

# A MIDSUMMER LITERACY + ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA



EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES BY STEPPING INTO A CHARACTER'S SHOES

## Overview:

Characters are truly the beating heart of any story, and the more connected a young person feels to characters in books, the more invested they will be in reading them. Moreover, to the extent that young readers learn to “look out through a character’s eyes,” they strengthen the foundation for such extraordinarily valuable capacities as empathy and perspective taking. This engaging storytelling activity helps young people connect with characters, from the inside out, by having them describe what happened during a story event entirely from the perspective of a chosen character.

## Activity

1. Participants choose a specific event from a given story (e.g. a dramatic scene, and important moment in the plot, etc.), and then identify one character that was a part of or somehow connected with that event.
2. Each participant will then describe their story’s event, entirely from the point of view of that character.
3. Depending on the participants, you may need to scaffold this process for them. For example, you could use any of the following steps to help them prepare:
  - a. Have them list the basic details of what happened in the event.
  - b. From what they know of the character, what feelings would the character have had (or did the character actually have) about that event?
  - c. What are some obvious beliefs/values/guiding ideas that the character generally has?
  - d. How would any of these beliefs/values/ideas impact how the character would see the event?
  - e. Roughly describe how they might imagine the character to be while describing the event. How would they talk, feel, stand, move, etc.?
4. In describing the event as their character, participants will ideally get up and do so in front of everyone using spoken words, expression, body language, etc. Alternatively, they can write or draw their description.
5. Unpack: Encourage participants to examine what it was like exploring a character's point of view from the inside out. Was it pretty clear to them how their character would perceive the event at hand, or did it take some figuring out? Were they surprised by anything that emerged as they considered their character's take on the event? Did their sense of the event or the character change at all as a result of this activity?

