



"The Lady, or the Tiger?" Which Do You Choose?

Internal & External Conflict



Susan McHale

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	9th Grade	Time Frame	3 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	150 minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition		

Essential Question

What is the author's purpose in writing this story? Why does the author ask the reader to determine the ending?

Summary

This lesson is based on the short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton. Students will summarize the story and analyze each character's personality and internal conflict. Students will also identify the external conflict through the plot and setting. The author does not provide an ending for the reader, so students must choose an ending for the story using textual evidence to support their reasoning.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Magnetic Statements activity that supports the themes of the short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?".

Explore

Students work in pairs to read and annotate the short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" and then develop a brief summary.

Explain

Students use textual evidence to identify external conflicts, motivations, and internal conflicts for each main character in the story.

Extend

Students use Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) analysis to determine an ending to the story.

Evaluate

Students re-evaluate the themes of the story in light of their previous analysis and discuss why the author purposely did not provide a conclusion to the story.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.1.S.2: Follow agreed-upon rules as they engage in collaborative discussions about what they are reading and writing, expressing their own ideas clearly, building on the ideas of others, and respectfully disagreeing when necessary in pairs, diverse groups, and whole-class settings.

9.3.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

9.7.R: Analyze and evaluate the techniques used in a variety of multimodal content and how they contribute to meaning.

Attachments

- [CER—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.docx](#)
- [CER—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [CER—Which Do You Choose.docx](#)
- [CER—Which Do You Choose.pdf](#)
- [Character Analysis—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Character Analysis—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Character Analysis—Which Do You Choose.docx](#)
- [Character Analysis—Which Do You Choose.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Which Do You Choose.pptx](#)
- [Magnetic Statements—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Magnetic Statements—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Magnetic Statements—Which Do You Choose.docx](#)
- [Magnetic Statements—Which Do You Choose.pdf](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger with Annotated Vocabulary—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger with Annotated Vocabulary—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger with Annotated Vocabulary—Which Do You Choose.docx](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger with Annotated Vocabulary—Which Do You Choose.pdf](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger—Which Do You Choose - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger—Which Do You Choose.docx](#)
- [The Lady or the Tiger—Which Do You Choose.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Magnetic Statements (attached, one set)
- "The Lady, or the Tiger?" short story (versions with and without annotated vocabulary are attached, one per student)
- Character Analysis handout (attached, one per student)
- CER handout (attached, one per student)

45 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to the lesson, print one set of the attached **Magnetic Statements**. The set includes six possible statements that support the theme and the underlying motivations of the characters in the short story, "The Lady, or the Tiger?"

Omit some of the statements, if needed. Before class begins, post the Magnetic Statements around the room where they are easily visible.

You may also choose to prepare copies of "The Lady, or the Tiger?" by Frank R. Stockton. Two versions of the story are included in the attachments—one with vocabulary included and annotated, and one without. Consider which copy you'd like your class to use and prepare one copy per student (if not using a textbook instead).

Begin the lesson by showing **slides 2-4** of the attached **Lesson Slides**, which introduce the title of the lesson, the essential questions, and the learning objectives. Emphasize that the essential questions will be addressed throughout the lesson.

Display **slide 5**, introduce the [Magnetic Statements](#) strategy to students, and ask them to use this strategy to stand beside one of the statements posted around the room that "attracts" or "repels" them. Depending on the length of the class discussion, this activity should take approximately 15 minutes.

Point out the statements posted around the room. Slowly read each statement aloud and clarify any statements that might be confusing to students.

- Humans are basically good.
- Humans have a capacity for great evil and violence.
- Jealousy can cause people to act cruelly.
- True love is unselfish.
- In extreme situations, it is impossible to make good decisions.
- Family bonds are stronger than any other relationship.

Ask students to identify what these statements have in common.

Sample Student Responses

Students might respond to the question in a variety of ways, such as: "These are about human emotions," "They are about the good and bad things humans do," or "These statements are our inner thoughts or feelings." Accept all answers.

Ask students to choose a statement that they either believe to be true and "attracts" them or one which they do not believe to be true and "repels" them.

Allow a few minutes for students to move to their chosen statement. After they have gathered around the various statements, give students time to discuss their opinions with others who chose the same statement. Instruct them to discuss their reasoning as to why they chose that statement and why they were attracted to or repelled by it.

Have each group choose a spokesperson to summarize and share their discussions with the class. After each group shares, ask students to share a personal experience or an example they have observed that would make any one of these statements true for them.

Teacher's Note: Connecting to Personal Experiences

Groups might have already used personal experiences or examples in the discussion. However, if this did not occur, elicit more student responses to draw upon their personal experiences or prior knowledge.

Model some examples for student responses such as: "My mom and dad make sacrifices for my brothers and me, which is an example that love is unselfish," or, "My friend got jealous when I was texting her boyfriend too much and refused to speak to me, which is an example of how jealousy can cause people to act cruelly."

Remind students that as they share personal experiences, they should respect others' privacy and not use the names of family, friends, or classmates.

Conclude the discussion by emphasizing to students that these statements are all themes in the story they are about to read.

Explore

Display **slide 6** to preview the short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" Introduce students to author Frank R. Stockton, and share some of the challenges that Stockton faced as a writer.

Teacher's Note: Frank R. Stockton

Visit [Frank R. Stockton's page](#) on Wikipedia to familiarize yourself with the author's background prior to the lesson.

Pass out a copy of "**The Lady, or the Tiger?**" (with or without annotated vocabulary) to each student (or use the text in your textbook if available). Share with students that the story had been written for publication in a magazine in 1882. Stockton uses words not commonly used today. To this end, advise students that some of the vocabulary in the story is archaic.

Read the story aloud and ask students to read along silently. Instruct students to underline any unfamiliar or confusing words or phrases.

After you've completed the first reading, ask students to share words or phrases that they have underlined. Discuss them as a class. Refer to the attached "**The Lady, or the Tiger?**" with **Annotated Vocabulary** to aid with this discussion.

Teacher's Note: Student Support

Previewing the background of the author, reading the story aloud the first time, and addressing difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary can aid with comprehension and text analysis.

Display **slide 7**. Pair students as reading partners. Using a variation of the [CUS and Discuss](#) strategy, ask pairs to read the story again and circle the main ideas. When they finish reading, pairs should work together to write a summary of the story in 20 words or fewer.

Teacher's Note: Pairing Strategies and Vocabulary Support

Consider pairing students who struggle with reading with students who are proficient readers. For students who continue to struggle with the vocabulary in the reading, consider creating a vocabulary word wall, [Anchor Chart](#), or visual display that includes a synonym for each word that you discuss.

Call on pairs to share out their summaries in a class discussion. Dispel any misconceptions about the story if student summaries include inaccuracies.

After the discussion, display **slide 8**. Ask students about the setting of the story using guiding questions, such as:

- What do the words "amphitheater," "arena," "gladiators," "tribunal," and "galleries" call to mind?
- Who are the king's "Latin neighbors"?
- What does this tell you about the possible time period of the story?

Possible Student Responses

The words should call to mind for students the Roman sport of gladiator fighting. The king's "Latin neighbors" is a direct reference to the Roman Empire. The king took inspiration for his own arena games from the Romans. The time period *might be* during the Roman Empire or shortly afterward.

45 minutes

Explain

Direct students to look closely at the story's main characters: the king, the princess, and the courtier (the princess' lover). Pass out a copy of the attached **Character Analysis** handout to each student.

Display **slide 9**. Before students begin their analyses, explain what constitutes a character trait: a word that describes a character, often inferred from literal details in a text. Pairs should work together to complete the handout. Allow 25 to 35 minutes for this activity.

After pairs have completed their analyses, combine the pairs to make groups of four. Ask group members to discuss their analyses and add any new information to their handouts.

Discuss each character's personality and the textual evidence that supports each personality trait. For each character, have groups share personality traits and text phrases or words that support their analyses.

As groups share out, write one or two phrases for each character and the supporting textual evidence on **slides 10-12**.

Once you and the class have developed individual character analyses, read aloud the definition of external conflict from **slide 13**. Pose the question to the class: *What is the external conflict of this story?*

Possible Student Responses

To guide students in identifying the **external conflict**, refer to the main setting of the story—the arena, where any citizen for any reason could be eaten by a tiger or forced to marry someone against their will.

Ask students to revisit their summaries of the story to identify the external conflict in the story. The plot or storyline centers on the king's prerogative to send citizens to meet their fate in the arena as a routine practice. The king alone determines this fate. What happens is entirely at his whim.

Read aloud the definition of internal conflict on **slide 14**. Ask students to think about the difference between external conflict and internal conflict. Pose the following questions to the class: *What is the internal conflict? Who has the greatest internal conflict in the story?*

Possible Student Responses

Students should be able to identify the princess as the character with the most **internal conflict**. She is torn between jealousy that the courtier will marry someone that he might love instead of her and having someone she loves die before her eyes. Thus, the internal struggle is jealousy versus true love. The author also writes that the princess has had similar "semi-barbaric" feelings toward her father, the king. This statement infers that her jealousy could easily spark into violence or evil.

Explain that the author uses both internal and external conflict as literary devices to build rising tension in the story. Explore student perceptions of the tension that the story poses. Students should realize that the princess is jealous of her rival while also being deeply in love with the courtier (internal conflict) and that the courtier cannot escape the consequences of being in the arena (external conflict).

45 minutes

Extend

Pass out a copy of the attached **CER** handout to each student. Introduce the [Claim, Evidence, Reasoning \(CER\)](#) strategy to students. Display **slide 15**. Note to students the author's decision to purposely leave the ending of the story up to the reader, and invite students to use the CER strategy along with the handout to aid them in choosing an ending for the story. To do so, have students decide which door the princess pointed to for the courtier. Instruct them to write their choice of door in the *claim* box. After they have identified their choice of door, have them add textual evidence in the *evidence* box. Once they have filled the evidence box, guide them in inferring the story's ending in the *reasoning* box. Allow students to use their Character Analysis handout and previous class discussions as references for this activity. Allow 20 to 30 minutes for students to complete the assignment.

Display **slide 16**. Place two chairs in the middle of the room facing each other. Divide the room in half. Based on their CER analyses, designate one side of the room for students who believe the courtier choose the "door that opened to a tiger." Designate the opposite side of the room for students who believe the courtier chose the "door that opened to the maiden." (This activity is a variation of the [Philosophical Chairs](#) strategy.)

Select one student from each side to sit in the chairs in the middle of the room. Ask both students to discuss why they chose their position. Allow students to use their CER handouts as talking points.

Invite students who have a rebuttal for any ideas that have been discussed to sit in the chairs and share their thoughts. Continue this debate until a representative group from each side has expressed their viewpoints.

Have students return to their seats. Encourage students to discuss whether their minds were changed by a statement or argument that they found compelling.

Optional Technology Integration

As an alternative to the Philosophical Chairs activity, consider creating a [Flip](#) topic for students to respond to by recording their talking points for their choice of door. Ask students to view two other students' responses that present opposing views and either record a rebuttal or write a short written rebuttal in the comments of the videos that they viewed.

45 minutes

Evaluate

After the Philosophical Chairs debate, ask students to return to their seats. Display **slide 17**, and revisit the lesson's overarching essential question: *"What is the author's purpose for writing the story?"* Explain further by asking, *"What is the author's purpose in leaving the ending up to the reader?"*

Possible Student Responses

Allow for a variety of student responses to these questions. For example, students might believe that the author creates greater tension, interest, or excitement about the story by leaving the conclusion up to the reader. Ask students if they experienced any internal conflict by trying to determine the true nature of the princess. Creating internal conflict in the reader might also have been part of the author's purpose.

Display **slide 18**, and return to the Magnetic Statements from the Engage activity. Ask students to vote for *one* of the statements that they believe is the prevailing theme of the story.

Mention to students that their choice might be affected by the door they chose as well. After a vote, ask for volunteers to elaborate on their choice. The voting and subsequent discussion should take approximately 10 minutes.

Additional student products in this lesson that are available for assessment include the Character Analysis handout and the CER handout.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor Charts. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER). Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and Discuss. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Flip. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1075>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Magnetic Statements. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/166>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Philosophical Chairs. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/71>
- Literary Devices. (n.d.). *Conflict* [Definition]. <https://literarydevices.net/conflict/>
- LitCharts. (n.d.). *External conflict* [Definition]. <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/external-conflict>
- Richter, S. (2018, January 25). *Nature/landscapes* [Digital image]. Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/nature-animal-world-3106213/>
- Stockton, F. (1882). *The lady, or the tiger?*. Project Gutenberg. <http://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/396/pg396-images.html>
- Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Frank R. Stockton*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_R._Stockton