

What's Your Story?

Using Perspective to Understand Others



BIG IDEAS

- › Different people see the same situation in different ways.
- › Everyone is the main character of their own story.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- › Select details from stories that show an understanding of different characters' goals and the obstacles they face.
- › Compare the perspectives of multiple characters within the same story.



VOCABULARY

- Goal** › something you want to do, have, or accomplish; goals can be short-term or long-term
- Obstacle** › a challenge or block to a goal
- Perspective** › your point of view; the way you see things



CHARACTER CONNECTION

This activity provides a foundation for students to learn about **empathy**, by teaching them how to seek out multiple perspectives.

THEME

Appreciating Diversity

GRADE LEVEL

4-8

TIME

30 minutes

MATERIALS

What's Your Story? worksheet (attached); pens/pencils



Directions

1. Introduce students to the *Somebody Wanted But So* strategy, using the examples on the attached worksheet. (If you are unfamiliar with the *Somebody Wanted But So* reading strategy, you can learn more about it here: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/Somebody-Wanted-But-So.html>.)
2. Write the words 'goal' and 'obstacle' on the board. Ask students what column in the chart shows characters' goals, and what column in the chart shows characters' obstacles. Have students pair up and discuss this question with a partner for 1 minute before sharing out.
3. Clarify that the 'Wanted' column shows characters' goals. In other words, what a character wants is their **goal**.
4. Clarify that the 'But' column shows characters' obstacles. In other words, something that stops a character from getting what they want is an **obstacle**.



ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Common Core Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4-8.1 >

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4 >

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

PA Student Interpersonal Skills

16.1.4-5.C > Identify adverse situations which all people encounter and healthy ways to address.

NJ 21st Century Life & Careers

9.1.8.B.1 > Use multiple points of view to create alternative solutions.

5. Next, you will have students practice the strategy using a story of your or their choice. Have students choose one character from the story and complete one line of the worksheet, identifying that character's goal and an obstacle that is keeping them from that goal.
6. Tell students that in that example, they were looking at the story from the point of view, or **perspective**, of one character. Now they are going to look at the story from the perspective of another character.
7. Have students choose a different character in the same story and complete another line of the worksheet for that character. Check for understanding by moving around the room to monitor students' progress.
8. When all students have finished this task, ask students what differences and similarities they noticed between the goals and obstacles of the two characters. How does the story seem different from the second character's perspective?
9. Students can add more characters to the worksheet as time allows, or as needed for clarity.

WRAP-UP

In pairs or small groups, or in a written reflection, have students answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character in the story you are using?
2. How can you tell they are the main character?
3. Are there main characters in real life?





What's Your Story?

Worksheet

NAME _____

Pretty much all stories include **somebody** who **wants** something, **but** something stops them from getting it, **so** they think of something to do about that. If you think about it, you can probably break down almost any story into these parts. Let's try it...

SOMEBODY

WANTED

BUT

SO

► Here's an example from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, by J.K. Rowling:

Harry Potter	to live a happy, healthy life	he found out he was a wizard whose powerful enemy had once tried to kill him	he went to Hogwarts School to learn wizarding skills and made friends to help him along the way.
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► You can also take several different characters from one story and figure out what they each wanted. Here's an example from *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, by Lemony Snicket:

Three siblings named Violet, Klaus, and Sunny	to find a safe and loving home	they had to live with Count Olaf, who treated them badly and wanted to steal their money	they made a plan to use their skills to escape from him.
Violet	to be an inventor	she couldn't go to school because she had to care for her brother and sister	she created amazing inventions to help her and her siblings in their adventures.
Count Olaf	to steal the money that Violet, Klaus, and Sunny inherited from their parents	the children outsmarted him and escaped	he vowed to track them down and make them pay.





In the last example, it's also like three different stories are going on at once. That's because you are looking at the same story from three different **points of view**, or **perspectives**.

Now you try it! Using your favorite story, or one your teacher has assigned, see how many characters' perspectives you can identify.



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO

