

# Expressing Character Traits & Emotions

As a strategy for story making through puppet play

---

### Timing

10 minutes

---

### Space

Kids should be able to see the sample puppet play and should not have their puppets in their hands for this activity.

---

### Additional supports

Visit  
[TeachwithArtsConnection.org](http://TeachwithArtsConnection.org)



---

### Introduce this strategy

To help kids make choices about who their characters are and how they feel, and show those choices using vocal expression and puppetry.

---

## 1. Model the strategy

Play a brief puppet story for your class using a variety of puppet movements and a range of vocal choices to show traits and emotions

### Sample Script

- **Narration:** It was the morning of frog's birthday! Frog woke up.
- **Grumpy Frog:** Aaaarg! I hate waking up. (*falls back asleep*)
- **Narration:** There was a knock at the door!
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*jumping up and stomping to the door*) Ug! Who is making all that noise!
- **Narration:** It was bunny!
- **Peppy Bunny:** (*hopping all over the place quickly*) Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy birthday...
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*annoyed*) Quiet! You are giving me a headache!
- **Peppy Bunny:** (*concerned*) Oh no! Are you ok? Do you have a fever? Can I help you?
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*frustrated*) Bunny! Why did you come here?
- **Peppy Bunny:** (*excited*) Oh! Because it is your birthday!
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*grumbling*) Oh I don't care about my birthday...
- **Peppy Bunny:** ... and I baked you a fly birthday cake.
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*amazed*) A fly birthday cake?!?! That's my favorite!
- **Narrator:** The Frog gobbled up the fly birthday cake.
- **Grumpy Frog:** (*grateful*) That was the best fly cake I've ever eaten! Thanks!
- **Peppy Bunny:** (*proud*) You're welcome! Happy birthday!

# Expressing Character Traits & Emotions

As a strategy for story making through puppet play

---

## 2. Reflect on Traits

### Questions

- What kind of character was frog? Were they friendly or grumpy?  
Does anyone have another word to describe this kind of character?
  - How did you know? How did I move my puppet and change my voice to make the frog “grumpy”?
  - Let’s move & sound like frog! Stomp your feet and say “who’s making that noise?” in a grumpy voice.
  - What kind of character was bunny? Were they calm or peppy?  
Does anyone have another word to describe this kind of character?
  - How did you know? How did I move my puppet and change my voice to make the bunny “peppy”?
  - Let’s move & sound like bunny! Bounce around and sing happy birthday in a peppy voice.
- 

## 3. Reflect on emotions

### Questions

How did frog feel when...

- They first woke up?
- There was a loud noise?
- The bunny was hopping all over their house?
- They got a fly birthday cake?

How did bunny feel when...

- Frog said they had a headache?
- Frog said that their fly cake was the best one they ever had?

Did their emotions stay the same the whole time or did they change, depending on what was happening?

# Expressing Character Traits & Emotions

As a strategy for story making through puppet play

---

## 4. Chart Traits & Emotions

### Questions

- My characters' traits were grumpy and peppy. What are some other kinds of characters? What kinds of characters have you made or would you like to act out with your puppets? (*chart a few ideas*)
- In my story, frog felt sleepy then annoyed and then grateful. Bunny felt excited then concerned and then proud. What are some other emotions that our puppet might feel? (*chart a few ideas*)

---

### Tip

- Depending on how long the other steps have taken, the kids may run out of steam for charting. If so, just get a few ideas down and then continue to add ideas inspired by the kids play. You can also come back to the charting step in the next session.

---

## 4. Challenge the kids to try it!

Post the chart each time they play and encourage the kids to

- choose character traits & emotions traits to play
- show their character traits & emotion with their puppet movement
- change their voices to express their character traits & emotions

Continue to add to the chart as kids generate more ideas through play.

---

### Resources

[Character Trait Vocabulary Resource](#)

[Advance Emotion Vocabulary Resource](#)