

Character Traits & Motivation

Lesson 1: What does it show?

GRADES 3-5



TRAIT



FEELING

ANCHOR CHART

2 ORIGINAL STORIES

SORT + EXIT TICKET

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Teacher page: goal, 15-20 minute plan, standards
- Illustrated anchor chart
- Guided story with think-aloud notes (Level A)
- Independent story (Level B) + 5 questions
- Cut-and-glue sort (12 cards) + mat
- Exit ticket (two per page) and answer keys

Trait or feeling? What does it show?

LEARNING GOAL

I can tell a character trait from a feeling by asking one question: does it show what the character is like, or how the character feels right now?

THE 15-20 MINUTE LESSON

3 min	Hook	Anchor chart (page 3): read the two Amara examples. Ask: which one shows what she is like, and which shows how she feels right now?
8 min	I do	Read Amara's Kite aloud (page 4). Think aloud with the notes for sentences 1, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 12. Students fill the T / F strip.
5 min	We do	Partners label the other sentences and name the word or the action that shows it.
3 min	Check	Exit ticket (page 9), two per page.

Next day, centers or homework: the Diego's Robot passage and five questions (pages 5-6) and the cut-and-glue sort (pages 7-8). Answer key: page 10.

Say: A trait is what a character is like inside. A feeling is how a character feels right now. Feeling words help, but they are clues, not rules. Our question today is: does it show what they're like, or how they feel right now?

LISTEN AND LOOK FOR

- Students give a reason: the word or action, and what it shows. Sentence 9 happens once, but it shows patience: a trait.
- Students notice feelings that are shown, not named: stomping, yelling, crying and laughing (sentences 6, 7, 11 and 15).
- Students see that sentence 8 has feels but shows a trait: never ... for long shows what Amara is like.

STANDARDS (WORDING CHECKED AGAINST THE OFFICIAL COMMON CORE TEXT)

RL.3.3	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
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).
RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.3.3 names traits, motivations and feelings; RL.4.3's thoughts, words and actions are Lesson 2's three ways. Students answer from the text and copy their evidence (RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1). Comparing two characters (RL.5.3) is not a focus.

WHERE THIS LESSON FITS

Lesson 1 of the Character Traits & Motivation Complete Unit. Page 11 shows real pages from the unit.

Trait or Feeling?

Ask: Does it show what they're like, or how they feel right now?



TRAIT

A trait is what a character is like inside. One action can show it.

Clue words: patient, kind, brave, honest, curious, shy.

EXAMPLE

“Amara is a patient kite builder.”



FEELING

A feeling is how a character feels right now. It comes and goes.

Clue words: felt, excited, nervous, proud, scared, upset.

EXAMPLE

“On Saturday, Amara felt excited because her new kite was done.”

TRICKY!

- 1 Authors often **SHOW** a trait or feeling. Look at what a character does, says and thinks.
- 2 Looks are not traits. Curly hair or a red cap is how a character looks, not what the character is like.
- 3 Motivation is **WHY** a character acts, not **WHAT** the character did.
- 4 Clue words are clues, not rules. “Nia burst into tears” has no feeling word, but it is a feeling. “Grandpa always makes me feel safe” has feel, but it is a trait.

Follow along as your teacher reads and thinks aloud with the notes. Then write T or F for every numbered sentence.

Amara's Kite

● Level A · 155 words

- 1 Amara is a patient kite builder. 2 She cuts each stick with care. 3 She checks every knot two times. 4 On Saturday, Amara felt excited because her new kite was done.
- 5 At the park, the wind was strong, and she felt nervous. 6 Then a gust tangled the string, and she stomped her foot. 7 “This is the worst day ever,” she yelled. 8 But Amara never feels upset for long when things go wrong. 9 She sat down and worked on the knot, one loop at a time. 10 She did not give up.
- 11 Her little brother Kofi was crying because his kite was stuck in a tree. 12 Amara always shares her things with Kofi. 13 “You can fly my kite first,” she told him.
- 14 Kofi felt so happy that he ran in circles. 15 Amara laughed and ran with him. 16 When the kite rose high above the trees, Amara felt proud. 17 Grandpa says that Amara is the most patient builder he knows.

THINK ALOUD

1 Trait word: patient

Patient shows what Amara is like. TRAIT.

4 Clue: felt

Excited is how she feels right now. FEELING.

6 No feeling word

Stomping shows how she feels right now. FEELING.

8 Clues, not rules

Feels is here, but never ... for long shows what she is like. TRAIT.

9 One moment

But what does it SHOW? Patience. TRAIT.

12 Look at the action

Sharing with Kofi shows what she is like. TRAIT.

Write T (trait) or F (feeling) for each numbered sentence.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17			

Read the story. Then answer the questions on the next page. Ask: does it show what Diego is like, or how he feels right now?



Diego's Robot

■ Level B · 214 words

- 1 Diego had three weeks to build a robot for the school science fair. He made it from an old toy car, a small motor, and a cardboard box. He wanted his grandpa to see it, because Grandpa had taught him how to use a screwdriver. Diego kept every tool in a neat row and wrote each step in a notebook. He likes to feel each gear with his fingers before he glues it in place.
- 2 The first time Diego tested the robot, a wheel fell off. He fixed it, but the next day the same wheel fell off again. Diego groaned and dropped his head onto the table. Then he picked up his pencil, wrote down the problem, and tried a new plan. Diego does not quit when something is hard. On his fifth try, he used a longer screw, and the wheel held tight.
- 3 By the end of the second week, the robot worked every time. On the night before the fair, Diego could not fall asleep. His hands shook as he packed the robot into a box.
- 4 At the fair, the robot rolled across the table and picked up a block. Diego felt proud when the judges clapped. Then he ran to find Grandpa and showed him the notebook, page by page.

LESSON 1 · ON YOUR OWN

**Diego's Robot:
questions**

Date _____

Use the Diego's Robot story to answer each question.

- 1** Which word BEST describes what Diego is like?
 - (A)** adventurous
 - (B)** proud
 - (C)** generous
 - (D)** determined

- 2** Which sentence from the passage shows how Diego FEELS?
 - (A)** His hands shook as he packed the robot into a box.
 - (B)** Diego kept every tool in a neat row and wrote each step in a notebook.
 - (C)** Diego does not quit when something is hard.
 - (D)** He likes to feel each gear with his fingers before he glues it in place.

- 3** Circle the word that names a FEELING.

“Diego is a careful builder, but on the night before the fair he was nervous.”

- 4** Paragraph 2 shows what Diego does when a job is hard. Copy the sentence that shows he makes a new plan. Then name the trait it shows.

- 5** Why did Diego want Grandpa to see his robot? Copy the sentence from paragraph 1 that tells you.

LESSON 1 · SORT

Trait or feeling? Cut and sort

Date _____

Cut out the 12 cards. Ask: does it show what they're like, or how they feel right now?
Glue it on the mat under TRAIT or FEELING.

1

Zara told her mom the truth
about the broken vase.

2

The loud thunder makes
Omar feel scared.

3

Leo is curious about
how things work.

4

Maya felt embarrassed
during the whole play.

5

Ruby slammed the door
and stomped up the stairs.

6

Noah tried the puzzle
again until he solved it.

7

Sam felt proud all day.

8

Lily showed the new student
the way to the library.

9

Ivy jumped up and down
at her surprise party.

10

Mr. Lee always makes
us feel welcome.

11

Tariq felt jealous all afternoon.

12

Ben shares his
snacks every day.

Glue each card in a box under TRAIT or under FEELING.



TRAIT

what they're like



FEELING

how they feel now

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

glue

LESSON 1 · EXIT TICKET

Check your thinking

Name _____

1 Trait or feeling?

“Kai covered his eyes during the whole scary part of the movie.”

Circle one:

TRAIT

FEELING

2 Circle the word that names a TRAIT.

“Hana is an honest girl, but today she feels grumpy.”

3 Write one trait and one feeling that describe you. For the trait, tell one thing you do that shows it.

cut

LESSON 1 · EXIT TICKET

Check your thinking

Name _____

1 Trait or feeling?

“Kai covered his eyes during the whole scary part of the movie.”

Circle one:

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“Hana is an honest girl, but today she feels grumpy.”

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Lesson 1

GUIDED PASSAGE: AMARA'S KITE (SENTENCES 1-17)

1	TRAIT	trait word: patient	10	TRAIT	does not give up
2	TRAIT	an action: careful	11	FEELING	trap: no feeling word
3	TRAIT	an action: careful	12	TRAIT	an action: sharing
4	FEELING	felt excited	13	TRAIT	her words: sharing
5	FEELING	felt nervous	14	FEELING	felt happy
6	FEELING	trap: no feeling word	15	FEELING	trap: no feeling word
7	FEELING	trap: no feeling word	16	FEELING	felt proud
8	TRAIT	trap: never ... for long	17	TRAIT	Grandpa's words
9	TRAIT	one moment, shows patience			

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: DIEGO'S ROBOT

1	D	trap: proud is in the story, but it is a feeling. His actions show determined (paragraph 2).
2	A	trap: D has feel, but it means touch. Shaking hands show he is nervous.
3	nervous	a feeling on one night; careful is a trait
4	Then he picked up his pencil, wrote down the problem, and tried a new plan. Trait: determined (also accept patient).	paragraph 2; accept any trait the action really shows
5	He wanted his grandpa to see it, because Grandpa had taught him how to use a screwdriver.	paragraph 1: the reason (a preview of Lesson 4)

CUT-AND-GLUE SORT

Card 1	TRAIT	an action	Card 7	FEELING	clue: felt, proud
Card 2	FEELING	clue: feel, scared	Card 8	TRAIT	an action
Card 3	TRAIT	trait word: curious	Card 9	FEELING	clue: surprise
Card 4	FEELING	clue: felt, embarrassed	Card 10	TRAIT	trap: feel, but a trait
Card 5	FEELING	trap: no feeling word	Card 11	FEELING	clue: felt, jealous
Card 6	TRAIT	an action	Card 12	TRAIT	an action

EXIT TICKET

1	FEELING	clue: scary
2	honest	grumpy is today's feeling
3	Answers vary	a trait with an action; a feeling right now

Character Traits & Motivation Complete Unit

Real pages from the unit (reduced):

PRE-ASSESSMENT Form A

Read each sentence carefully. Take your time. Score: /12

PART A: CIRCLE TRAIT, FEELING OR APPEARANCE.

- "Maya felt excited all morning about the class trip."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Andre shared all of his markers with a classmate who forgot hers."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Mr. Diaz is a patient coach who explains every drill twice."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Sam bounced in his seat and could not stop grinning."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Grandma Rosa always makes our friends feel at home."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Nora is the tallest player on her soccer team."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE

PART B: WHY?

- Why did Jada run to the bus stop?
Jada ran all the way to the bus stop because she did not want to miss the class trip.

☐ A She did not want to miss the class trip.
☐ B She likes riding the bus.
☐ C She ran all the way to the bus stop.
☐ D She is a fast runner who likes to race her friends.

Pre-assessment, Form A

LESSON 2: PARTBEE Show It!

Every sentence is from Lucia and the Lost Dog. Write T (trait) or F (feeling). Then tick how the author shows it.

Sentence	T or F	How does the author show it?
1 "If that were my dog, I would want someone to help," Lucia thought.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
2 The dog shook and backed away from her.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
3 She sat down on the curb and waited quietly for a long time.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
4 "Please, please do not run into the road," Lucia thought.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
5 "I was so scared I would never see her again," the man said.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
6 "Please keep your money, because I just wanted to help," Lucia said.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
7 Lucia did not chase it.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks
8 Then Lucia dipped all the way home, humming a song.	☐	☐ does ☐ says ☐ thinks

Lesson 2: Show It! chart

LESSON 3: YOU DO! Tricky sentences

Appearance is how a character looks on the outside. A trait is what the character is like inside.

PART A: CIRCLE TRAIT, FEELING OR APPEARANCE.

- "Rosa has red hair and wears a yellow raincoat."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Rosa is a generous girl who lets everyone use her tools."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Rosa felt proud when her marble made it all the way down."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE
- "Rosa is the tallest girl in the fourth grade."

Circle one: ☐ TRAIT ☐ FEELING ☐ APPEARANCE

PART B: ONE SENTENCE, TWO PARTS. UNDERLINE THE LOOKS PART. CIRCLE THE TRAIT OR FEELING WORD.

- "Grace wears round glasses, and she is a clever puzzle solver."

Trait or feeling word: _____
- "Omar has a red backpack, and he felt proud of his drawing."

Trait or feeling word: _____
- "Nadia has a long braid, and she is a brave swimmer."

Trait or feeling word: _____

Lesson 3: tricky sentences

LESSON 4: YOU DO! Why does Priya do it?

Copy three clues from paragraphs 3 and 4. Tell what each one shows about WHY.

What Priya does in paragraph 3 (the action)

A clue from paragraph 3 or 4

What it tells you about WHY

- Clue: _____

Why: _____
- Clue: _____

Why: _____
- Clue: _____

Why: _____

Her MOTIVATION: Priya raised her hand because ...

Lesson 4: why organizer

LESSON 5: SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW! Jayden's Talent Show

Read the story. The sentences are numbered. Then answer the Show What You Know questions.

Jayden's Talent Show

Level C: 225 words

- Jayden signed up to play the drums in his school's spring talent show. The show would take place on a Friday night in the crowded school gym. He had played in his basement for years, but he had never played for a real crowd. When he pictured himself alone on that big stage, he felt nervous.
- Jayden's younger sister, Kiana, liked to sit on the basement stairs and listen while he practiced. Kiana was only six, but she knew every song he played by heart. She clapped along with each song, even when her clapping drifted a little off the beat.
- "Remember you will really play in the show," she said one evening.
- Jayden wanted to keep the promise he had made to Kiana. He practiced his song every single afternoon for two whole weeks. When his arms grew tired and sore, he rested for a few minutes and then began again. Jayden is a hard worker who does not give up when something is difficult.
- On the night of the show, Jayden's hands were icy. His heart pounded so hard that he was sure the whole gym could hear it. He peeked around the heavy curtain and spotted Kiana sitting in the very first row. Then he played his whole song, from the first beat to the last, without a single mistake. When the last crash of the cymbals faded, the crowd burst into loud cheers. Jayden felt proud when he heard Kiana cheering louder than anyone else in the gym.

Lesson 5: Level C passage

REVIEW/TASK CARDS: Trait or feeling?

Cut apart the cards. Read each card and decide: trait or feeling? Circle your answer on the recording sheet and write why.

TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Talia thanked the bus driver by name as she got off." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?	TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Owen felt nervous every minute before his piano recital." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?
TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Jim's hands shook as he waited for his name to be called." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?	TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Camille is a creative girl who invents new games of recess." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?
TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Yusuf felt delighted when he found his lost library book." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?	TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Ms. Park always makes new students feel welcome." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?
TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Marco waters the class plants every day without being asked." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?	TASK CARD Trait or feeling? How do you know? "Les felt jealous when his friend got a new bike." Ask: what they're like, or feel right now?

24 task cards

WHAT THE FULL UNIT ADDS TO THIS LESSON

- 4 more lessons in gradual release: how authors show it (does, says, thinks), looks are not traits, motivation (why, not what), and a show-what-you-know finale
- 4 more stories in 6 leveled passages at three measured levels (159 to 258 words), level and length printed; the finale tells one story at all three levels
- Pre- and post-assessment in parallel forms (12 points each) with a class tracker
- 24 task cards with a recording sheet, including trap sentences where a feeling word misleads
- 3 small-group reteach cards for the most common mix-ups, mapped to the test items
- An exit ticket for every lesson and an answer key for every page

Find the full unit on TpT:

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