



LESSON: Writing a Diary Entry in Person

Grades: 1-3

Subject Area: Language Arts

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

I. Summary: In the voice or persona of Captain Huggy Face, students will write a diary entry on a day in his life and how he feels about it. Diaries may contain a variety of different kinds of information: description of one's setting or circumstances, observations about the world at-large, writing about feelings and reactions to people, places, and events, or simply a recording of one's daily life.

Taking on the voice and personality of another character is a common technique in stories and poems. It is called writing in persona. In this lesson, students will practice writing in the persona of Captain Huggy Face, and learn two new words: PERSONA— the voice that represents a character from a dramatic or literary work, and IDENTITY – the personality traits that make a person who they are. For example, the list for Captain Huggy Face might include: clever, talented, frustrated, coordinated, loyal, hungry.

II. Objectives:

- Students will learn the definitions of "persona" and "identity"
- Students will be encouraged to use specific details in their writing
- Students will practice writing in a persona
- Students will exercise their creativity
- Students will become aware of another's feelings

III. Materials:

- Two 5x7 inch index cards
- Markers
- Paper
- Pen/pencil

IV. Procedure:

For younger students who may not be as proficient at writing, this lesson may be adapted to a group activity. For example, in class discussion, students can verbally describe a character's identity as the teacher writes their words on the board. The class can then think of sentences to include in a diary entry, which the teacher will record.

1. Ask students what they think it would be like to BE Captain Huggy Face. Invite students to keep a list of some of those observations for later use, including some specific situations Captain Huggy Face finds himself in.



For example, it would be exciting to be Captain Huggy Face because he gets to overpower the bad guys. In one episode, he wipes out the Butcher and eats up all the different meats, and in the process, he saves WordGirl and himself! Sometimes, however, it can also be frustrating to be Captain Huggy Face, because he doesn't have super-powers. Unlike WordGirl, who just flies off, Captain Huggy Face has to take the bus home after they successfully tie up Dr. Two-Brains and save the day! Now you try it!

2. Ask students to define what they think "personality" means. On the blackboard, write down their responses. Then ask students what they think Captain Huggy Face's personality is like. For example, Captain Huggy Face is a great friend, loyal and dependable -- he is always ready to help WordGirl. He is also quite sensitive! His feelings get hurt when WordGirl teases him about having pudgy toes. Urge your students to be as descriptive as possible. Make another list from this discussion.

3. On one of the two index cards, ask students to copy the word **IDENTITY** in bold marker. Ask them to explain what they think the word means, and acknowledge that this is a difficult word to define because it can mean so many different things. For this lesson's purpose, however, "identity" will mean the personality traits that make a person who they are. Invite students to write that definition under the word.

4. On the other index card, ask students to copy the word **PERSONA** in bold marker. Explain to students that writing in persona means taking on the voice and personality of another character. Ask them to copy the definition of persona under the word.

5. Now ask students to review their lists about Captain Huggy Face and choose one scene to write about. For example, students might choose the time where Captain Huggy Face eats all the meat The Butcher throws at WordGirl. Whatever episode or incident students select will be the basis for a diary entry in "a day in the life of Captain Huggy Face."

6. Remind students that they are pretending to be Captain Huggy Face in this diary entry which means they will write in first person, or "I." Since Captain Huggy Face cannot talk, encourage students to let their imaginations run wild. What kind of words or expressions might Captain Huggy Face use if he could talk? What would he say about his experiences? How might he feel?

7. After students have written their diary entries, invite volunteers to read them aloud to the class.

V. Assessment: Students should be able to define in conversational language what "identity" and "persona" mean. Students should be able to write in a persona. Students should become aware that, depending on one's identity, particular diction and syntax are used. Students should complete a diary entry in Captain Huggy Face's "voice."



VI. Extensions in Learning:

- After students have shared their diary entries with the class, discuss how it felt to write in persona. Invite students to share their thoughts about Captain Huggy Face's identity. Discuss how writing in persona can contribute to greater understanding of and empathy for other people.
- Encourage students to choose another character from WordGirl and write a "day in the life of" diary entry for that character.
- Invite students to perform a selection of diary entries for the class, using props and costumes.
- Visit the library to discover published diaries.

**Related National Standards (These are established by McREL at URL:
[http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/.](http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/))**

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