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“The Necklace”: Understanding Character

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- **describe** the character traits of Mathilde Loisel, the main character in “The Necklace,” using textual evidence to support their claim.

Assessment:

Exemplary: Student describes at least four defining character traits, supports their claims using direct quotes/evidence from the text, uses correct formatting and mechanics to cite their evidence. Their textual evidence is relevant and agrees with their claim and enforces their stance. Response is typed in MLA format with no spelling or conventional errors and reads smoothly without confusion or disruption.

Proficient: Student describes three defining character traits, supports their claims using direct quotes/evidence from text, but may not use correct citation formatting or mechanics to cite their evidence. Their textual evidence mostly agrees with their claim and enforces their stance, although there may be some room for disagreement, but overall, their evidence is relevant to their claims. Response is typed in MLA format, but may have a few spelling or conventional errors, but the response is clear to read and understandable.

Developing: Student describes a couple defining character traits and attempts to support their claims by referencing the text, though they may not use quotes correctly nor use the correct citation formatting or mechanics. Their textual evidence seldomly with their claims or is irrelevant with the point they’re making. Response is typed in MLA format, but has many spelling and conventional errors that make the response difficult to read.

Inadequate: Student describes zero to two defining character traits and makes little effort to back their claims. They do not use direct quotes or are missing textual evidence all together. If textual evidence was used, it does not back their claims, disagrees with their point, or is irrelevant to their claim. Response does not follow MLA format and has many spelling and conventional errors, making the response extremely difficult to follow.

Procedures:

- 1) The teacher will begin class by having the students do a quick write for the first few minutes of class. The quick write will allow students to get their minds re-focused on “The Necklace,” which they read yesterday. The quick write will be guided, with the teacher prompting the students: Choose a line or short passage from the story, “The Necklace,” that stuck out to you or you found important. Explain that quote and why you found it to be significant.
- 2) After students have had a chance to write their answers, ask students if any of them would like to share their answer to allow others to get some other perspectives of the

story as well as engage with one another. Another possibility is to share their writing with a classmate for the same reason: to engage with text and with each other.

- 3) Gather the class together and prepare to explain and demonstrate the next assignment to go along with “The Necklace.”
 - a. Explain: Students will use the text to find four lines or passages that describe Mathilde Loisel as a character. (One will be done as a class, one will be done in groups of two, and the other two will be done independently.) They will need to incorporate direct quotes from the story to support their claims using MLA format. We will demonstrate one together.
 - b. Demonstrate:
 - i. Ask the class: what is one trait that you remember that describes Mathilde Loisel? (Use a student’s response to complete a demonstration.)
 - ii. Using the student’s example, write a sentence that sets up the claim. For example: In “The Necklace,” Mathilde is introduced as a poor woman who wishes she had more. [This sets up the claim that a character trait of Mathilde Loisel is that she is unhappy and in poverty.]
 - iii. Now that we have our claim, have a student find a line or sentence from the story that shows an example of Mathilde’s beauty. Demonstrate to the students how to incorporate a direct quote into a paragraph. For example: The author portrays her as dressing “plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy” (1). [This quote has been incorporated into the response.]
 - iv. Now, the students can help you pull apart the quote and use parts of it to back the claim. For example: a student may pull out that she was “plainly dressed.” Have the student guide you, the teacher, in writing the sentence. It may look like this: “Mathilde dresses plainly, which describes her character as poor. A wealthy woman would be dressed with lots of jewelry and fancy clothing.” Although this is a good start, we could have another piece to back up our point. You could ask another student to pull a piece of information from our quote. For example: “The simile, ‘as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy,’ demonstrates how sad Mathilde is when it comes to her financial position. She hurts so much to be wealthy that she almost grieves the loss.” [Now we have supported our claim by explaining pieces of our evidence]
 - v. Finally, we need a conclusion sentence that reinforces our claim. In this example it could be: “The physical description of Mathilde Loisel as plain and unhappy sets her character up as a miserable woman in poverty.” [Our paragraph is now ended in a way that restates our claim.]
 - vi. Round out any edges that need to be done to the paragraph to make it shine a little better and re-read the class example to the students. The example here would be:
 1. In “The Necklace,” Mathilde is introduced as a sad poor woman. The author portrays her as dressing “plainly because she had never

been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy” (1). Mathilde dresses plainly because she did not have enough money to buy anything nicer, which describes her character as broke. A wealthy woman would be dressed in lots of jewelry and fancy clothing. Also, the simile, ‘as unhappy as If she had once been wealthy,’ demonstrates how sad Mathilde is when it comes to her financial position. She hurts so much to be wealthy that she almost grieves the loss. The physical description of Mathilde Loisel as plain and unhappy sets her character up as a miserable woman in poverty.

- c. Once a demonstration has been done, students can gather into groups of two and create another paragraph together, like the one they did as a class by finding a piece of evidence, start their paragraph with an opening sentence, introduce their direct quote and incorporate it using correct MLA mechanics, use the quote to back their claims, and conclude their paragraph.
- d. They will need to develop two more pieces of evidence to describe character traits of Mathilde Loisel on their own. This is just a response, not a paper, so students will not be required to have an introductory or conclusion paragraph. They will only need to have a total of four claims (two together and two independently).