



## **From Prince to King: Black Panther in Text and Film**

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### **Introduction**

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Do you remember playing games at recess as a child? When I was in elementary school back in the 90's, the show Power Rangers was all the rage. Every day it was a great debate among my classmates and me who would be which Power Ranger. Being an African American girl, the only options for me were the girl rangers who were the yellow and pink rangers. One of them was Caucasian and the other Asian. So I never really had anyone who resembled me to dream about and emulate. The same was the case for Saturday morning cartoons and growing up loving comic books and superheroes. I imagined I too could possess the talents and superpowers that they did, but I remember always wishing that there was one that looked like me. I had a deep longing to buy a toy, watch a show, or read a comic strip with someone that looked like me, my family, and my friends.

I came across an anonymous quote years ago that says "Mirror, mirror, what do I see? A truly confident reflection of me." Imagine yourself as a child, looking into the mirror and seeing yourself with limitless potential, endless possibilities, and enough confidence to achieve any goal that is set before you. How awesome it would have been for me as a child to dress up in costumes or go see a movie that gave me the feeling of looking into a mirror and seeing myself in the reflection as one of these amazing characters that I loved so much. My greatest hope as an educator is to bring the above quote to life by building confidence and a positive self-image in my students.

My unit, *From Prince to King: Black Panther in Text and Film*, is based on the Marvel Comics Universe's 2018 blockbuster film, *Black Panther* and the children's novel *Black Panther: The Young Prince* by Ronald Smith. The movie tells the story of Prince T'Challa, a young man who becomes the newly crowned king of the fictional wealthy African kingdom of Wakanda upon the death of his father, King T'Chaka. The film drew praise around the world. It is among the ten highest grossing films ever made. For African Americans and other minority groups, this film is a game changer. A new and different type of superhero is showcased as the star: a powerful black man. Young, influential, intelligent African people are shown in their own land, not as victims or in poverty, but as royalty. *Black Panther* has changed society's perception of African culture as consisting of poor, desolate countries. The film's popularity and use of advanced technology has set a new standard and raised expectations. I would love my students to see and read about characters who look like them and are depicted in a positive light. It also brings a great hope of amazing possibilities for all minority students. How

long will it be before we have an Asian or Latino superhero? Or superheroes of many other nationalities that mirrors the faces of the diverse population of young learners we serve. The story of Black Panther could very well be a kind of trailblazer for others like it in the very near future.

The children's novel is an early adaptation of the Marvel Comics' character T'Challa as he travels to America from his home in Africa as a twelve-year-old boy. I selected this book in an effort to make learning fun for my students, as they are very interested in the world of comic books and superheroes. They role-play superheroes at recess, write about them in their journals, and often check out books from our school library about superhero adventures. It is a culturally relevant age-appropriate novel, and this story will engage my students as they are also interested in the character of Black Panther. I teach in an inner city school with mostly African American students who are learning who they are, and it gives them a superhero they can relate to. He is a strong role model that begins his journey at an age not much older than they are, which will be very captivating. My third grade class was very excited when the movie was released this past February, and many of them talked about it at school. I was very impressed when a few of them wrote reviews and illustrations about it in their writing journals.

In the unit I will focus on the skill of analyzing character as we look at the development of T'Challa from one medium to the other (literature to film) and over time as a prince and then as a king. Studying these adaptations of *Black Panther* will allow me to teach my students to visualize and, on a larger scale, understand how, when adapting a text to film, filmmakers are bringing that text to life, basing it on the descriptive words of the author. I will also be able to introduce them to the many ways that film manipulates its audience by showing short scenes. Additionally, students will be practicing the skills of compare and contrast as well as creative writing through creating storyboards, graphic novels, or comic strips.

One of my favorite things about teaching is introducing students to various genres of literature. They complete a survey to determine which genre is their favorite, which gives them suggestions for books they might like. It is a joy to see their excitement after picking out a book from the school library from the genre they like best. My main reason for exposing them to this variety is to create in them a love for reading and ultimately for them to become lifelong readers. In third grade, chapter books are an adjustment from picture books and many students are often intimidated because they don't have the stamina. Additionally, these books don't have pictures and they have to rely on their reading comprehension to visualize the story, typically over multiple reading sessions. I often select chapter books that are age-appropriate and have been made into a motion picture. Students are very interested in reading the book when they know they will get to watch the film version. I find they are often unaware that many films are adaptations of award winning novels.

## Demographics

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I have the honor of serving the community and children at Elizabeth D. Redd Elementary in Richmond, Virginia. Redd is an inner-city, Title I school serving grades K-5. We have approximately 500 students, with the majority coming from low-income households. Our students are predominantly African American and Hispanic. Many students migrated from Central America and speak English as a second language.

Reading has been a recurring struggle for our 3rd graders, according to scores from our state standardized assessment in Virginia. The students particularly struggle with vocabulary, comprehension, and stamina.

Studying adjectives and character traits is important because it expands the students' limited vocabulary and supports comprehension within the context of relevant literature. The students also have difficulty deeply understanding texts as they struggle to visualize, make connections, or compare and contrast as they read. Connecting texts to a film supports comprehension because the students can see what they thought about the text versus what the filmmaker depicted, thus developing a greater attention to detail supporting their comprehension in other reading.

## Content Objectives

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This unit will be taught during my two-hour language arts block. I am going to focus it around the standards analyzing character, compare and contrast, and creative writing. We use Benchmark Literacy Curriculum in my district for Language Arts instruction. Each comprehension skill is taught in units that are three weeks long. I will begin by reading aloud the novel *Black Panther: The Young Prince* to students about 2 weeks before starting Grade 3 Benchmark Literacy Unit 2 Analyze Character and Visualize, as I want them to be able to analyze the development of T'Challa's character as he transforms from prince to king. Therefore, they will need to know details about him before beginning the unit on the skill of analyzing characters. For students to fully comprehend a text, they need a firm grasp of characterization. What makes a character's choices and actions believable? This question can only be answered through the examination of character development.

We will also practice the skill of visualizing when reading the novel *Black Panther: The Young Prince*, as there are no pictures. Students will make their own adaptation of the novel by making up their own ending to the story with the options of creating short graphic novels, storyboards, or comic strips. In doing this, they will be retelling, sequencing, and summarizing the story through creative writing. Next, I will show a series of pre-selected scenes from the film *Black Panther*. We will focus on making connections (text to film) and comparing and contrasting the book and the film along with the development of T'Challa's character using new vocabulary words and character traits learned in class.

## Unit Content

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*"Film cannot reproduce many of the pleasures of reading novels, but it can produce other experiences of parallel value."* - Seymour Chatman<sup>1</sup>

### What is an Adaptation?

Have you ever wondered what distinguishes a remake from an adaptation? Or wondered where the inspiration for certain films originated with regard to society and the times in which they were created? During the Yale National Initiative seminar *Adaptations: Literature, Film and Society* under the leadership and guidance of Yale University's Professor of Film Studies Brigitte Peucker, we explored several pieces of literature and analyzed various adaptations of the text in film. In doing this I discovered how meticulous and deliberate filmmakers are

when creating their work of art. They find a way to make their films unique, or in other words put their stamp on them. Through unpacking each sequence, chapter, act and scene, I gained a new found appreciation for literature and film that I have never really had before.

So what exactly is an adaptation with regard to literature and film? An adaptation is a common practice in the exchange between literature and film, describing the transposition of a novel, play, or other literary source to film<sup>2</sup>. In other words, an adaptation is simply a story that travels from one medium to another; starting with one form such as a novel and then taking that novel and transferring it into another form such as a film.

## **Fidelity to the Source**

In most discussions about adaptations, a key term is *fidelity*, meaning how faithful or true an adaptation is to the original text. This goes into further detail by looking into the settings and plots, how the ideas of the original source is communicated in the adaptation, if a historical or cultural context has been changed, and whether the change in the material changed the meaning of its work to the reader or viewer. When analyzing an adaptation it is important to look at what's omitted, what's added, the pace of editing (how long the scenes are), if the timeline is slowed down or sped up, the difference between black & white and color, and the music used just to name a few.

## **Types of Adaptations**

There are three types of adaptations: *literal*, *loose*, and *faithful*. If the source text is a play, a *literal* film adaptation follows the text as if the camera was set up at the theater and filmed it. A *loose* adaptation will not strictly follow the guidelines of the source material, often straying from the material completely. A *faithful* adaptation follows the source material as faithfully as possible. For example, in Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* 1837 vs. David Lean's film *Oliver Twist*(1947) we found that Lean created a faithful adaptation of the novel. Lean's film in black and white was very *pictorial*. The opening scene starts with a shot of storm clouds, rain, and a branch of thorns, which sets the mood and tone of the film for the audience in a very cinematic way. It then shows Oliver's mother walking outside in the rain, clearly distraught, in labor and in unbearable pain. Lean uses a *montage*, which is a series of shots edited together, to show her struggling to reach her destination, while in Dickens' novel, chapter one begins with Oliver's mother already at the workhouse after giving birth to Oliver, where she dies shortly thereafter.

Adaptations sometimes tend to exclude "extra" characters from the original text, but occasionally the opposite happens, like in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In the play there was no "holy man" character originally, however in Orson Welles film *Macbeth*, the holy man character was added. In the case of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* you can analyze theatrical vs. cinematic. Welles' *Macbeth* was very theatrical because it featured the speeches by Welles, but it was also cinematic, as it featured many *low angle shots* where the camera is low looking up. Characters can also be subtly changed. Welles' *Macbeth* is an example of a faithful adaptation as well. The dialogue among the characters uses the original Shakespearean language and most of the key lines from the play are used in his film.

Film adaptations can also add events. These additions can have any number of motivations: to take advantage of a brilliant actor, to suggest contemporary relevance, or to "correct" the novel for aesthetic reasons<sup>3</sup>. Michael Fassbender's film *Macbeth*(2015), is a cinematic and faithful adaptation. In the opening scene it shows an arrangement of actors in a *mise-en-scene* of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth at a funeral for their young son, while in the original Shakespeare play they did not have any children. Fassbender's *Macbeth* has many scenes in which the witches and other characters are arranged in *tableau* form where they are

looking out at the spectators in an almost confrontational manner. It also includes many graphic and detailed scenes of the gory murders Macbeth commits in order to maintain power. In the original play, Shakespeare only mentions that the deeds were done, but does not go into detail about how Macbeth did them.

Film can be an immersive medium. It has a narrative and tells this story through images. You have to look at both to get an accurate feel of the mood and tone the filmmaker is trying to convey. Western cinema often features facial *close ups*. There is beauty in the expressiveness of the human face. It is a major subject of the camera. Facial close ups are often used to draw you in. You are made to feel empathetic towards the characters in Fassbender's adaptation because of the many close ups. There are instances when there is a *reverse shot* for dialogue, the camera angle shifts. One of the reasons that Fassbender's Macbeth is considered to be very cinematic is because of the fascinating *high angle shots* where the camera is above looking down.

Another adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* we studied was Akira Kurosawa's film *Throne of Blood* 1961. Kurosawa's film is an example of a loose adaptation. This film was a Japanese adaptation spoken entirely in Japanese, with English subtitles. *Throne of Blood* used many *medium long shots* in which there were not very many close ups. However, the characters still portrayed strong emotional facial expressions and spoke in an almost aggressive manner, which had its way of drawing you in. This film was in black and white and reminded you of the popular pen and ink drawings of Japan, which values the white spaces on the paper. Sometimes film can give you the feeling of being an animated painting. Here the beauty and artistic methods of the filmmaker are very deliberately inserted into scenes, costumes, and sets. There were many *tracking shots* in this film as well where the camera moved with the fog or scenes with lots of motion like when the characters were traveling through the forest on horseback.

Most adaptations reflect their time. Like biological organisms, some texts need to change their characteristics in order to survive in a new environment. Sometimes elements such as scene locations, dialogue (including slang and cultural references), the look and demeanor of the characters, and even the storylines, are all changed to meet the sensibilities of the intended audience.

### **Literature, Graphic Novels, and Comics in the Classroom**

Aerospace engineering, also known as rocket science, is universally considered to be an extremely difficult area of study that requires much training and a significant amount of intelligence and skill. And to be compensated for the way that they have to pay very close attention to detail in their work, rocket scientists earn a pretty hefty six-figure salary. You often hear people jokingly say when referring to tasks that should be fairly simple "It's not rocket science!" indicating that rocket science is in fact a difficult job. There's a saying that "teaching reading is rocket science" and as a teacher of young children, I have seen first-hand up close and personal that this is true!

As teachers we stress the idea that our students are reading every single day. But I think we fail to encourage them to have the freedom to select material that fits their own definition of fun or that meets their desire to read. Unfortunately, we are always assigning them material that we want them to read and not allowing them to choose what draws them in, what interests them. We also tend to push them to achieve certain reading levels to make sure they are progressing and getting enough of a challenge. To grow and encourage the true lifelong readers that we strive to create in them, we must find ways to motivate reading to apply the skills we work like rocket scientist to teach.

I have found that my students take a great interest in comic books and graphic novels. And I can certainly

understand why. In 3rd grade we are transitioning from picture books to chapter books, in an effort to build stamina and reading comprehension, so it can sometimes be intimidating to a transitional reader when you put a book with nothing but words and few to no pictures in front of them. “Graphic novels are books written and illustrated in the style of a comic book. To be considered a graphic novel, rather than a picture book or illustrated novel, the story is told using a combination of words and pictures in a sequence across the page. Graphic novels can be any genre, and tell any kind of story, just like their prose counterparts. The format is what makes the story a graphic novel, and it usually includes text, images, word balloons, sound effects, and panels.”<sup>4</sup> “Comics offers tremendous resources to all writers and artists: faithfulness, control, a chance to be heard far and wide without fear of compromise...it offers range and versatility with all the potential imagery of film and painting plus the intimacy of the written word. And all that's needed is the desire to be heard--the will to learn--and the ability to see.”<sup>5</sup>

We should not keep our students from choosing comic books and graphic novels. They are a great bridge between picture books and picture free novels. As they use a combination of both words and pictures to tell the story. Comic books and graphic novels offer a scaffold to a struggling reader who may need support with comprehension or is just more of a visual learner. They also help support skills like sequencing, stamina, and vocabulary. My students love to check out graphic novels such as *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney and *Captain Underpants* by Dav Pilkey from the school library and they often choose to use the unique format of comic strips to write in their journals in class.

This basic way of storytelling has been used in various forms for centuries—early cave drawings, hieroglyphics, and medieval tapestries like the famous Bayeux Tapestry can be thought of as stories told in pictures. The term “graphic novel” is generally used to describe any book in a comic format that resembles a novel in length and narrative development. Graphic novels are a subgenre of “comics,” which is a word you may also hear people use when referring to this style of book<sup>6</sup>. Graphic novels have been found to be popular with reluctant readers, especially boys. At the same time, graphic novels with rich, complex plots and narrative structures can also be satisfying to advanced readers as well. They are flexible enough that often the same titles can be equally appealing to both reluctant and advanced readers.

### **Black Panther: The Comic Book**

The character Black Panther was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1966, making his debut in the comic book *Fantastic Four #52*. Black Panther predated the Black Panther Party by only a few months; to avoid any political controversy, Marvel unsuccessfully attempted to change the name to Black Leopard. Lee and Kirby introduced this character during the Civil Rights Movement, which took a lot of guts! Here you have this African American character who is smarter than any other hero, stronger than most heroes, and comes from a place that is more advanced than anywhere else in the world. His prominence in the greater Marvel Universe immediately became a symbol of pride for the African American community. This was never more evident than in the reception that his first solo film received when it was released in February 2017.

T'Challa is the prince of the wealthy African nation of Wakanda. He also has inherited the role of Black Panther, which was passed down to him from his father King T'Chaka. Black Panther is the protector of their home, as he possesses a very powerful gift. Wakanda has been a secret for centuries, a hidden kingdom that's incredibly beautiful and almost magical. It was built on a mound of an alien metal called Vibranium that crashed into the continent of Africa hundreds of years ago. It is the most valuable metal to man, known as “The Gift” to the people of Wakanda as it is the source of their livelihood, everything they have is made of it. It is sewn into their clothes, it powers their weapons, and heals their people. The most prominent benefit of



Vibranium is that it makes Wakanda a technological marvel, and it is a best kept secret from the world. When the king dies, T'Challa must step up and be king, carrying the responsibility of keeping Wakanda and its most prized possession, Vibranium, a secret.

In the unit, I will introduce my students to T'Challa's character in the original Marvel comic book *Black Panther*. We will discuss the original design of the Black Panther and identify similarities and differences from the current adaptation of him that is portrayed today.

### ***Black Panther: The Children's Novel***

The children's novel *Black Panther: The Young Prince* by Ronald Smith, tells the story of twelve- year- old T'Challa. When there is a war brewing in his home of Wakanda, his father King T'Chaka sends him and his best friend M'Baku away to America in an effort to keep them safe. They are enrolled in Southside Middle School in Chicago and have to assume new identities. For the first time they are introduced to the outside world where they have to adapt to a new way of life. T'Challa faces many challenges in the novel as he is dealing with the pressures to assimilate to American culture. Both of the boys have to learn how to be regular kids and find a way to remain true to themselves.

T'Challa is troubled when M'Baku ends up making friends with a classmate named Gemini Jones. Gemini was bad news and he was also rumored to be involved with dark magic. It was bad enough that T'Challa and M'Baku's friendship had changed, but soon afterwards weird things started happening at school. T'Challa has to step up and be brave to figure out what is going on. He uses a Vibranium ring and a high tech suit that he was given before he left Wakanda and which he was told to use only for emergency purposes. T'Challa has to find the courage to save his friends while using his cleverness and skills in the process. All of these are traits that he possesses and will eventually make him a great king, and the Black Panther.

In the unit I will have students identify some examples in different chapters of the novel where T'Challa is displaying various character traits. For example, in Chapter One the boys encounter a strange man who is wounded in the forest. T'Challa shows that he is fearless and compassionate when he is compelled to help the stranger.

### ***Black Panther: The Film***

Comic book characters, particularly superheroes, have long been adapted into film, beginning in the 1940s with Saturday movie serials aimed at children. *Superman* (1978) and *Batman* (1989) are two later successful movie adaptations of famous comic book characters. In the early 2000s, blockbusters such as *X-Men* (2000) and *Spider-Man* (2002) have led to dozens of superhero films.<sup>7</sup> *Black Panther* is the first major superhero of African descent to be in mainstream media, which is why I believe it was such a hit at the box office.

It is the third top grossing film of all time at the North American box office, earning approximately 699 million dollars. It is the tenth top grossing film of all time globally, earning 1.3 billion dollars at the box office.<sup>8</sup> The numbers alone speak volumes as to what a huge achievement this film was, reaching all ethnicities and capturing audiences all over the world with its fascinating technology and action-packed storyline. Ryan Coogler, a young successful African American man, was the director. In many interviews he talked about how he put his heart and soul into this film, as he too grew up wishing there were heroes that looked like him. Something that makes this film so unique is that it has a cast of almost entirely African American actors, which is something that's been unheard of in Hollywood until now.

Just like the original comic storyline, the film tells the story of Prince T'Challa who becomes the newly crowned king of Wakanda upon the death of his father, King T'Chaka. T'Challa must keep his home of Wakanda safe and make sure its very valuable gift of Vibranium remains hidden from the rest of the world. As the plot progresses, T'Challa will find himself questioning whether or not the decisions of his father and past kings were the right ones. He is faced with the task of correcting their mistakes and determining how Wakanda should be positioned in the world and how its resources and knowledge should be shared for the first time in their deep history. In the film he says: "We must find a way to look after one another, as if we were one single tribe."

For the unit I have pre-selected a few key scenes from the film that have major events to show students. They speak to the type of person King T'Challa evolves into. Students will identify character traits of T'Challa from each scene. From this they should be able to Compare and Contrast T'Challa the prince in the novel to T'Challa the king in the film. I will be using the Blu-Ray disk of Black Panther. In the disk menu are scene selections that I will choose from. The scenes I have chosen are 3. Time to be King; 4. "Let the Challenge Begin"; 6. Extradition; 8. Busan Car Chase, 11. Blood Rights; 14. Jabariland; 16. The Battle for Wakanda; and 17. A New Wakanda. In each of these scenes I will have students choose character traits that T'Challa depicts and justify their reasoning with specific examples. This will help them to see the development of his character, and also help them to compare and contrast.

## Teaching Strategies

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The steps of the unit include the following: in the first week, I will continue to read the children's novel aloud to my class. There are forty-four chapters in the book, so I will begin reading about two chapters a day approximately two weeks before I begin the unit. This way students will have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the character T'Challa the prince. Once I begin the unit, it will be my read aloud each day during our reading block. By this time, I should be halfway through the book. After we read each day the lesson will build from the text.

To introduce students to the concept of character traits at the beginning of the unit, I will use chart paper to create an anchor chart with them. The anchor chart will serve as a visual aid for students. I will add content to the chart throughout the lesson and post it in the classroom for students to refer to. Key points to include are the characters thoughts, feelings, actions, and motivations. The best anchor charts are ones the teacher and students create collaboratively. This will also be a good time to review or reteach adjectives.

Next we will look at the way T'Challa is described in the novel. I will pose the question: How is it different from what you've seen of him in the comic book we explored? Students will *turn and talk* with a partner to determine the differences. Doing this will teach the students vocabulary (traits) used to describe T'Challa's character. It will also help me support the students to better understand visualization. Students take what they visualized from the novel and draw the picture that they see in their mind. We will discuss how they knew to draw certain aspects of T'Challa. We will build on visualization as we continue to read. They will draw a picture and write 5 sentences after each chapter in their Lit Journals (literature journal) to summarize what they visualized. Over the rest of the week we will continue to read and apply visualization, study vocabulary, and draw and write about it to comprehend the text. For example: After reading a certain page, I will have the students reflect on how we could predict T'Challa would act this way based on how he was described earlier in



the text—they will give evidence. Students will work in small groups to start identifying character traits found in the novel. They will add them using sticky notes to an anchor chart made during whole group instruction in class. A graphic organizer, like a T-Chart could also be used for this activity. On the right side, list the character trait, and on the left provide evidence for that character trait.

In the second week, as I continue to read through the text with the class and building their vocabulary, visualization, writing and summarizing skills, I will use the select scenes mentioned above from the film to compare and contrast with the novel. For example: using a Venn diagram, Page 126 of Chapter 21 with Scene 6: Extradition (at 37:20 minute and second). In the novel, T'Challa is trying on the Panther Suit he has brought to America with him from Wakanda. The author goes into detail about the suit and how T'Challa feels about it. In scene 6 of the film, T'Challa goes to visit his sister Shuri's lab in Wakanda, where she presents him with a new and improved suit. These two could be compared and contrasted. What descriptive words are the same in the book and movie? Are the characters visually the same as they were described in the written text? What similarities do you see? What differences? Students will be able to analyze T'Challa's development from prince to king. Using the skills and an understanding of character, the students will compare and contrast T'Challa as a prince and as a king. It is important to have brief discussions after each movie scene, to ensure understanding and to identify what character traits were shown. It will be helpful for students to also take notes during the movie scenes in their Lit Journals.

In the third week, to end the unit students will have the choice to create storyboards, graphic novels, or comic strips about T'Challa as the Black Panther. They will have to incorporate character trait vocabulary into their work as well. I will give them the freedom to decide if they would like to create their own ending to the novel, or the film in this activity.

Other Essential Questions that can be asked

1. How are the settings, characters, plot, problems and solutions in the novel and film the same or different? (story elements)
2. Character Analysis: what character traits does T'Challa have that are the same as the prince and the king? (brave, curious, eager, adventurous, kind, etc.)
3. What do the adaptations tell us about the society in which it was made?
4. What changes would you make as the author or filmmaker?
5. What character traits would you like to have that T'Challa or any other characters had?

## Classroom Activities

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**For the duration of the three-week unit, students will complete the following activities:**

*Summarizing in "Lit Journals"* (literature journals): I love to do Lit Journal entries with my students whenever we are reading a new novel together as a class. It gives them the chance to practice the skills of sequencing and visualizing, as they will sit quietly and listen as I read aloud. They will paint a picture in their minds of what has happened. After the chapter is over, students will label the page with the chapter number and write a very brief 5-8 sentence summary of what happened. I teach my students the *five-finger summarizing strategy*: 1. Somebody (who is the main character); 2. Wanted (what did the character want); 3. But (what was the problem); 4. So (how did the character try to solve the problem); 5. Then (what was the resolution). They

also draw a small picture that illustrates their summary. This activity should take no more than fifteen minutes. If time allows, I allow students to share their summaries with the whole class. If time is limited, I give them about five minutes to share with a partner. Lit Journal summaries also help students recall the whole story for later projects or activities. They can use their entries as a source of reference to go back to if needed.

*Character Post-Its Poster-* I will create an anchor chart using a large poster board or chart paper with a picture of Black Panther in the center of the poster. I will add 5-6 post-it notes to the chart surrounding the picture. Each note will be labeled with a different character trait. Each student will be given a post-it note of a different color. They must find evidence of Black Panther showing that particular trait and write it on their post-it note. This could be a great time for students to go back into their Lit Journals for reference. The Character Post-its Poster activity can be used with T'Challa's character from either the novel or the film. There is also another variation of this activity that could be done. Instead of adding post-it notes to the poster, allow students to write different traits on sentence strips and add them to the poster.

*Character Timeline-* Students can work in small groups (3-4 students per group) using a large roll of paper about a yard long (I will use the fadeless paper rolls that are for bulletin boards) and create a timeline of illustrations of T'Challa starting off as the prince and then in different ages up until he becomes king and Black Panther. This will be a visual representation showing the development of T'Challa's character over time. Students will add a character trait with one sentence that provides evidence of that trait. It may be fun for students to look for character trait words in old magazines or newspapers to add to their timelines. These can be displayed out in the hallway or in class. This activity will require students to use some of their brain power and *infer* the type of character traits T'Challa may have developed during the years that we have not read about or have watched in the film. I will pose the question: do you think T'Challa may have had some of the same experiences and challenges from when he was a teenager in America as he got older?

*Graphic Organizers-* There are many graphic organizers to use that will help students with each comprehension skill we will be learning about. I will use character analysis graphic organizers and T- Charts where students can gather and organize their evidence for characters and their traits. They can also use a graphic organizer that has an outline of a person, which will represent T'Challa. Students will label the inside and outside of the outline with character traits. Inside the outline will be how he thinks or feels, while the outside should be what he does or says and how he looks. I will also use Venn Diagrams that allow students to compare and contrast the book vs. the film, T'Challa the Prince vs. T'Challa the King, and *Black Panther* the comic book vs. *Black Panther* the film. I will have my students complete graphic organizers during independent work time using notes from their Lit Journals and from the actual text that we use in class. Students will have the choice to fill out graphic organizers while I read aloud, as I will be sure to stop periodically to give them the opportunity to share their work, or they can choose to fill it out during independent work time. I've found that giving my students options in ways to complete assignments can be very beneficial. If you give them the freedom to choose what works best for them they can be successful.

*Gallery Walk- Comic Strips/Storyboards/Short Graphic Novel-* To end the unit, I will give the students the option to choose one of the following activities: comic strips, a storyboard, or a short graphic novel. For the comic strip and storyboard options, students will select their favorite part of either the novel or the film and create their own ending. For the graphic novel, they must select a favorite scene from the film and recreate it. Students may add new characters as well, with similar character traits or traits that are the opposite of T'Challa's. Lit Journals will be useful for this activity as well. I will develop a rubric for grading these projects with the required components that each activity must have. Although students will be familiar with comic strips and graphic novels, they may need some instruction on how to create them. I will explain that in a

comic strip, a panel is an individual frame, or single drawing, in the multiple-panel sequence of a comic strip or comic book. A panel consists of a single drawing depicting a frozen moment. I will also point out how the order of the panels is important in telling their story. We will look at some examples together from comic books, graphic novels, and comic strips from the local newspaper. Once their projects are complete, we will share them in class. I will also hang their finished projects out in the hallway for display. I may also find a designated area in our school to display all of our work on character traits and *Black Panther* and allow students to invite other classes to come and check it all out in a gallery walk.

Another activity that can be done at the end of this unit to help deepen their connection to character traits, students could look at all of the character traits we've learned over the three weeks and choose ten words they feel best describe themselves. Those words will then be added to silhouettes of the students or to a large poster of a self-portrait that students will draw themselves.

## Appendix

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Standards- Virginia Standards of Learning for Language Arts-- 3rd grade- These standards can be easily cross-referenced to other standards.

Virginia Standard of learning 3.5 d

The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional text and poetry by

d) Compare and contrast settings, characters, and events;

k) Use reading strategies to monitor comprehension throughout the reading process.

Common Core Standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Virginia Standard of Learning 3.9c-e

The student will write for a variety of purposes.

c) Write a clear topic sentence focusing on the main idea.

d) Write a paragraph on the same topic.

e) Use strategies for organization of information and elaboration according to the type of writing.

Common Core Standard CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.1.I

Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

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*Black Panther*-Film

## Notes

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