

# Close Shaves in Colombia

## Characterization Through Conflict

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| **Grade Level** | 8th – 9th Grade | **Time Frame** | 120–140 minutes |
| **Subject** | English/Language Arts | **Duration** | 3 class periods |

## Essential Question

How can conflict bring a character to life?

## Summary

In this lesson, students will explore dilemmas and how they reveal character traits through two Colombian short stories. Students will read the stories “One of These Days” by Gabriel García Márquez and “Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez. Students then learn about characterization and how authors use conflict to reveal a person's character. To conclude the lesson, students will compare and contrast the main characters from the two short stories and evaluate how the characters would handle dilemmas and resolve conflicts.

## Snapshot

### Engage

Students decide which conflicts they would most and least prefer to encounter and consider what their choices reveal about themselves.

### Explore

Students read the short story “One of These Days” and identify key details from the story.

### Explain

Students formalize their understanding of conflict and characterization.

### Extend

Students read the short story “Lather and Nothing Else,” highlight examples of conflict and characterization, and compare the main characters.

### Evaluate

Students demonstrate their understanding of characterization and conflict by creating a comic strip.

## Standards

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

**CLR401:** Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
**REL301:** Identify clear comparative relationships between main characters in somewhat challenging literary narratives

*Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)*

**8.3.R.3:** Analyze literary elements to support interpretations of a literary text:
- setting
- plot
- characters (i.e., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- point of view (i.e., third person limited and omniscient, second person, and unreliable narrator)

**8.3.R.8:** Compare or contrast two or more texts, providing textual evidence to support their inferences.

*Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)*

**9.3.R.7:** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.

## Attachments

- Barber Burden—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.docx
- Barber Burden—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.pdf
- Barber Burden—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Barber Burden—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- Cognitive Comic—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Cognitive Comic—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- Comparing Characters—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.docx
- Comparing Characters—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.pdf
- Comparing Characters—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Comparing Characters—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- Dentist Details—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.docx
- Dentist Details—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.pdf
- Dentist Details—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Dentist Details—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- Dentist Dilemma—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.docx
- Dentist Dilemma—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.pdf
- Dentist Dilemma—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Dentist Dilemma—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- La Violencia—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- La Violencia—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Close Shaves in Colombia.pptx
- Magnetic Statements—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic Statements—Close Shaves in Colombia - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic Statements—Close Shaves in Colombia.docx
- Magnetic Statements—Close Shaves in Colombia.pdf

## Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Magnetic Statements posters (attached; one set per classroom)
- La Violencia document (attached)

- Dentist Details handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Dentist Dilemma handout (attached; one per student; print two-sided, staple)
- Barber Burden handout (attached; one per student; print two-sided, staple)
- Comparing Characters handout (attached; one per pair; print one-sided)
- Cognitive Comic handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Highlighters (one per student)
- CommonLit account (optional; for teacher use)

# Preparation

This lesson has students read two short stories. Due to some strong language in the original stories, the two stories have been slightly modified. These modified versions are available in the attached **Dentist Dilemma** and **Barber Burden** handouts. You may print the handouts or the originals to give to students or keep as a class set, or you may share these digitally with your students using your LMS.

To access the original stories, visit CommonLit.org and log in or sign up for a free account. Then click the following links to access each story:

- "One of These Days" by Gabriel García Márquez
- "Lather and Nothing Else" by Hernando Téllez

Select "Download PDF" and follow the directions to print each short story for your students.

For students whose first language is not English, CommonLit.org can provide translations. You must first create a CommonLit.org class in order for them to have access to a translated version of the story. The CommonLit tech tool can assist you with this. Once you have created a class, you can make the class code available to students who wish to read it in Spanish.

15 minutes

# Engage

### Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Prior to beginning the lesson, print the attached **Magnetic Statements** posters. Hang the four posters around the room with space for students to gather around each one. If space is a concern, consider hanging the posters in the hallway.

As students enter the classroom, display **slide 3** of the attached **Lesson Slides**. Begin the lesson by asking students to think about the following dilemmas on the slide:

- **Scenario 1:** Should I sit with my best friend or my crush at lunch?
- **Scenario 2:** Do I finish my homework or watch a couple of episodes of my favorite show?
- **Scenario 3:** Do I risk wearing expensive, new shoes to school, knowing someone might step on them?
- **Scenario 4:** Should I tell the cashier if she gave me an extra $5 in change?

Transition to **slide 4** and ask the class how they would define "dilemma."

### Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

During this discussion of the definition of dilemma, ask guiding questions but do not yet correct students in their definition. During the Explain phase of this lesson, students will deepen their understanding of internal and external conflict.

After a few minutes of discussion, show **slide 5**, which shows the same dilemmas from before, and introduce students to the Magnetic Statements strategy. Draw students' attention to the posters around the room. Ask students to decide which of these scenarios they would find the easiest to deal with (which is the most attractive) and indicate their decision by moving to that poster.

Once students have moved to a poster, have students share their reasoning with the others at their poster. Allow a couple of minutes for discussion, then ask one person from each group to share the reasoning behind their choice with the class.

Have students stay where they are and display **slide 6**. Ask students to quietly consider the question on the slide, "What does your choice reveal about you?" Use the other questions on the slide to prompt students to consider how their choice speaks to their personalities, their likes and dislikes, etc. Invite volunteers to share their responses with the whole class.

Repeat the process above using **slides 7–8**. Ask students to decide which of the scenarios they would find the hardest to deal with (which most repels them) and indicate their decision by moving to that poster. At the poster, have students discuss their choices and reflect on what their choice reveals about themselves.

Have students return to their seats. Transition through **slides 9–10** and share the lesson's essential question and learning objectives. Review these with your class to the extend you feel necessary.

20 minutes

# Explore

### Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

During this phase of the lesson, students must complete their assigned portion of a graphic organizer as they read a short story. Students are expected to share their responses with the class. Prepare a space to record these responses ahead of time. This could be within the Lesson Slides, on chart paper, on a whiteboard, etc. Use **slide 16** as a model for preparing this space. Whichever space you choose must serve as a working document that you can reference throughout the lesson.

### Reading Options

Consider how you want students to read the short story "One of These Days." You may want students to read the story aloud as a whole class, read aloud in groups, or listen to an audio recording from YouTube.

There are several factors to consider when selecting a method. Reading aloud is a good default option for most classes. However, if your class is hesitant to read aloud or you would like to monitor students more closely during the story, then consider the audio option. Regardless of the method, give each student a copy of the short story so they may follow along, and pause at intervals to give students time to catch up on note-taking. Take time to clarify any details as you read the story.

Move to **slide 11**. Ask students to think about the purpose of a dilemma in a fictional story and ask for volunteers to answer the questions on the slide. If necessary, ask guiding questions so that students understand that the purpose of a dilemma is to help the reader better understand the character. Share with students that they will explore the importance of dilemmas in fiction and how authors use dilemmas in different ways.

Display **slide 12** and give each student a copy of the attached **Dentist Details** handout. Equally assign students a number from 1–4. Prompt students to circle their assigned number on the handout so they will remember. Tell students to complete the quadrant on the handout that corresponds with their number as they read the short story "One of These Days."

- **Quadrant 1:** Write at least three "why" questions that you could ask to better understand the story.
- **Quadrant 2:** Write at least three details used to describe the dentist.
- **Quadrant 3:** Write at least three details you could infer about the dentist that the story did not directly tell you.
- **Quadrant 4:** Write at least three problems that the dentist must manage.

Give each student one copy of the attached **Dentist Dilemma** handout, which includes the short story. Display **slide 13** before students read the short story. Set the scene for the story by reading aloud the attached **La Violencia** document to the class so they understand the background of the stories in this lesson. Remind students that they should list at least three things in their assigned quadrant by the end of the story.

Show **slide 14** and have students read the short story.

Once students finish reading the story, display **slide 15** and introduce the Stand Up, Sit Down strategy. Ask all students who were assigned number 1 to stand up and ask for a volunteer to share one response from their list. Have classmates who wrote that same response on their papers sit down. Continue the process until everyone is seated then ask for volunteers to share additional responses until until there are four responses in that quadrant. Repeat this process for the remaining quadrants. Have students complete their handouts by writing down what their peers share.

Use **slide 16** or your prepared space to write students' responses as they share.

Collect students' Dentist Details handout or have students keep them in a safe place to use later in the lesson.

**Teacher's Note: Pacing**

If you have a traditional 45-minute class period, it is recommended to pause here and begin the next portion during the next class period.

25 minutes

# Explain

Ask students to retrieve their Dentist Details handouts from the Explore section. Display **slide 17** and discuss the different types of conflicts in stories. The slide provides some general examples of internal and external conflicts. Ask for volunteers to share examples of conflicts from the "One of these Days" short story using their notes from the Dentist Details handout. As students give examples, have them identify if the conflict is an external or internal conflict. Direct students to write "external" or "internal" next to the dilemmas in the fourth quadrant of their Dentist Details handouts.

Once it appears that students have a good understanding of conflict, transition to **slide 18**. Introduce the video "Direct and Indirect Characterization: Show and Tell." Share with students that they will learn more about how authors can use forms of conflict to help readers understand what kind of person a character is. Explain that the method of a writer revealing the personality of a character is known as *characterization*. Play the video on the slide.

**Embedded video**

https://youtube.com/watch?v=KWYPzVveuKY?si=AzuArGvDycbQ8UJ1

### Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

The video introduces the acronym "STEAL" as a way to remember different elements of characterization. There are many good places to pause this video and ask questions of students. Preview the video ahead of time to determine good stopping points. For example, 2:40 would be a good time to stop and ask students to discuss what they think before resuming the video to see the answer.

Once the video ends, show **slide 19** to reiterate what the STEAL acronym stands for. Ask students to write down "STEAL" and what each letter stands for on the back of their Dentist Details handouts. Then, ask students to look back at the second and third quadrants of their handouts and identify where they see the elements from the acronym. As you review each letter of the STEAL acronym, ask for volunteers to share examples of each letter from the short story. After each volunteer shares, ask the class what they learned about the character from that story detail.

### Sample Student Responses

When teaching about STEAL, let students know that STEAL is not a list that an author checks off as they write a story or create a character. It is a tool students can use to analyze a character by identifying and considering specific elements. Tell students that they won't always find an example of every letter in a text.

- **S (Says):** The dentist tells his son to tell the mayor to come and shoot him. This shows that he is not afraid of the mayor.
- **T (Thinks):** While the author hints at what the dentist might be thinking, we are never told exactly what he thinks.
- **E (Effects on others):** The mayor relies on the dentist to help with his pain. This shows that the dentist is important to the community.
- **A (Actions):** The dentist pulls the mayor's tooth, even though he dislikes him. This shows that the dentist doesn't let his feelings get in the way of doing his job.
- **L (Looks):** The dentist responded to the threat of being shot "without hurrying." This means that the dentist must be a calm person.

25 minutes

# Extend

Display **slide 20**. Give each student one copy of the attached **Barber Burden** handout, which contains the short story "Lather and Nothing Else." Introduce the Why-Lighting strategy and tell students that as they read this story, they are to highlight at least two examples of each of the following: *indirect characterization*, *direct characterization*, *internal conflict*, and *external conflict*.

Show **slide 21** and share with students that "Lather and Nothing Else" and "One of These Days" are both set during the same time period. Tell students that the stories share similarities in plot but that the characters and their choices make the outcomes of the stories different. Explain to students that they should prepare to compare how each author uses conflict and characterization to convey different ideas.

Have students read the story "Lather and Nothing Else."

After students have read the story, have them find a partner or assign partners. Distribute one copy of the attached **Comparing Characters** handout to each pair and display **slide 22**. Use the slide, which includes a layout of the handout, to introduce the task. Have pairs write at least four attributes the dentist and the barber have in common on the lines between the two characters. Have pairs write at least four attributes that are unique to each character on the lines beside each character. Each column is labeled to indicate where students should record the information.

Start the 10-minute timer on the slide and have students complete the handout.

### Teacher's Note: Pacing

If you have a traditional 45-minute class period, the lesson can be paused while pairs are working on their Comparing Characters handout. Pairs can resume and finish the handout at the beginning of the next class period.

Once students have completed the handout, display **slide 23**. Ask pairs to use what they understand about the two characters to respond to the prompt on the slide, "Would you rather have the dentist or the barber as your substitute teacher? Why?" Have pairs discuss their response then record it on the back of their handouts. Tell pairs to support their responses by citing specific details from the stories.

As time allows, ask for volunteers to share their responses with the class.

35 minutes

# Evaluate

### Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

During this portion of the lesson, students must create a comic strip that has at least three cells. The handout provides more than three cells, so students may choose to leave some cells blank or use more than three cells.

Encourage students to include drawings with more detail than stick figures, even though students' comfort with their drawing skills will vary. Explain the reasoning behind the more detailed sketch is that their drawing should clearly communicate who the character is and represent what the student visualized from the story.

Decide whether or not you want students to use color in their creations, depending on the amount of time available. You may also consider having students hang their comics for display. Ensure that you communicate all expectations to your students before they begin drawing their comics.

Show **slide 24** to remind students of the dilemmas they discussed at the beginning of this lesson. Transition to **slide 25**, share the Cognitive Comics strategy with the class, and introduce the instructions for the activity. Explain that they should choose either the dentist or the barber as their character, select one of the dilemmas, and show how their chosen character would resolve that dilemma in a comic strip.

Show **slide 26** and share with students the expectations for the comic strip. Explain that they should use at least three cells to represent the character being introduced to the dilemma, the character making a choice, and the outcome of the choice. Encourage students to use speech and/or thought bubbles to help communicate their story.

Give each student a copy of the attached **Cognitive Comic** handout. As students work, encourage them to refer to the Magnetic Statements posters for information about the dilemmas.

### Digital Option

If you would prefer a digital option for this activity, consider using a tech tool like Autodraw or Canva. You may want to use a tool that your students are familiar with in order to reduce the amount of time students need to learn the tool.

Once students are finished, show **slide 27** and direct students to write a paragraph explanation on the back of their Cognitive Comic handouts or on a separate piece of notebook paper. Tell students that their explanation should include at least four sentences that explain how they used at least two details from the story to determine how their character would handle the dilemma.

**Teacher's Note: Student Support**

If students need structure for their paragraph explanations, provide them with this outline:

- **Sentence 1:** Explain the first detail and how it fits into the story.
- **Sentence 2:** Explain how that detail influenced your comic.
- **Sentence 3:** Explain the second detail and how it fits into the story.
- **Sentence 4:** Explain how that detail influenced your comic.

## Resources


- García Márquez, G. (1962). One of these days. CommonLit. https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/one-of-these-days
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- The ELA Connection. (2021, July 27). *Direct and indirect characterization: Show and tell* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/KWYPzVveuKY?si=AzuArGvDycbQ8UJ1