

Teaching Themes of Honesty & Understanding Characterization



"The Empty Pot"

The Empty Pot:

Story Summary: A group of boys who wish to be the next in line for Emperor are given "royal seeds" to grow in six months' time; whomever flourishes the best plant will be crowned the successor. However, what the boys don't know, is that they've been tricked to test their character! The "royal seeds" have been baked and therefore won't grow a magnificent plant. Will any of the youth be honest despite looking foolish and show up empty-handed or will they give in to their desire to be Emperor, at the cost of being dishonest, and "grow" a plant with a seed other than the one they were given?

Materials:

- [Story Text](#)
- [Play Script](#)
- [Character & Decision Maps](#)

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 5.2

Unit Essential Question:

How has Honesty played an important role in your relationships with others?

Objective:

Students will recount folktales and determine the central message/moral while exploring the theme of Honesty through Characterization, reviewing how characters respond to the challenge.

Anticipatory Set: They say Honesty is always the best policy. Is it? Why or why not? (5mins)

Activities:

- **Read Aloud:** Assign the 14 parts (could give students 2 parts if working in small groups) or divide class in half to create two reading groups, depending on class size. Students read the script aloud, creating a “Reader’s Theater Round” working on fluency and expression. Groups should stop at the end of each scene to discuss the setting, main characters, and main events.

You may also use the story instead.

- Character Map: of Shen (Jun if using the story) to analyze his specific character traits and how his actions effected the outcome of the story.

- Students analyze Shen's (Jun if using the story) choices and what is shows about his character.
- Finally, have students individually or in groups, participate in a “What Would You Do?”
 - Provide certain scenarios of Honesty/Character and have students respond either written or orally what they would do.
 - Here is a great set of questions from Pearson Education. Use the ones appropriate for your grade level. <http://i.infopls.com/fe/pc/O,,12211-741,00.pdf>

Closing:

Have students answer the following questions:

- What made Shen (Jun) special? What do we learn about his character from his actions?
- **Extension:** Explain a time when you were in a similar situation: What did you do and how did your actions affect the outcome? Could you have done anything differently?