

Boost Free Lessons - Year 10 English

Lesson 19: Imaginative Writing: Writing Characters Well

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Your task: Write a narrative of about 450 to 550 words in which two characters want incompatible things from the same conversation.

Neither character may be presented as simply right or wrong. The reader should be able to understand both positions.

You will be assessed on characterisation, dialogue, and your control of the reader's sympathy.

Worked Example 1

Writing characters who are not types

1. Give each character a **want** that makes sense from inside their own position.
2. Give the reader access to only one of them. Sympathy follows access, so decide deliberately who you are inside.
3. Then work against that advantage. Let the character we cannot hear make the better point at least once.
4. Replace expected traits with **specific** ones. Not *she was stubborn*, but a particular thing she does that a stubborn person would do.
5. Give at least one character a detail that contradicts their role. Consistency is what makes a stereotype.

Two understandable wants, unequal access, and one detail per character that the role does not predict.

Remember: Give both characters a **reasonable** want. Sympathy follows access, so let the character you are not inside win a point, and replace expected traits with specific ones.



Question 1: Plan your response before you begin writing.

1. Character A: what they want, and why it is reasonable

2. Character B: what they want, and why it is reasonable

3. Whose perspective the reader is inside, and why

4. One moment where the other character is right

5. A specific detail for each character that their role does not predict

6. How the conversation ends



Question 2: Write your narrative below. Continue on the next page.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Continue your narrative here.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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Model Response and Self-Check: Imaginative Writing: Writing Characters Well**Model Response**

Mum had the forms out before I sat down, which meant she had been rehearsing.

"It's a deferral," she said. "Not a withdrawal. There's a difference and I've read about it."

She had. She had read about it the way she reads about everything, which is completely, at the kitchen table, with a ruler under the line. There were three highlighter colours on the top page. I have never once seen her use three.

"I'm not deferring."

"Then I don't understand what the objection is."

Here is the objection, and I did not say it: if I defer, I am the person who deferred, and that is a thing that happens to you and then keeps happening. But I could not say it without saying it about Dad, and she was sitting there with three highlighters, so I said the timetable was fine instead.

"The timetable isn't fine. You were up at two. Tuesday, and last Thursday, and the Sunday before that." She did not look at the forms when she said it. She had that in her head.

That is the part I keep coming back to. She was not guessing. She had been counting when the light under my door went off, and had not mentioned it until she had a form to mention it with.

"I'm not deferring," I said again, and it came out smaller than the first time.

She squared the papers on the table. Then she put them back in the envelope, which she did not have to do, and which took a while.

"Then you're not," she said. "I'll keep them."

"I'll keep them," she said, and went to put the kettle on, and that was the end of it, except that she left the envelope on the bench where I would see it, and I have not moved it either.

Check your own response

1. Both characters want something the reader can understand.
2. Neither is presented as simply right or wrong.
3. The character I am not inside makes at least one strong point.
4. I have used specific detail rather than generic traits.
5. At least one detail contradicts what the character's role predicts.
6. My dialogue is punctuated correctly and sounds like speech.
7. I have shown emotion through action rather than naming it.
8. The ending resolves the scene without resolving the disagreement.
9. I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

