

Charlotte's Web

by E.B. White

This is a narrative at the Interactive Episodic Level: Perspective Taking is required for comprehension.

The Critical Thinking Triangle® is very important: Kick-Off, Feeling, Plan and Mental States. Familiarity with the triangle from the perspective of differing characters will aid in comprehension and foster discussion and written expression.

Information text (expository) is included within the narrative.

CHAPTER 1: Before Breakfast

Focus: Perspectives of Fern and her father regarding the “birth of the runt of the litter.”

Take this Kick-Off from the points of view (perspectives) of Fern and her father.

Use the PERSPECTIVE TAKING MAP and map out their feelings/plans especially in order to explicitly teach the concept that feelings and plans regarding the same Kick-Off may be different, leading to different actions.

The diagram shows a central circle with a star, connected by arrows to two other circles, one above and one below. The top circle contains a star icon, and the bottom circle contains a gear icon. The form has two columns of horizontal lines for writing, with a legend at the top right: a star icon for 'To take the perspective of more than one character'.

CHAPTER 2: Wilbur

Focus: First two stages of narrative:

Description Sequence: More information about characters and setting.

Action Sequence: What Fern did with Wilbur.

Mini Episodes within the chapter:

1. Going Swimming: Wilbur's perspective
2. Page 12: Father announces that Wilbur will have to be sold.

Father's Perspective (feelings/thoughts/plans)

Mother's Perspective (feelings/thoughts/plans)

Fern's Perspective (feelings/thoughts/plans)

CHAPTER 3: Escape

Focus: Description of the barn as a setting for the animals.

Episode #1: Wilbur's boredom as a feeling. This was a Kick-Off for the goose who made a suggestion. In life and in literature, others' feelings serve as a catalyst (Kick-Off) for others who feel compassionate or other feelings and make a plan to do something to influence change in that other character.

Episode #2: Wilbur's freedom as a Kick-Off for animals and people on the farm.

Episode #3: Wilbur's feelings about freedom.

CHAPTER 4: Loneliness

Focus: Wilbur's Plans for the day: This is a series of sequenced actions to occur during the day. This is Wilbur's "ho-hum" day...the expected occurrences.

EPISODE I



Kick-Off: RAIN!



Feeling: sad/lonely



Plan: "Wilbur didn't want food, he wanted love. He wanted a friend-someone who would play with him."



Attempt: Mentioned his loneliness and what he wanted to the goose....but was rejected



Attempt: To the lamb...but was rejected



Attempt: to Templeton...but was rejected



Consequence: Could not get anyone to be a playmate/friend.



Resolution: Sad

Mini Kick-Offs:

- was given molasses/sulphur/tonic.
- Darkness

All of the above result in an intensity of the feeling of loneliness.

EPISODE II



Kick-Off: A voice: "I'll be a friend to you. I've watched you all day and I like you."



Feeling: surprise ("jumping to his feet) curious (Where are you and who are you?)



Plan: The strange voice tells him to wait until the morning...so he does.

CHAPTER 5: Charlotte

Focus: Wilbur's Plan to find out who his "friend" is.



Kick-Off: "Just as Wilbur was settling down for his morning nap, he heard again the thin voice that had addressed him the night before."



Feeling: excited



Plan: to find the source of the voice (and the meaning of "Salutations!")



Attempt: Follows the voice's directions

Consequence: Discovers "Charlotte"!, a spider...description

Resolution: Wilbur is happy. "I think you're beautiful", he said to the spider.

Mini-Episode: Watches in horror how the spider catches a fly.

Wilbur voices his horror to the spider who rebuts his opinion. This is a mini-lesson opportunity to talk about persuasion.

Mini-Episode: the goose's observation: What does she know that Wilbur does not know?

(Mental States). As in many selections in literature, one character knows/remembers/realizes something that another does not...this influences the outcome.

Note: The book *The Spider and the Fly* contains personality traits of a spider that are in contrast to Charlotte's personality...although Wilbur at first thinks that Charlotte is "fierce, brutal, scheming and bloodthirsty."