# 8.1 Analyzing Characters’ Decisions

## Subject: ESL
Length: 6 weeks

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<th>Stage 1 - Desired Results</th>
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### Unit Summary
In this unit, students will read and analyze the plots of short stories. In particular, students will look at moments in the stories where characters make important decisions that move the plot of the story. Students will then create their own stories containing the required plot elements.

### Content Standards and Learning Expectations

#### Listening/Speaking

- **L/S.8.1** Listens and responds during a read aloud from a variety of fiction and nonfiction to comprehend, generalize, relate to character and setting, identify tone, voice, and mood; makes connections to text.
- **L/S.8.4** Applies a variety of language patterns and structures to explain texts, discuss topics and themes, express thought on plot development, identify problem and solution, as well as make predictions, inferences, and draw conclusions from listening to a variety of texts and multimedia sources.
- **L/S.8.5** Explains the main idea or topic and important details from learned concepts or read alouds of a variety of expository texts, and applies sequence of events to clarify, discuss, and summarize a topic from a variety of texts.

#### Reading

- **R.8.3** Distinguishes main from supporting characters, compares and contrasts characters traits, and explains setting in fiction and nonfiction; distinguishes between first and second person point of view.
- **R.8.4** Sorts and organizes relevant events, states cause and effect, makes connections, predictions, and inferences, determines problem and solution, and draws conclusions in narrative, expository, and persuasive texts.

#### Writing

- **W.8.1** Combines sentences and ideas using simple transitional phrases; applies commas and colons to correctly punctuate sentences; identifies phrases and clauses; applies phrases in writing to construct complex sentences.
- **W.8.3** Applies organizational patterns and the elements of descriptive, narrative, and expository forms to construct a three-paragraph composition.
- **W.8.5** Uses basic editing marks and reference sources to revise writing; verifies information; writes a final draft using the writing process.

### Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings:
- The decisions we make impact us and those around us.
- The decisions characters make help move the plot of the story.
- It takes both small and large details build a good story.
- Taking the time to edit our work improves our writing.

### Essential Questions:
- Why do decisions matter?
- How do characters’ decisions move the plot in a story?
- Do all characters and events matter in a story?
- Why do we edit our work?

### Content *(Students will know...)*
- Setting in fiction
- The difference between main and supporting characters
- Plot development: introduction, rising action,

### Skills *(Students will be able to...)*
- Listen and respond during a read aloud to make generalizations
- Make predictions regarding plot development in short stories
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- climax, falling action, and resolution.
- Applying sequences of events to clarify, discuss, and summarize topics of short stories
- Compare and contrast character traits
- Sort and organize relevant events in short stories
- Determine problem and solution in short stories
- Draw conclusions in narrative texts such as short stories
- Combine sentences and ideas using simple transitional phrases (because, and, then, after, for example, in addition)
- Apply organizational patterns and elements of narrative form to construct a three-paragraph composition (introduction paragraph, body paragraph and concluding paragraph)
- Use basic editing marks (capital letters, lower case, delete, insert, no space, insert period) and reference sources to revise writing

Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:
Reading Response: Analyzing Characters’ Decisions
- Pre-reading activity:
  Discuss the question “would you save the life of someone at any cost to you?”
- During-Reading activity:
  Have students read the story, “The Window,” by Harry Buschman, or choose any story where characters make important decisions (See Attachment: 8.1 Text - The Window). As they read the story, have students complete a decision-making reading log (See Attachment: 8.1 Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log).
  Reading Response Essay Prompt:
  The story, “Window,” by Harry Buschman, tells a story of two ill men who share a hospital room and one man’s growing resentment towards another for having his bed next to the window where he can look at the world outside their room. Write a reading response (five-paragraph essay) discussing the decisions that the resentful man made in the story and the impact of his decisions on himself and on his roommate.

Other Evidence:
- As students read texts, have them complete the decision-making reading log to document the decisions characters make (See Attachment 8.1: Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log)
- Have students create a plot diagram of the short stories they read during the unit (See Attachment: 8.1: Graphic Organizer – Plot Diagram Blank)
- Provide students with an unedited copy of a story and have them edit the story by using editing marks (See Attachment: 8.1 Writing Tool – Editing Marks)
- Create a Word Wall using unit vocabulary and new concepts/words students encounter in texts they read during the unit (See Attachment: 8.1: Other Evidence – Using Word Walls to Improve Instruction).
- Have students keep a word journal for this unit or for the entire school year (See Attachment: 8.1 Other Evidence – Word Journal)
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- **Review format of a five-paragraph essay:** introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and concluding paragraph. Provide students a graphic organizer for writing their first essay drafts (See Attachment: 8.1 Writing Tool – Essay Template)
- **Revision Process:** Have students revise each others’ work (See Attachment 8.1 Writing Tool – Peer Revision Checklist).
- **Assess students’ work using a rubric** (See Attachment: 8.1 Writing Tool – Reading Response Rubric).

#### Analyzing Plot

- **Review the elements of a plot—introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution** (See Attachment: 8.1 Graphic Organizer – Plot Diagram).
- **Pair students up and have them reread the story,** “The Window” (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – The Window)
- **Have them complete a plot diagram of the story** (See Attachment: 8.1 Graphic Organizer – Plot Diagram Blank).
- **Reflection questions:** Have students write a journal entry discussing all of the following questions:
  - What did the author need to explain to readers in the exposition section?
  - What inciting event causes the action to begin to “rise”?
  - Where does the story peak?
  - Is there a clear climax, a decision making moment, in the story?
  - Which events lead up to the conclusion?
  - How is the story resolved?

#### Writing My Short Story

- **Have students re-write the short story,** “The Story of an Hour,” by Kate Chopin (See Attachments: 8.1 Text – The Story of An Hour and 8.1 Text – The Story of An Hour Rewritten). Students will only receive the beginning and the end of the original story. They will need to fill in the middle of the story that leads to the given ending.
- **Have students predict how they want their
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<td>stories/plots to develop. What major decision/s will the character make now that her husband is dead? Based on the ending we know that the main character dies, what events will lead to this ending?</td>
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<td>• Have students create plot diagrams of their stories and use them to create their drafts of the stories</td>
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<td>• Have students brainstorm details of the setting of their story (See Attachment: 8.1 Performance Task – Elements of Setting).</td>
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<td>• Have students revise each others’ stories (See Attachment: 8.1 Writing Tool – Revision Comment Sheet).</td>
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<td>• Have students share their stories with the class.</td>
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<td>• Read the original story by Kate Chopin and have students do journal reflections comparing their versions of the story with the original one.</td>
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Stage 3 - Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Editing
- Have students use editing marks to peer-edit their reading response pieces or stories they wrote (See Attachment: 8.1 Writing Tool – Editing Marks)
- Give students a list of simple sentences and have them connect two sentences using transition phrases (See Attachment 8.1 Writing Tool – Creating Sentences Using Transitions).

Reading: Plot Elements & Character Analysis
- Ask each student to do a plot analysis for their favorite television sitcom.
- Have students read the story “Eleven,” by Sandra Cisneros (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – Eleven) and use a T-chart (See Attachment: 8.1 Graphic Organizer – T-Chart) to list the main character(s) on one side and the supporting character(s) on the other side, along with a description of the classification.
- Have students work in groups of two to illustrate the main events in the version of “The Story of an Hour” that they wrote as a Performance Task, with one event per small sheet of paper. Have one student predict the order of their partner’s story.
- Have students compare and contrast the setting of “The Story of an Hour” to the setting of the story they created based on “The Story of an Hour” (See Attachment: 8.1 Resource – Elements of Setting).
- Have students compare and contrast how two characters change from the beginning to the end of the story (See Attachment: 8.1 Graphic Organizer – Character Map).

Sample Lessons
- Writing a multi-paragraph essay (See Attachment: 8.1 Sample Lesson – Essay Writing)
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Additional Resources

Literature Connections
- **Eleven** by Sandra Cisneros (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – Eleven)
- **Leona From Seedfolks** by Paul Fleischman (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – Leona)
- **The First Day of School** by Edward P. Jones (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – The First Day of School)
- **The Story of An Hour** by Kate Chopin (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – The Story of An Hour)
- **The Window** by Harry Buschman (See Attachment: 8.1 Text – The Window)