

I Will Survive! Design Thinking and Character Analysis

by Debra Drummond (Provo City School District)

Students will be designing...

In these lessons, students design “school survival” kits for each other as a way to be introduced to Design Thinking. They will then read and annotate Jack London’s classic story “To Build a Fire,” then, in teams, design a survival experience for the protagonist. By creating an Empathy Map, a Needs Statement, and a Prototype, students will have, in essence, written a claim based on textual evidence and created a prototype that will “meet a character’s needs.” They will work in teams, interview a literary character, generate ideas, and design innovative user-centered solutions.

Through engaging in this challenge, students will learn...

- To engage in a design challenge
- To develop empathy, to brainstorm ideas, to synthesize information
- To conduct an interview and to share information
- To build and test prototypes
- To differentiate between Problem Solving and Design Thinking
- To annotate for character analysis
- To understand thoughts, feelings, actions of their “User”
- To create a visual representation of characterization

Lesson 1

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an overview of all phases of the design thinking process. They will work in pairs, interview each other, generate ideas, and design innovative user-centered solutions for a “school survival kit.”

Lesson 2

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with sufficient essential information about the design challenge and the “User” they will be designing for--the protagonist in Jack London’s “To Build a Fire.” Students will work in pairs, read and annotate text, generate ideas, and create a visualization of their learning.

Lesson 3

The purpose of this lesson is to use the Design Thinking process to deepen students' understanding of the techniques authors use to develop characters. By creating an Empathy Map, a Needs Statement, and a Prototype, students will have, in essence, written a claim based on textual evidence and created a prototype that will "meet a character's needs." They will work in teams, interview a literary character, generate ideas, and design innovative user-centered solutions.