
4. How would you describe Old Tom? Use three words or phrases.
5. Why does Old Tom eat his Thanksgiving dinner alone?
6. What morals or values does the story teach?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characterization

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the way a writer creates a character's personality is called characterization. Explain that there are different methods of characterization. Often, a character's personality is revealed through his or her own words, thoughts, feelings, actions and the words, thoughts, and reactions of other characters. Have students reread page 30. Then have them turn and talk with a partner to identify what they learned about the different characters. Discuss responses as a class. Then distribute the *Characterization* worksheet to all students and discuss which characterization methods are used on page 30.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to complete the worksheet for one of the story characters. Invite students to share their responses with the class.

EXTEND

Social Studies The Maricopa Mountains are located in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. Have students conduct research to learn about the history, culture, food, and structures of the ancestral Sonoran Desert people. Also have them learn about Native American communities that exist in this area today.

Characterization

As you read "Old Tom's Thanksgiving Dinner," notice how the author uses the techniques below to develop the characters' personalities. Note examples of each technique in the chart.

The person's own words and actions	Words and actions of other characters
The person's own thoughts and feelings	Thoughts and feelings of other characters