

Feelings vs Character Traits

This simple graphic organizer will help small groups analyze characters by making inferences based on a character's speech and actions. Groups will infer if those behaviors are indicative of a feeling or a character trait.

Benefits of Using the Feelings vs Character Trait Organizer

- Emphasizes core values
- Cultivates social skills
- Provides a non-threatening way to examine our own behaviors and traits
- Leads to responsible decision making
- Encourages empathy and the ability to care about others
- Fosters a more positive climate

Types of Stories for Feelings vs Character Traits

- Look for stories that have characters caught between their feelings and their character because they are facing a difficult decision.
 - When the Assyrian army comes to Judah, King Hezekiah must take a stand or pay a tribute. (Story #154)
 - The woman with issue of blood must decide if she will approach Jesus for healing. (Story #195)
- Look for stories with a conflict between a character's speech and actions
 - Ananias and Sapphira promise to give money to the apostles but then keep some of it for themselves. (Story # 226)
 - When the 12 spies return from Canaan, the people become angry with Joshua and Caleb. Are the behaviors of various characters determined by feelings or character traits? (Story #49)

Some examples of Feelings displayed at a moment in time	Some examples of Character Traits displayed consistently
Nervous	Nervousness
Happy	Happiness
Anxious	Anxiety
Crabby	Crabbiness
Sad	Dishonesty
Suspicious	Creativity
Worried	Reliance upon God
Pensive	Loyalty

Directions for the Feelings vs. Character Traits Organizer

1. Have a discussion about the differences between feelings and character traits. Consider the following points:
 - a. Feelings are fleeting; character traits are more consistent. Character traits define a person. For example, what reaction would you expect if you gave Oscar the Grouch a silk scarf as a present? You would expect him to complain because that is his character. “This is the wrong color. I’m allergic to silk. I never wear anything this fancy.” But Oscar might surprise you by smiling and showing gratitude. We would know that today, for a few fleeting moments, Oscar is feeling happy. So, his behavior for that moment is out of character.
 - b. Some feelings can also be character traits. I might be feeling worried as flood waters are encroaching upon my house even if I am not a person who worries habitually. Other people might worry about everything; this means worry is a character trait for them but not for the person who is only worried about a specific situation.
 - c. Have the group brainstorm examples of feelings and character traits. Feelings are often listed as adjectives; character traits as nouns.
2. After telling a story, hand out the organizer to small groups. Determine which character from the story each group will discuss. For example, in the story of David and Goliath, half of the groups might discuss David while the other half discusses Goliath. Or each group could focus on a different character: David, Goliath, Eliab, Saul, the Israelite Army, and the Philistine Army.
3. Explain that they will make inferences about characters based upon the words and actions in the story they just heard. For example, when I see Cain pouting, I can infer he is upset. When I hear Esau threaten to kill Jacob, I can infer he is very angry.
4. It can be difficult to determine if something is a character trait or an emotion when we have only one story. Is Jacob always angry or is he only angry at this point in time? As we hear and read more stories, it becomes easier to see a pattern of behavior.

Feelings vs. Character Traits

Story #: / Text:

Name

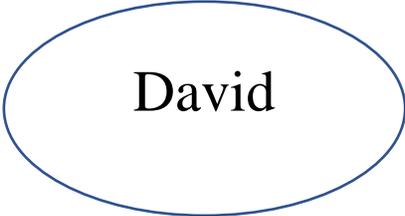
Feeling:

Trait:

Support from the Story or Text

Support from the Story or Text

Completed Sample based on Story #: 87 / Text: 1 Samuel: 17:1-55



Feeling: David feels angry.

Trait: David is confident of God's protection.

Story / Text Support for Feeling

Eliab insults David but he responds to his brother, "What have I done now? It was only a question." The word "now" implies that David and Eliab have quarreled before. When David turns away from his brother, he seems to be tired of Eliab's superior attitude and is feeling angry.

Story / Text Support for Trait

David does not hesitate to talk with King Saul. He explains that he battles lions and bears and the Philistine is "like one of them." He repeatedly refers to the Lord: The Lord who saved me from the paws of the lion and the bear will save me from this Philistine. This battle is the Lord's. His consistent words and actions show me that he is confident in God's protection.