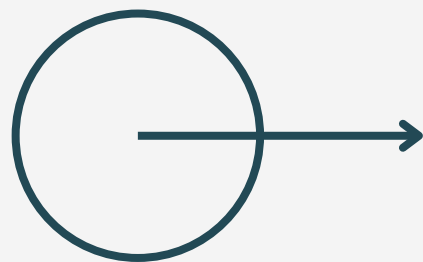# SMUDGE MIDDLE GRADE EPISODE GUIDE

Integrating SEL, ELA, and Creative Expression

EP 1

OVERVIEW

In Episode 1, Smudge, an unfinished character, ventures into the Inkling Society, a gathering place for authors, with the dream of sharing their own story. Despite being told that characters aren't meant to write, Smudge bravely pushes forward, navigating challenges to prove their creativity deserves recognition.

- Key Themes:
  - Resilience: Smudge faces doubt and obstacles but remains steadfast in their mission.
  - Creativity: Smudge's story, "The Brave Teapot," symbolizes the power of unique ideas.
  - Courage: Smudge's journey encourages students to believe in themselves, even when others don't.

LEARNING PATHS

With our comprehensive set of resources, teachers can focus on three key paths to maximize engagement with Smudge Episode 1:

1 **ELA**
- Focus: Strengthen understanding of story structure, character analysis, and symbolism through engaging narrative activities.

2 **SEL**
- Focus: Develop students' self-confidence, resilience, and empathy by connecting them to Smudge's journey and challenges.

3 **Creative Expression**
- Focus: Encourage visual storytelling and imaginative thinking as students interpret and expand on Smudge's world.

PRE-WATCH DISCUSSION

These questions encourage students to actively listen for key literary elements, identify story themes, and reflect on character motivations, sparking discussions on creativity, storytelling, and perseverance.

Prompts:

- What do you think makes a character stand out in a story?

- What challenges do you think authors might face when writing a story?

- Have you ever been told you couldn't do something? How did you feel?

DURING-WATCH DISCUSSION

Prompts:

- <u>The Authors Only Sign</u> – Why might Smudge feel nervous seeing this sign? What does it mean for them to enter anyway?

- <u>Authors Laugh at Smudge's Story</u> – How do you think Smudge feels? Why might they be nervous to share their story?

- <u>Approaching the World Book</u> – Why is this moment important? What do you think is motivating Smudge?
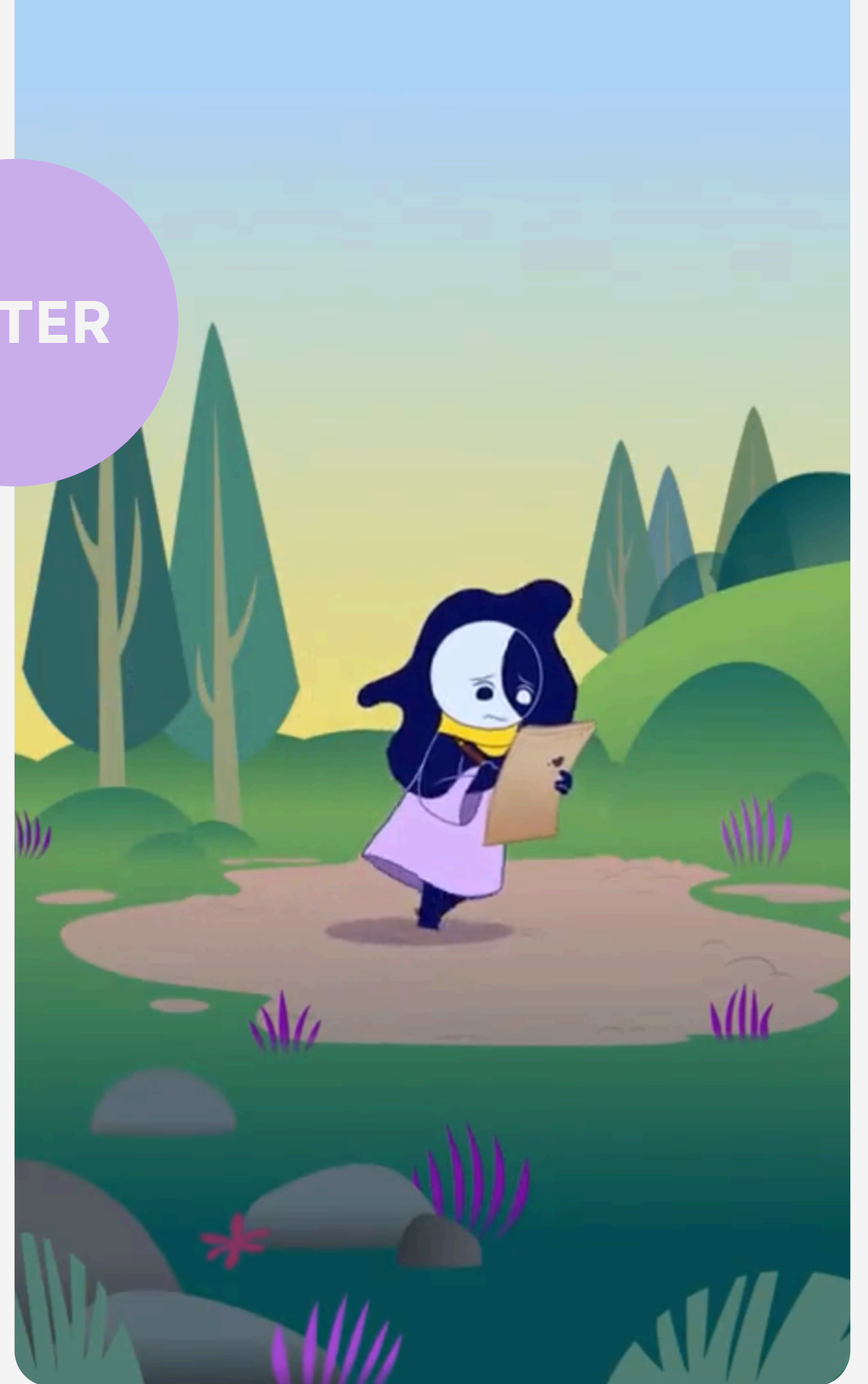
POST-WATCH DISCUSSION

Prompts:

○ Why was it so important for Smudge to put their story in the World Book?

○ How did Smudge show courage in their journey?

○ What message does Smudge's journey give us about who can be a storyteller?
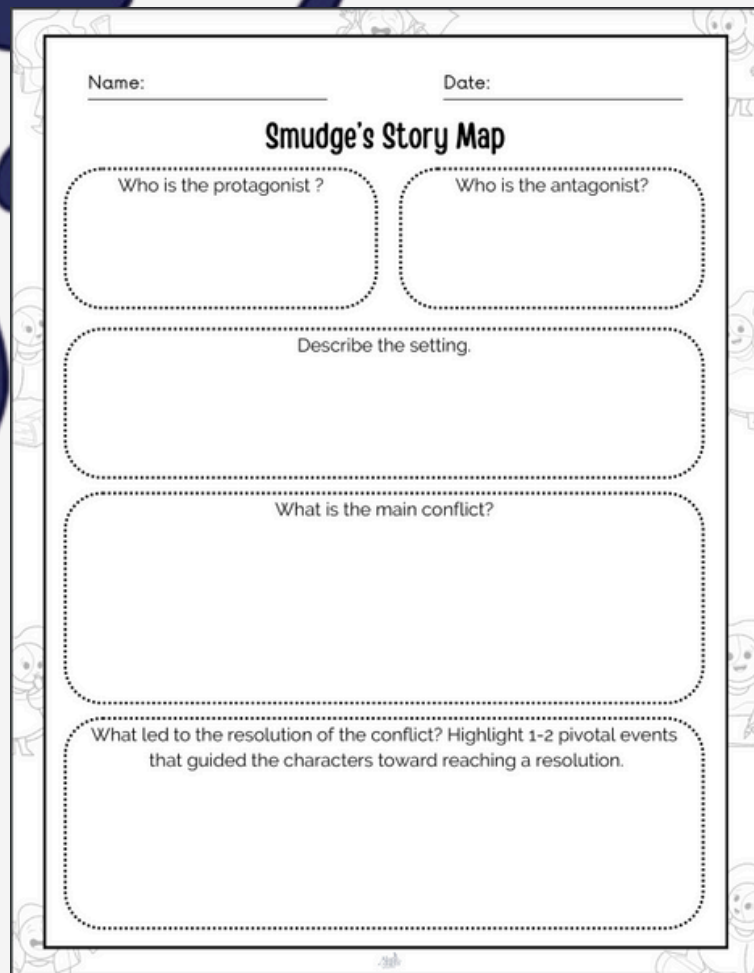

AFTER

CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

- **Smudge**: A creative but timid creature determined to share their story, representing resilience and self-expression.

- **Edgar**: Smudge's creator, a kind but skeptical author who symbolizes the authority of storytelling.

- **Wendell, Aziz, Clarissa**: Fellow authors, each displaying different reactions to Smudge's ambitions, representing the varied perspectives of criticism.

- **The Bird**: Acts as a gatekeeper, embodying the challenge of reaching one's dreams despite opposition.

PLOT BREAKDOWN

- **Introduction:** Smudge enters the author's lair, hoping to gain respect and get their story "The Brave Teapot" into the World Book where all important stories are held.

- **Conflict:** Smudge faces resistance and skepticism from the authors.

- **Climax:** Smudge bravely attempts to add their story to the World Book, overcoming obstacles like a mischievous ink creature and the authors' pens.

- **Resolution:** Edgar takes and reads Smudge's story without knowing who wrote it. Smudge feels pride in having it appreciated, marking a small victory.

MIDDLE GRADE ELA RESOURCES

Smudge's Story Map

Who is the protagonist ?

Who is the antagonist?
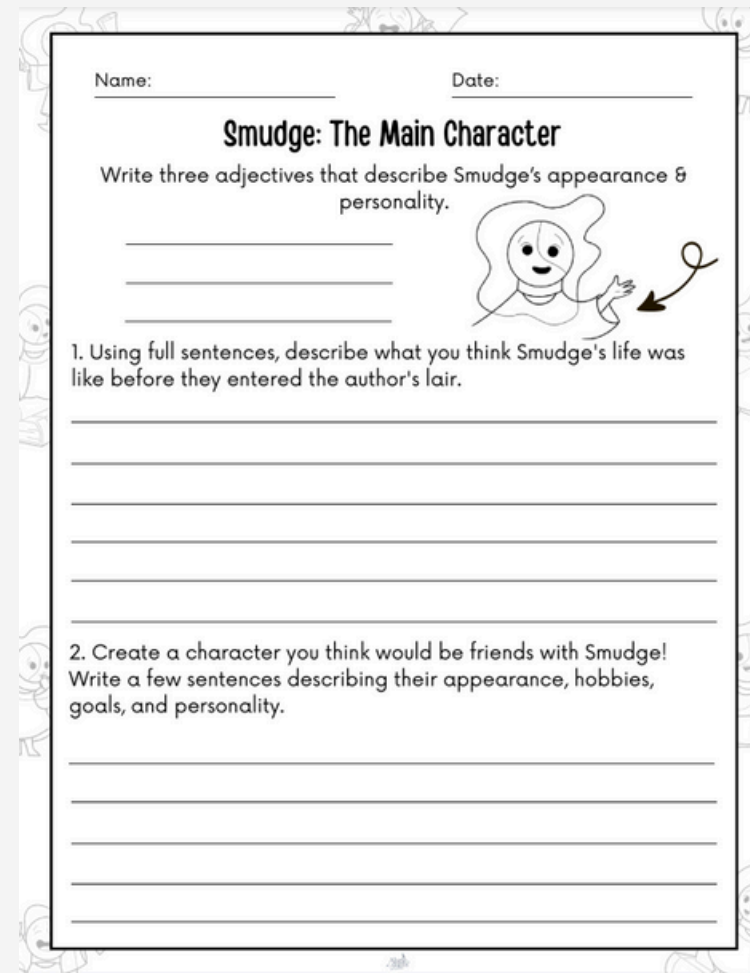
Describe the setting.

What is the main conflict?

What led to the resolution of the conflict? Highlight 1-2 pivotal events that guided the characters toward reaching a resolution.

Smudge: The Main Character

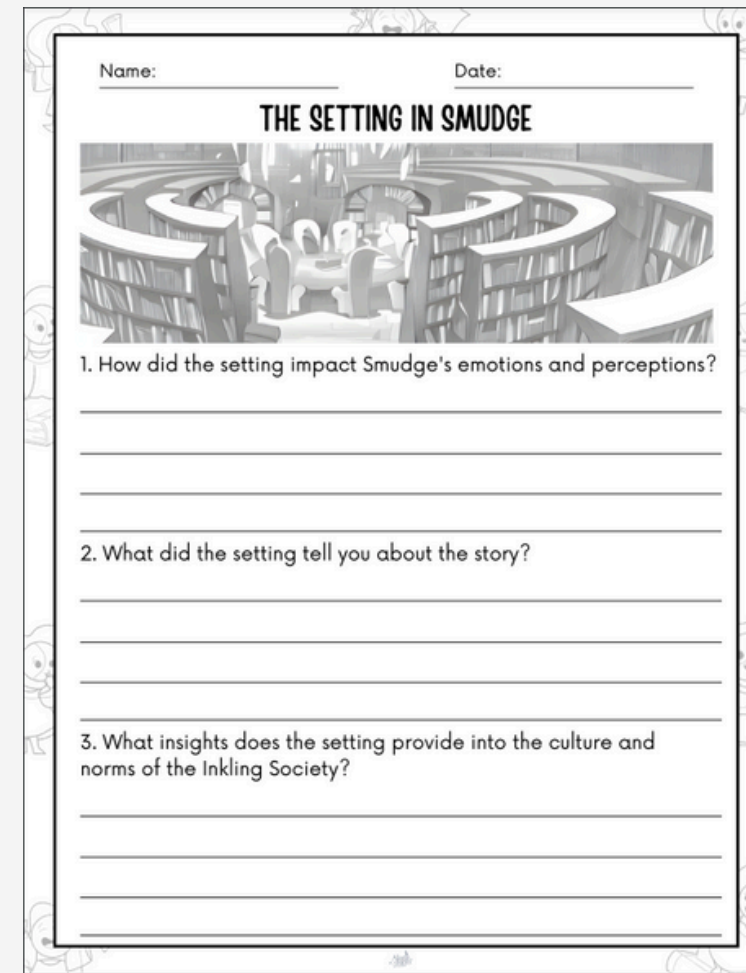Write three adjectives that describe Smudge's appearance & personality.

1. Using full sentences, describe what you think Smudge's life was like before they entered the author's lair.

2. Create a character you think would be friends with Smudge! Write a few sentences describing their appearance, hobbies, goals, and personality.
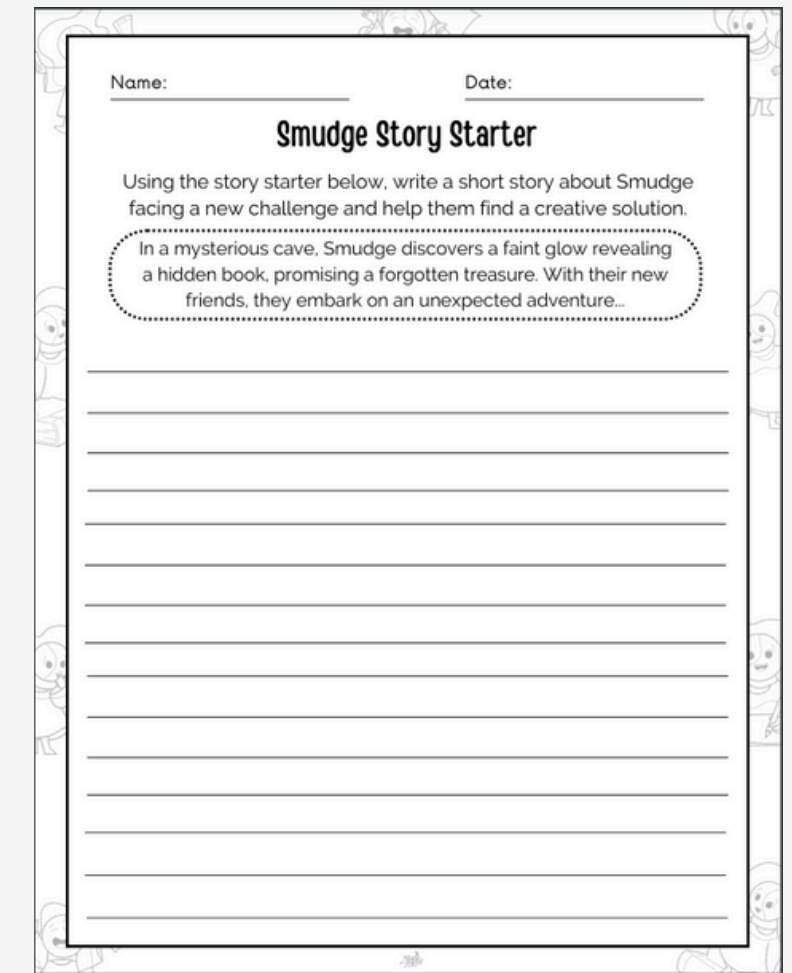
THE SETTING IN SMUDGE

1. How did the setting impact Smudge's emotions and perceptions?

2. What did the setting tell you about the story?

3. What insights does the setting provide into the culture and norms of the Inkling Society?

Smudge Story Starter

Using the story starter below, write a short story about Smudge facing a new challenge and help them find a creative solution.

In a mysterious cave, Smudge discovers a faint glow revealing a hidden book, promising a forgotten treasure. With their new friends, they embark on an unexpected adventure...

STORY MAP

Organize the main parts of a story.

MAIN CHARACTER

Explore the traits, motivations, and actions of the main character.

SETTING

Learn how the setting shapes the story's mood and events.

STORY STARTER

Encouraging them to create their own unique ending.

MIDDLE GRADE SEL RESOURCES

FEELINGS MAP

Understand the character's journey and reactions to events.

EMPATHY IN ACTION

Understand and relate to different perspectives and feelings within a story.

Name: _____   Date: _____

Smudge's Feelings Map

Understanding feelings helps us follow a story by showing us how characters change. How did Smudge's feelings change as the story unfolded? Use a drawing to illustrate your answer, and explain your reasoning using full sentences.

Beginning

Middle

End

Name: _____   Date: _____

Empathy In Action

When you show empathy toward another person, you are showing that person how brave they are to share things about themself. When you listen, you should listen with kind ears and an open mind. Look at this moment from Smudge when the authors laugh after learning Smudge wrote a story:

What is Smudge trying to share about themself in this scene? How could the authors have responded more kindly?

MIDDLE GRADE CREATIVE RESOURCES

DRAW SMUDGE

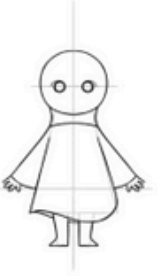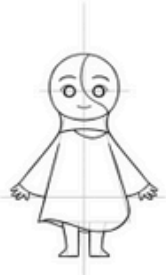Step-by-step guide to draw Smudge, building confidence in drawing.

CREATE A LAIR

Design an ideal writing space, imagining where they'd feel most inspired to write their stories

LET'S DRAW SMUDGE!

Grab a separate sheet of paper and discover the art of drawing Smudge with these simple steps!

Step 1
Create a grid using one vertical line and two horizontal lines. Lightly, draw a circle within.

Step 2
Lightly draw the outline of Smudge's clothes using straight lines. Draw their legs.

Step 3
Darken the outline of Smudge's head then add curved lines to the clothing. Add feet, eyes, and hands.

Step 3
Add eyebrows, a smile, and a curved line to Smudge's face and collar.

Step 4
Draw various circles that will make up Smudge's ink hair.

Step 5
Connect the circles, erase the light lines, and darken the final lines!

Create Your Own Authors Lair!

Imagine a magical place where you can write stories like Smudge! Draw an illustration of this place, then create three rules and explain why they're important for your imagination to soar!
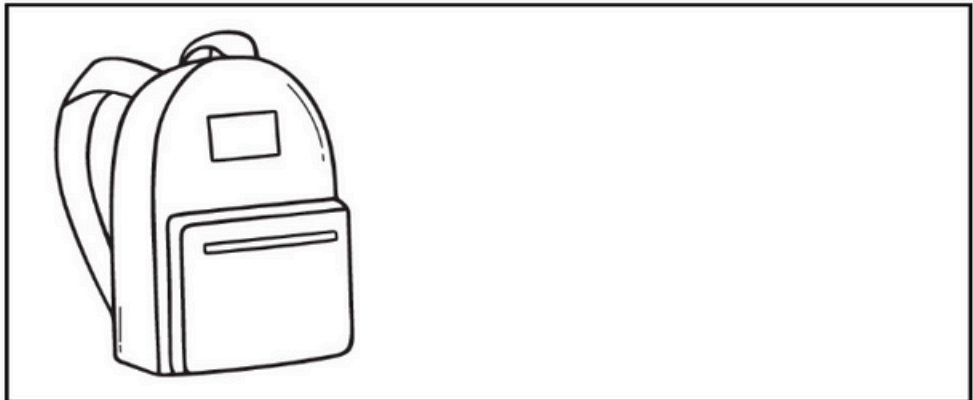
Name: _____ Date: _____

ADDITIONAL ELA CHARACTER RESOURCES

What's In The Backpack?

Think about what a character in your story would carry in their backpack. Draw and label each item, then describe why each item is important and how it shows something about their personality.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Item 1: _____

Description of why it's important: _____
_____

How it reveals the character's personality: _____
_____

Item 2: _____

Description of why it's important: _____
_____

How it reveals the character's personality: _____
_____

Character Spy Kit

Name: _____ Date: _____

You are a secret agent on a mission to discover the most interesting details about a character in your future story! Create a "Spy Profile" by filling out the information below.

Name of character you're observing: _____

Spy Profile Section 1: Physical Appearance
- Hair color and style: _____
- Eye color: _____ Height: _____
- Any special features (scar, freckles, etc.): _____
_____

Spy Profile Section 2: Personality Quirks
What makes this character unique? List two or three interesting personality traits.
_____
_____
_____

Spy Profile Section 3: Goals and Motivations
What drives this character?
- Main Goal: _____
- Why is this important?: _____
_____

Spy Profile Section 4: Secrets
What secrets does this character keep?: _____
_____

Story Elements: Characters

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fill in three personality traits for each of the following types of characters:

Protagonist (Hero) _____

Antagonist (Villain) _____

Sidekick _____

Using the personality traits above, complete the following prompts to create a backstory for a protagonist:

Where are they from? _____
_____

What is their biggest fear? _____
_____

What do they want most in life? _____
_____

What secret are they hiding? _____
_____

ADDITIONAL ELA SETTING RESOURCES

Name: _____ Date: _____

Setting: Create a Comic Strip

Imagine how the setting in a story changes as the plot progresses. Draw a four-panel comic strip, showing how the setting looks at different points in the story. In each panel, add a short caption to explain how the setting feels and how it affects the mood of the story at that point.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Setting: Recipe Card

Think about a future story setting and imagine it as a recipe. List the "ingredients" you'd need to create this setting. Then, write a "recipe" for putting these ingredients together, describing how they work together to build the setting's mood.

Setting Name (e.g. Mysterious Forrest): _____

Ingredients List
List the ingredients that make up this setting, using descriptive language (e.g., 2 cups of fog, 1 tablespoon of silence, a pinch of moonlight).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Write a few sentences explaining how to "combine" the ingredients. Describe how the setting should feel and look.

_____
_____
_____

How does this setting affect the characters or story?

_____
_____

ADDITIONAL ELA CONFLICT RESOURCES

Conflict Swap

Name: _____ Date: _____

Think about a conflict from a story or movie you know well. Imagine if this conflict were swapped for a different type of conflict. How would the story change?

Original Conflict Information

Story/ Movie Title: _____

Conflict Type: (circle one)

Character vs. Character   Character vs. Nature.   Character vs. Self

Character vs. Society   Character vs. Technology   Character vs. Supernatural

Description of Original Conflict: _____

_____

Conflict Swap

New Conflict Type:(Circle one that is different from above)

Character vs. Character   Character vs. Nature.   Character vs. Self

Character vs. Society   Character vs. Technology   Character vs. Supernatural

Imagine how the story/ movie might play out with this new flict. Write a short story that shows the swapped conflict.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Conflict Dice Roll

Name: _____ Date: _____

Roll a dice to discover the type of conflict you'll explore! Each number represents a different kind of conflict. Use the guide below to see what each number represents.

- Roll a 1: Character vs. Character
- Roll a 2: Character vs. Nature
- Roll a 3: Character vs. Society
- Roll a 4: Character vs. Self
- Roll a 5: Character vs. Technology
- Roll a 6: Character vs. Supernatural

Roll Result: _____

Write Your Story

Using the type of conflict you rolled, write a short story below that describes the conflict. Include details that show what is at stake for the character(s) and how the conflict affects them.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How did this type of conflict change how the character acted?

_____
_____

Conflict: Create a Comic Strip

Name: _____ Date: _____

Think of a conflict in a story you know, or create a new one. In the comic strip boxes below, show how the conflict unfolds and how it is resolved. Use dialogue and captions to describe each character's actions and how they lead to a resolution.

_____
_____
_____
_____