

Locating Archetypes in Pop Culture, Literature, and Life

Archetypes

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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	125 minutes

Essential Question

What are archetypes? How does the media present characters through archetypes? Where are archetypes present in everyday lives?

Summary

Using pictures related to pop culture as mentor texts, students identify the archetypal figures represented. They then are broken into small groups where they choose a figure not previously identified to represent the archetype assigned to them and are asked to justify this choice to the whole group. Students create their own character to represent a particular archetype. Through a Gallery Walk/Carousel and reflective Quick Write, students make a real world application as to why people act/are the way they do/are, integrating an attitude of tolerance for the differences among people.

Snapshot

Engage

Students examine pictures of pop culture to identify archetypal representations.

Explore

Students are assigned an archetype and then locate, through research, a pop culture representation of that archetype.

Explain

Students create an original character to depict a specific archetype.

Extend

Students engage in a Gallery Walk/Carousel, viewing and providing feedback for their peers' original characters.

Evaluate

In addition to the original character creation, students reflect on what they know of people's differences and tolerance through a Quick Write.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR301: Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

10.8.W: Write independently using print, cursive, and/or typing for various lengths of time, intentionally selecting and combining modes and genres to suit their audiences and purposes.

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

11.1.S.3: Conduct formal and informal presentations in a variety of contexts supporting their message with evidence and using verbal and nonverbal cues.

Attachments

- Cooperative Grouping Strategies—Locating Archetypes.docx
- Cooperative Grouping Strategies—Locating Archetypes.pdf
- Pop Culture Archetypes—Locating Archetypes - Spanish.docx
- Pop Culture Archetypes—Locating Archetypes - Spanish.pdf
- Pop Culture Archetypes—Locating Archetypes.docx
- Pop Culture Archetypes—Locating Archetypes.pdf

Materials

- Writing materials: pen, pencil, paper, etc.
- Computers and/or iPads
- Art supplies: paper, markers, colored pencils, etc.
- Post-it notes

20 minutes

Engage

Going into this lesson, ensure that students have prior knowledge of archetypes. At the minimum, make sure they know the definition of archetype.

Teacher's Note

From the OSDE website, an archetype is a descriptive detail, plot pattern, character type, or theme that recurs in many different cultures. One such archetype, which appears in Shakespeare's Macbeth, is the battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Visit this link for more information about archetypes, including a more detailed definition and examples.

Begin this lesson with a picture related to pop culture. Choose a figure with which most students are familiar. An example would be Harry Potter, a version of the hero archetype. Have students complete a 5-minute Quick Write explaining what archetype that figure represents and why. First ask students to share their Quick Write with an Elbow Partner, then have volunteers share their Quick Write with the class.

Teacher's Note

Provide a list of archetypes from which students can choose. See a list of archetypes at https://boords.com/storytelling/character-archetypes.

Provide another picture and have students repeat this activity individually.

Teacher's Note

Pictures of different movie characters are attached above and can be used for this activity (see **Pop Culture Archetypes**; attached). These do not align perfectly with the 12 common archetypes previously mentioned, but there is overlap and should present students with plenty of options and examples.

After students' individual work, focus a whole-class discussion on not just who these people are, but also *why* they act they way they do. It is important during this activity to point out *how* the media portrays these pop culture icons and whether or not that affects how we perceive them. Lead the discussion by pointing out that archetypes are not only present in pop culture, but also in our everyday lives. Encourage students to make connections from pop culture to their own lives.

35 minutes

Explore

Place students in groups of 5 (or fewer) for the Explore. Assign each group one archetype to explore. Options include the innocent, the orphan, the hero, the caregiver, the explorer, the rebel, the lover, the creator, the jester, the sage, the magician, the ruler, etc.

Teacher's Note

See **Cooperative Grouping Strategies** (attached) for ideas on how to group students.

Teacher's Note

https://boords.com/storytelling/character-archetypes will be useful again during this activity.

Collectively, have each group use an iPad or computer to research a figure in pop culture who fits their assigned archetype. Groups should make a list of reasons why that figure is an example of that archetype and prepare to defend their example to the class as a whole.

Although all students should work collaboratively on each part of the assignment, encourage each group member to serve a particular role during their group exploration (e.g., facilitator, scribe, reporter, timekeeper, etc.). The roles are flexible and fluid, so give students autonomy during this activity.

After approximately 15 minutes, ask each group to share out. Encourage other groups to ask questions to presenting groups to help each group clarify their initial response and reasoning. Again, ask students to focus on the why (*Why do certain people behave a certain way?*) in addition to the how (*How do they behave?*) and the what (*What are their physical and personality traits?*).

40 minutes

Explain

Have each student (either individually or collaboratively with a partner) choose one archetype that interests them and create an original character to represent that archetype. Ask students to consider both the outer and the inner traits of the character during this process, relying on their prior knowledge and experiences as they design their original character.

Archetypal traits could include some or all of the following:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Goals
- Talents
- Personality
- Skin/hair/eye color
- Physical attributes
- Dreams/desires
- Words
- Thoughts

Require students to provide evidence and reasoning for who their characters are and how their characters represent the particular archetype they chose. As they design their characters on a piece of paper, have them keep a running list of traits related to that particular archetype on the back. Allow students to be as creative as possible and encourage them to use plenty of color to create a visually appealing piece.

Teacher's Note

If students have access to technology, they could design and write about their character using a platform like Canva or Piktograph instead.

30 minutes

Extend

To encourage student reflection and feedback, have students place their archetypal characters around the room, whether on paper or on a laptop or tablet. Then engage in a Gallery Walk/Carousel. During the activity, ask students to write questions and comments on Post-it notes and leave them next to the characters they view. Ask them to think deeply about how each character/archetype could apply to people in real-world settings and leave comments/feedback centered on this connection.

Students should be encouraged to go back to their character and reflectively revise their traits and reasoning based on feedback from their classmates.

Evaluate

Evaluate group work and students' individual archetypal character creation. Characters could be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Neatness
- Effort
- Creativity
- List of traits
- Explanation of traits/supporting evidence

In addition, students should reflect on what they learned not only about archetypes, but also about differences among people in the real world. Students should answer the lesson's essential questions in a brief, reflective Quick Write, which they turn in as they leave class.

Teacher's Note

This lesson can be easily transferred to short stories, novels, and plays as well. It serves as an introduction to locating, evaluating, and creating archetypes; but students should also be encouraged to apply these skills as they read and respond to literature.

Resources

- Bennett, E. (2014). Pop Culture Cheat Sheet [PowerPoint Slide]. In Archetypes & Branding: The Unconscious Appeal. http://www.slideshare.net/EmilyBennett/archetype-overview-from-the-hero-and-the-outlaw?qid=e0a2dd70-ccb0-41f5-8b8a-c6957f503fe6&v=default&b=&from_search=1
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Canva. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/612
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow Partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk / Carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Piktochart. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2394
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Quick Write. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1127
- Leighfield, L. (2023). The 12 character archetypes. Boords. https://boords.com/storytelling/character-archetypes
- Literary Devices. (2016). Archetype. http://literarydevices.net/archetype/
- Lynne Cagle Graphics. (2002). Cooperative Grouping Strategies for Classroom Teachers. https://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com/file/view/Cooperative+Grouping+Strategies.pdf