

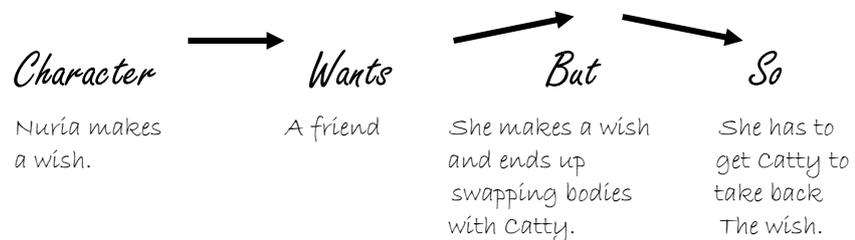
Power Lessons - Year 5

Characterisation

Objective: To help students identify the relationship of a character's motives and the outcome of the story.

Materials: Any novel you have recently read to the students, such as *Well Wished* by Franny Billingsley (5.8).

- Lesson:**
1. Tell students that in many stories, the main character, also known as the protagonist, wants something (friendship, a home, acceptance) and it is this wanting that causes the character to make certain choices and take certain actions, all the way to the final story outcome.
 2. Help students to identify the wants (*or motives*) of the main character in the story that you are currently reading aloud. For example, ask, "In *Well Wished*, what does Nuria want?" (to find a friend).
 3. Point out that the character rarely gets what he or she wants in a simple or direct manner. Explain that authors often deliberately place obstacles in the way of the main character. Say, "In trying to get what he or she wants, the character might end up with even bigger and more serious problems. Then again, he or she might end up with greater rewards as well."
 4. Draw the following diagram on the board. Have students provide you with the information to complete the diagram.



5. Ask, "Does the main character get what he or she wants in the end?" The answer may surprise students. In many stories, such as *Well Wished*, the character *does* get what she wants by the story's finish. In others however, the character does not get what she wanted from the beginning. Have students brainstorm stories in which the character does not get what he or she wants.
6. Guide students to understand that both types of stories (those in which the character does get what he or she wishes for, and those in which the character doesn't) have something in common; the main character changes. Ask, "How does Nuria change?" (She becomes less of a 'grabby bones.' She is able to compromise.)
7. Tell students that thinking about what a character really wants and whether or not the character will get it will help them know more about the story and will keep them turning the pages!

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Status of the Class

Follow up: As you take the Status of the Class, ask:

- What does the main character in your story want?
- What actions does your main character take to get what he or she wants?
- Do you think that the character will get what he or she wants in the end?

Added Practice: Have your students create diagrams to demonstrate what the main characters in their books want, the obstacles that get in their way and what the characters must do to get around the obstacles.

Make a two-column chart. Have students list stories in which the protagonist gets what he or she wants in the first column. In the second column, have them list stories in which the protagonist does not get what he or she wants. Ask students to note which type of story they come across more often.