# English S1 learning sequence – Character

**Learning sequence description**

Character is an important concept in narrative as a driver of the action, a function in the plot, a way of engaging or positioning a reader or as a way of representing its thematic concerns. The way character is read is an indication of particular approaches to texts, be it through personal engagement or critical response. Through the objectives of reading and viewing, writing and responding, speaking and listening, this sequence of lessons aims to introduce the concept of character and explore how conventions work in a range of texts to invite creative writing and responding.

The School Magazine has provided digital and non-digital texts for students to explore. This is licenced under CreativeCommons, Non-commercial and NoDerivatives.

## Syllabus outcomes and content

**EN1-1A** - communicates with a range of people in informal and guided activities demonstrating interaction skills and considers how own communication is adjusted in different situations

* explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions
* describe in detail familiar places and things

**EN1-2A** - plans, composes and reviews a small range of simple texts for a variety of purposes on familiar topics for known readers and viewers

* plan, compose and review simple imaginative, informative and persuasive texts on familiar topics

**EN1-4A -** draws on an increasing range of skills and strategies to fluently read, view and comprehend a range of texts on less familiar topics in different media and technologies

* recognise grammatical patterns to enhance comprehension, e.g. action verbs, words or groups of words that tell who, what, when, where and how
* compare opinions about characters, events and settings in and between texts

**EN1-7B** - identifies how language use in their own writing differs according to their purpose, audience and subject matter

* discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways
* make inferences about character motives, actions, qualities and characteristics when responding to texts

**EN1-10C** - thinks imaginatively and creatively about familiar topics, ideas and texts when responding to and composing texts

* use creative and imaginative features in role-play and drama
* recognise the place of ancestral beings in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dreaming stories

[English K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/english-year-10/english-k-10) © 2012 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

## Suggested routines

### Independent reading

Where possible, all students are encouraged to engage in daily independent reading. This should include a text that is of an appropriate instructional level. This may include picture books, comics, newspapers, levelled texts, novels. Texts read daily could be recorded on a reading log with parental feedback. A Record of text is included in the end of the Student workbook. Re-reading a familiar text is also encouraged as it supports fluency, phrasing and expression and student attention on comprehension.

### Phonics, high frequency sight words, spelling

It is anticipated that classroom teachers will provide students with opportunities to practice and refine their skills and knowledge of phonics, spelling and high frequency sight words if appropriate, as this two-week sequence of learning does not include these elements. Explicit phonics, high frequency sight words and modelled writing lessons are available on the Department of Education, Learning at home site.

### Handwriting

This two-week learning sequence provides frequent opportunities to practise handwriting but does not include explicit handwriting instruction or assessment. Such opportunities may be taken during any written task at the teacher’s discretion. Explicit handwriting lessons are available on the Department of Education, Learning at home site.

## Recording students’ learning

There are several options for students to record their responses. The student workbook can be printed to provide an offline option. Teachers can upload the student workbook as a whole or in parts to provide online learning, using their preferred online platforms.

## Lesson 1 – Introduction to character using adjectives

Students are learning to:

* describe in detail, familiar places and things
* use simple adjectives to describe
* make connections between texts and personal experiences.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 1.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students are to look in the kitchen and without gesturing or hand signals, describe one object in detail without naming the object. Students are encouraged to use adjectives (descriptive words).  Students describe the object to an adult or share verbally online. |  |  |
| 1.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students view the short video on character.  Pose questions to students, students to record in the student workbook (character video).  Why are characters important to a narrative?  Are all characters people?  What does the video tell us about the volcano character? What are they like?  Describe the illustrator, Andrew Cranna – physically and his personality. He is also a character in the video.  Students complete ‘character video’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 1 – character video](https://vimeo.com/398136844) [vimeo]  [Resource 2- Student workbook (DOCX 3.6MB)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/english/media/documents/english-s1-character-student-workbook.docx) |
| 1.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Opportunity to monitoring student learning**  Favourite character – written task  Students nominate a favourite character from a movie or book they are familiar with and discuss this character with an adult.  Students draw their character and label physical characteristics using adjectives (for example: long, curly hair).  Students identify the character’s likes and dislikes.  Students identify characteristics of their favourite character that are similar and dissimilar to themselves.  Students identify another character in another text that is similar to their favourite character and identify how and why?  Students complete ‘favourite character’ activity in student workbook.  **What to look for:**   * uses adjectives to label physical characteristics * makes connections with own experiences * makes connections between texts. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 1.4 | **Reflection**  Students discuss with an adult or their class online:  Why are characters important in a text?  What makes a ‘good’ character? |  |  |

## Lesson 2 – Characteristics

Students are learning to:

* engage in conversations and discussions
* identify key words and the meaning they carry
* understand that characters can invite positive or negative responses.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 2.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Using a familiar character from a movie or book (e.g. Spiderman, Elsa, Mickey Mouse, Pig the Pug) student will play ‘Bounce’ with an adult until all options have been exhausted.  Taking turns, the player will use a word or short phrase to describe the character (e.g. bossy, messy, sad, lonely).  Players will take it in turns until one person can no longer think of a word. |  |  |
| 2.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students will read or listen to ‘Once upon a time’ found in The School Magazine. A copy of the text is also located in the student workbook.  After reading, students will identify verbs used to describe the ways the characters (animals) moved. For example: fluttered and lumbered.  Students will draw their understanding of the selected verbs and use the verb in a sentence.  How does the use of verbs add to the visualisation of a character?  Students will complete ‘verbs used for movement’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 3 - Once upon a time](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/once-upon-a-time) (online)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 2.3 | **Writing and representing**  Focusing on the character of Bear, students will identify:  What activities did Bear like to do? Why?  How does Bear feel about his skills as a writer? Can you relate to how Bear feels?  How does Bear feel when he hears about Owl’s story?  Characters invite a positive or negative response, usually based on a reader’s own personal experiences. Students will write their response around their personal opinion of Bear.  Students will complete ‘Bear’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 3 - Once upon a time](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/once-upon-a-time) (online)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 2.4 | **Reflection**  What is a verb?  What is the purpose of a verb? What does it do in a text?  Discuss with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 3 – Characters and emotions

Students are learning to:

* explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions
* infer character’s feelings from actions
* predict and discuss ideas drawn from texts.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 3.1 | **Speaking and listening**  An adult will reveal to the student an emotion card which shows, for example: surprised, angry, happy expressions.  Students will demonstrate and discuss:  What would your face look like if you were feeling this emotion?  What would your body look like?  What is something you might say when you are feeling this emotion? |  | Resource 4 – emotion cards |
| 3.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students will read or listen to ‘Once upon a time’, from The School Magazine.  We can’t rely on visuals; however, we can read the emotions of the character from the author’s words.  The next morning, Bear sat in his cave, surrounded by crumpled papers.  ‘Writing a story is hard,’ he said.  We know that there are crumpled papers around, he sounds defeated.  Students to draw what this image would look like.  How would Bear be sitting?  What objects would be around him to show how he is feeling? (crumpled paper, lots of pencils, dirty dishes)  How would Bear look? (tired, slumped)  Students to complete ‘emotions of Bear’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 3 - Once upon a time](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/once-upon-a-time) (online)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 3.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  Character Map – written task  Students use the ‘character map’ in the student workbook to structure their ideas about Owl.  We do not hear the voice of Owl in this text. Readers have to infer Owl’s feelings and characteristics.  What sort of character is she? Would she be full of her own importance, or wise and generous in sharing with her knowledge? What would Owl say if she was talking to the other characters? Role-play a conversation between Owl and Bluebird about writing.  **What to look for:**   * infers character’s physical attributes * predicts and infers how and why particular characters behave in certain ways * predicts and infers other character reactions to and opinions of Owl. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 3.4 | **Reflection**  What can we learn from Owl and Bear?  Discuss with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 4 – Character and dialogue

Students are learning to:

* use role-play and drama to represent familiar events and characters in texts
* experiment with the use of quoted speech/direct speech (direct) and reported (indirect) speech
* write a description of a character’s appearance and personality
* organise ideas into paragraphs when composing texts.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 4.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students can role play a familiar event in a text (book or movie), adopting the role of the known character. Students are encouraged to pay attention to voice, body language and facial expressions. Other members of the household might also like to be involved by representing a well-known character the student will recognise, which may or may not interact with the student’s character (e.g. Shrek and Donkey from the Shrek movie franchise). |  |  |
| 4.2 | **Reading and viewing**  After reading ‘Once upon a time’, students will use their character map from lesson 3.3 to experiment with dialogue. Students will create dialogue between Owl and the character of Bear.  Students will include dialogue speech and thought bubbles to show what Owl might think or say.  Students will look at the clues in the text such as the insinuated importance Owl places on her writing and what she considers to be ‘good work’.  Students will complete ‘dialogue between characters’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 3 - Once upon a time](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/once-upon-a-time) (online)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 4.3 | **Writing and representing**  **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  Description of character – written task  Select one of the characters from the text ‘Once upon a time’. (Bear, Owl or Bluebird)  Write a description of this character – personality and physical appearance, using evidence that can be directly located in the text and what is inferred in the text.  Use adjectives (descriptive language) and increasingly sophisticated vocabulary. Write at least two paragraphs.  Complete ‘character description’ activity in student workbook.  **What to look for:**   * describes the character’s physical appearance and personality using adjectives * intentionally replaces common or generic words with synonyms (e.g. excited instead of happy) * organises ideas into paragraphs. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 4.4 | **Reflection**  Discuss with an adult – how are speech or thought bubbles helpful? What do they do for a reader? How can this information help you as a writer? |  |  |

## Lesson 5 – Responding as a character

Students are learning to:

* use persuasive language to convince
* write from a character’s point of view.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 5.1 | **Speaking and Listening**  Using persuasive language, students will attempt to convince an adult using 3 reasons why they should have pizza for lunch and why they should stay in their pyjamas all day. |  |  |
| 5.2 | **Writing and representing**  Students read the text ‘Once Upon a time’ in The School Magazine.  Students imagine they are Bluebird. Encourage them to think about how Bluebird thinks, moves, feels, acts and thinks.  Students think about how Bluebird might have felt when she broke the frame that held Bear’s special picture of Goldilocks.  Students will write a letter as Bluebird to Bear, apologising and convincing Bear to let her buy him a new frame.  Students to complete ‘letter to Bear’ writing task in student workbook. |  | [Resource 3 - Once upon a time](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/once-upon-a-time) (online)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 5.3 | **Reflection**  What is persuasive language? Why is it important?  Why do different characters in texts have different points of view?  Discuss with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 6 – Opinions about a character

Students are learning to:

* explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions
* compare opinions about characters in texts
* explain personal opinions using supporting reasons, simple inferences and reasonable prediction.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 6.1 | **Speaking and listening**  **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  Expression - Oral task  Focusing on expression, students will say ‘How are you today?’ as a different person. For example, the Queen, a school principal, their best friend, a very old person, a toddler, the Prime Minister.  Encourage students to think about their facial expression, tone and body language.  **What to look for:**   * adjusts pace, volume, pitch and pronunciation to enhance meaning and expression * uses body language and facial expressions to suit the character. |  |  |
| 6.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students will read or listen to School Dog’s big mistake found in The School Magazine. The text can also be found in the student workbook.  What do the different characters in the text think about School Dog?  Students will respond as if they were the various characters (students at the school, rabbits, teacher and the school inspector).  Students to complete ‘Opinions of School Dog’ activity in student workbook. |  | [Resource 5 – School Dog’s big mistake](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/school-dogs-big-mistake) [online]  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 6.3 | **Writing and representing**  Students will imagine they are the School Inspector. Students will write a letter to School Dog expressing their opinion of him from the point of view of the character, School Inspector.  Do you think he is doing good deeds? Why?  What else could he do at school to assist?  Did he handle the suspicious case correctly? Explain.  Students will complete ‘Letter to School Dog’ in the student workbook. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 6.4 | **Reflection**  What was one thing you did well with your independent reading today?  What is one part of your reading you would like to improve?  Discuss and share with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 7 – Character profile

Students are learning to:

* describe in detail familiar places and things
* use a dictionary for word meanings
* make inferences about characters’ actions and motivations.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 7.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students are to look around their bedroom and select an item.  Describe this item to an adult without saying what the item is.  The adult will guess the item based on the descriptions given.  Students are encouraged to used descriptive language. |  |  |
| 7.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students will re-read or listen to School Dog’s big mistake found in The School Magazine.  Students will identify unknown words and using a dictionary, record the meaning and write the word in a sentence.  Students will complete ‘Unknown words’ activity in the student workbook.  Examples of unknown meanings may be, for example: verandah, captive, suspicious, greeting. |  | [Resource 5 – School Dog’s big mistake](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/school-dogs-big-mistake) [online]  Resource 2- Student workbook  Dictionary |
| 7.3 | **Writing and representing**  Students view the stimulus picture of the bird in the student workbook.  Students imagine that the bird is the main character in a text. Students will build a character profile to match the image focusing on the following questions.  What is your character's name?  Does your character have a superpower?  Where does he/she live?  How does your character feel?  List what they like to do.  List the character’s dislikes.  How can you make the bird in this picture an interesting main character in a story?  Students will complete ‘bird profile’ activity in student workbook. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 7.4 | **Reflection**  What makes an interesting main character?  Discuss with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 8 – Character profile

Students are learning to:

* identify and discuss symbols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and recognise recurring characters, settings and themes in Dreaming stories
* understand that nouns represent people, places, things and ideas and can be, for example, common or proper
* make inferences about characters’ actions and motivations.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 8.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Ask students the following questions.  Have you seen typical Aboriginal art before?  Where have you seen Aboriginal art? What story did it tell?  Why do Aboriginal people often use art to tell their stories? What symbols are used?  Students will observe the Aboriginal artwork, ‘Reflection’ by Margaret Adams, from the Art Gallery of NSW. Margaret Adams has used the subject of the river to tell history. Along the course of the river we witness important scenes and moments from the history of Colonisation.  Encourage students to describe the artwork and their interpretation to an adult.  Encourage students to focus on descriptive language and the story the artwork is telling.  Teachers are encouraged to use local Aboriginal art and ensure acknowledgement of artist and stories.  ‘Reflection’  This artwork is referred to with thanks to the Art Gallery of NSW. Please note that this artwork with need to be prepared for students in a non-digital environment for their student workbook. |  | [Resource 6 – Reflection by Margaret Adams](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/567.1996/)  [Photograph of painting – Art Gallery of NSW] |
| 8.2 | **Reading and viewing/Grammar**  After reading or listening to School Dog’s big mistake, students identify common and proper nouns found in the text.  Students complete ‘common and proper nouns’ activity in the student workbook. |  | [Resource 5 – School Dog’s big mistake](https://theschoolmagazine.com.au/resources/school-dogs-big-mistake) [online]  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 8.3 | **Writing and representing**  Students view a G rated movie poster to make inferences about characters’ actions and motivations. (teacher selection)  Examples of G rated movie posters to view are Meet the Robinsons, The Little Mermaid, Finding Nemo. Try and select a movie poster that the students may not have seen.  Students view the characters in the poster and make inferences about the characters and their actions and motivations.  As students may be unfamiliar with the characters, it will be based on how the characters look, what they wear, how they stand and their facial expressions. |  | Resource 7 – G-rated movie poster (teacher selection) |
| 8.4 | **Reflection**  What was one thing you did well with your independent reading today?  What is one part of your reading you would like to improve?  Discuss and share with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 9 – Character development from stimulus video

Students are learning to:

* demonstrate the use of more precise vocabulary to describe emotions and experiences
* identify and describe a character’s identity.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 9.1 | **Vocabulary**  Using the word cline vocabulary, students place the words in a cline of modality. Students then create their own word cline.  Word cline is found in student workbook. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 9.2 | **Reading and viewing**  Students view the character stimulus video from lesson 1.  In order to connect with a character, the character needs to be given an identity. This identity includes a personality, feelings, wants and emotions.  Students are to think of a favourite character from a text (book or movie). Students are to identify the character’s personality, feelings and wants.  Students will complete ‘Connect with a character’ activity in their student workbook. |  | [Resource 1 – character video](https://vimeo.com/398136844)  Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 9.3 | **Writing and representing**  Students are to write a character description on the volcano from the character stimulus video. Students to think about and identify the volcano’s personality, feelings and wants.  Students brainstorm on the ‘volcano’ template in the student workbook and then write a descriptive paragraph. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 9.4 | **Reflection**  What is a character’s identity?  Share and discuss with an adult. |  |  |

## Lesson 10 – Independent writing

Students are learning to:

* describe in detail familiar places
* compose and review simple imaginative texts
* reread and edit text for spelling, punctuation and text structure.

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| Item | Learning experience | Differentiation strategies and/or adjustments | Resources |
| 10.1 | **Speaking and listening**  Students will describe in detail a familiar place using descriptive language.  This place could include a holiday destination, a shop, cubby house, bedroom, local park or backyard. |  |  |
| 10.2 | **Writing and representing**  **Opportunity for monitoring student learning**  Independent writing – written task  Students complete a scaffolded writing task to demonstrate application of learning so far.  In their student workbook, students write a short narrative using 2-4 characters of their choice. Students apply what they have learnt so far about narrative and character development.  Remind students of narrative structure (orientation, complication and resolution). Students are to demonstrate character identity, personality and appearance through their language choices.  Students are encouraged to reread and edit their work.  **What to look for**   * Uses language to represent characters with an identity (personality, feelings, wants, emotions). * Uses adjectives and increased vocabulary to describe characters and settings. * Edits own work. |  | Resource 2- Student workbook |
| 10.3 | **Reflection**  Why is it important to have a problem or complication in a narrative?  Why is it important that the problem or complication is resolved?  Share and discuss with an adult. |  |  |

**Reflection and evaluation**

These simple questions may help you reflect on your students’ learning and plan for next steps.

What worked well and why?

What didn’t work and why?

What might I do differently next time?

What are the next steps for student learning based on the evidence gathered?

## ESL scales links to the English syllabus

Teachers should use the ESL scales in conjunction with the syllabus to address the needs of EAL/D students and to assist them to access English curriculum outcomes and content. The ESL scales are designed to heighten awareness of English, how it is used, how it develops and how EAL/D students may be assisted to develop cognitive and linguistic competence.

The ESL scales can be found on the [Multicultural Education Page](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/multicultural-education/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/resources).

### Stage 1 Speaking and Listening

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is **Oral Interaction level 5**. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales **Oral Interaction strand from level 1 to level 5**. Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be mainly within the **Communication** ESL scales strand organiser. See ESL scales outcomes 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1.

### Stage 1 Writing and Representing

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is **Writing level 3**. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales **Writing strand from Beginning level 1 to level 3**. Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be within the **Communication and Language and cultural understanding** ESL scales strand organisers. See ESL scales outcomes B1.5, B1.6, B2.5, B2.6, B3.5, B3.6, 1.9, 1.10, 2.9, 2.10, 3.9, 3.10.

### Stage 1 Reading and Viewing

The level on the ESL scales needed to achieve this English syllabus outcome is **Reading and Responding level 3**. An EAL student at this stage of schooling may be assessed at a range of levels on the ESL scales **Reading and Responding strand from Beginning level 1 to level 3.** Teachers plan a learning pathway for EAL students using the ESL scales outcomes and pointers. Teachers assess EAL students' current level of English on the ESL scales then plan teaching and learning activities to scaffold learning for students working towards the achievement of English syllabus outcomes. For EAL students to achieve this English syllabus outcome the teaching focus and pathway of learning will be within the **Language structures and features and Strategies** ESL scales strand organisers. See ESL scales outcomes B1.3, B1.4, B2.3, B2.4, B3.3, B3.4, 1.7, 1.8, 2.7, 2.8, 3.7, 3.8.