

Lesson Plan: Extraordinary Characters!: Characterization in Stories

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- Overview

In Hannah E. Harrison's *Extraordinary Jane*, Harrison tells the story of an ordinary dog in a circus full of extraordinary characters. What's their story? In this lesson, students will practice their creative writing using one of Harrison's background characters as a starting point.

- Resources & Preparation

- Materials and Technology
 - The book, *Extraordinary Jane*
 - Pencils
 - Paper

- Instructional Plan

- Student Objectives:
 - Create a backstory for a fictional character
 - Identify examples of characterization in action
 - Write a story about that character
1. This lesson should take place after you read *Extraordinary Jane*.
 2. After reading the story, ask students what they know about Jane just from this short book. (Possible answers: she's a dog, she's clumsy, she tries hard, she's a good friend, she has a big family, etc.)
 3. Explain that authors show "characterization" through characters' actions, speech, appearance, thoughts, and how other characters perceive them.
 4. Flip through the book again as a class to identify and list the background characters (the ring master, the elephant, the bear, Jane's family members) in *Extraordinary Jane*.
 5. Have students choose one of these background characters and write a one page story about them. Students must give the character a name, explain what that character does at the circus, and describe what happened to that character during the infamous "balancing ball disaster".