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LESSON 1

Create the Main Character for Your Story

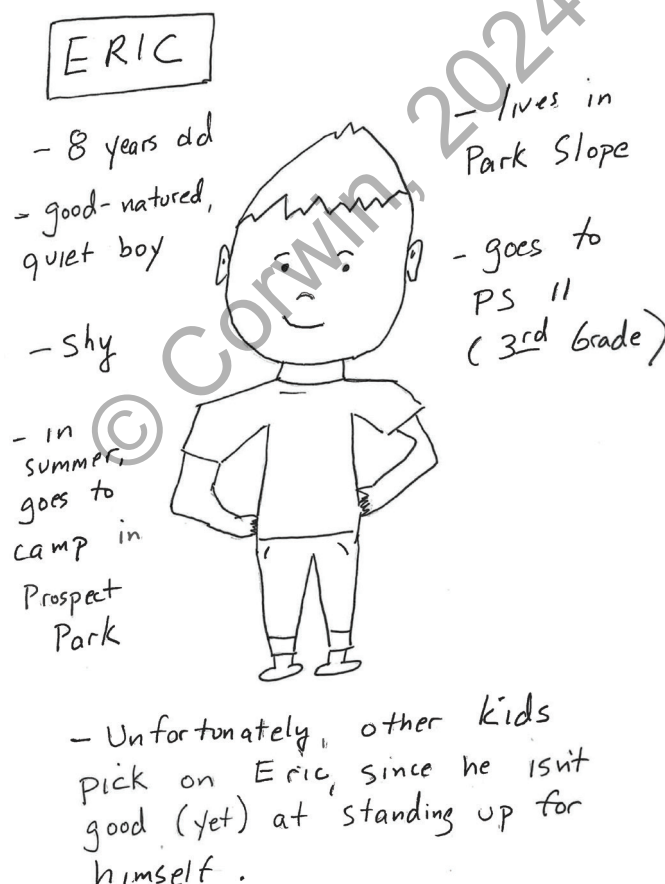


TYPE OF LESSON: Process

STRATEGY

First, decide what kind of a fantasy story you want to write. Then ask yourself, *What kind of main character is in this story, human or magical?* Next, draw the character and write notes about the character's life situation, traits, and problems/challenge(s). See Figure 4-3 for an example from my writer's notebook.

FIGURE 4-3 • CARL'S MAIN CHARACTER, ERIC



STRATEGY LESSON LANGUAGE

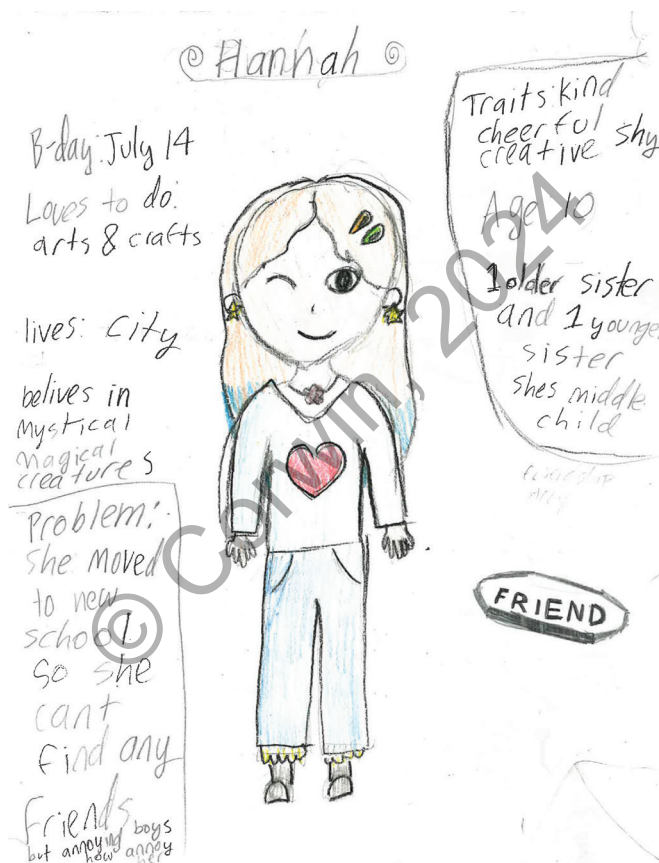
To create the main character for my story, I first decided what kind of a fantasy story to write. Since I love magical relationship stories, like *Margaret's Unicorn*, I decided to write one. To help me remember what kind of main characters this type of fantasy story has, I looked at the Magical Relationship Stories chart (I point to it), which reminded me that my main character could be human or magical. I decided mine would be human.

To get to know my main character, I drew him in my writer's notebook. You can see I gave him a name—Eric—and decided how old he is. I thought about and wrote notes on his life situation: He lives in Brooklyn, goes to PS 11, and attends a summer camp in Prospect Park. I also thought about what kind of kid he is. I decided he's good-natured kid and kinda shy. And—very important—I gave him a problem. His problem is that he's sometimes picked on by other kids.

Try this in your own writing! Once you know the kind of main character you want in your story, draw the character and then think about and take notes on them.

STUDENT EXAMPLE

FIGURE 4-4 • DAIN'S MAIN CHARACTER, HANNAH



NOTES

- After you explain how you created your main character, have students turn and talk to each other and create main characters with each other. Or, you could have your class do this together as a short interactive experience.
- After you confer with several students this period, if you've seen that students need further support with creating main characters, teach Additional Lesson A: Create a Main Character Together as the next minilesson (see Online Resource 4.1).
- If you have students who want to choose a magical creature as their main character but don't know which one to choose, or don't know that much about the kind of kind of creature they've chosen, refer them to *The Book of Mythical Beasts & Magical Creatures* by Stephen Krensky. If they've chosen a dragon as their main character, they can read Tamara Macfarlane's *Dragon World (Mythical Worlds)* to learn more about this kind of magical creature.