

Lesson Skill: Identifying internal and external conflict

Strand Reading-fiction

SOL 6.5
7.5
8.5

Materials

- x Copies of the attached Interior or Exterior Conflicts worksheet
- x Sticky notes
- x Short story

Lesson

1. Brainstorm with students the types of conflicts or problems they face on a daily basis, and write their responses on the board.
2. Explain to students that there are two types of conflicts that people face every day:
 - Internal conflict, which takes place in a person's mind for example, a struggle to make a decision or overcome a feeling. Internal conflicts are character vs. self.
 - External conflict, which generally takes place between a person and someone or something else, such as nature, another person or persons, or an event or situation. External conflicts may be character vs. character, character vs. nature, or character vs. society.

Tell students that characters in a story face the same types of conflicts, and it is important to identify them in order to understand the story completely.

3. Distribute copies of the "Interior or Exterior Conflicts" worksheet. Have students classify the conflicts as internal or external conflicts, writing the answers in the left column.
4. Go over the classifications with the class, and allow students to correct their answers as needed.
5. Give students copies of another worksheet showing a different set of interior and exterior conflicts, and have students classify the conflicts. Lead a class discussion of the ways conflicts been external or vice versa.

