

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

***Catsitters: Villain Con* by Colleen AF Venable**

Grade Levels

3–7

Time

45–60 minutes

Common Core Standards (CCSS ELA)

- **RL.3–7.1:** Cite evidence from the text to support analysis.
 - **RL.3–7.2:** Determine the theme or central message.
 - **RL.3–7.3:** Describe how characters respond to challenges.
 - **RL.3–7.6:** Explain how different characters' points of view influence events.
 - **RL.3–7.7:** Explain how illustrations contribute to the story.
 - **W.3–7.3:** Write narratives using descriptive details.
 - **SL.3–7.1:** Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
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Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how graphic novel illustrations develop characters and plot.
 - Examine the difference between heroes and villains.
 - Identify character motivations and conflicts.
 - Use evidence from text and illustrations to support ideas.
 - Write a creative narrative inspired by the story.
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Essential Questions

- What makes someone a hero or a villain?
 - Can a person's choices change who they become?
 - How do teamwork and trust help solve problems?
 - How do illustrations add meaning to a graphic novel?
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Materials

- *Catsitters: Villain Con*
 - Character Analysis Graphic Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Pencils/Colored Pencils
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Vocabulary

- Graphic novel
 - Panel
 - Dialogue
 - Caption
 - Conflict
 - Motivation
 - Villain
 - Hero
 - Evidence
 - Perspective
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- What makes a good hero?
- Can a villain ever do something good?
- Have you ever judged someone before knowing the whole story?

Students complete a Think-Pair-Share before discussing as a class.

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Detective

As students read, they track one main character.

Character	Goal	Challenge	Evidence (Words & Pictures)	What I Learn
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Encourage students to notice:

- Facial expressions
 - Action lines
 - Background details
 - Dialogue
 - Humor
 - Visual clues
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Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. What motivates the characters?
 2. How do the illustrations help tell the story?
 3. What makes someone trustworthy?
 4. Is every villain completely bad? Explain.
 5. How do the characters solve problems together?
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Mini-Lesson

Reading Graphic Novels

Remind students that graphic novels tell stories through both **text and illustrations**.

Readers should pay attention to:

- Panel sequence
- Speech bubbles
- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Sound effects
- Color and background details

Ask students to find one panel where the artwork tells more than the words.

Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Imagine you accidentally discover a secret convention where famous villains are meeting. You must decide whether to sneak in, spy on their plans, or work with a team to stop them. Write a story describing the adventure, the obstacles you face,

and how your choices help determine whether you become a hero. Include dialogue, descriptive details, and explain what you learn about courage, teamwork, and doing the right thing.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

Design Your Own Super Pet

Create a comic featuring a pet with unusual powers.

Include:

- Name
 - Special abilities
 - Biggest weakness
 - One adventure
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Grades 5–7

Hero or Villain?

Choose one character.

Write an argument explaining whether they are truly a hero, a villain, or somewhere in between.

Support your opinion with evidence from both the text and illustrations.

Graphic Novel Activity

Create a six-panel comic showing:

- Beginning
 - Problem
 - Rising Action
 - Climax
 - Solution
 - Lesson Learned
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Assessment

Formative

- Discussion participation
 - Character organizer
 - Close reading notes
 - Exit Ticket
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Summative Writing Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Creative and detailed	Clear	Some detail	Limited
Organization	Logical sequence	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow
Text Evidence	Strong support	Some support	Minimal support	No evidence
Conventions	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors	Many errors

Exit Ticket

Choose one:

- What makes a hero different from a villain?
 - Which panel best showed a character's emotions?
 - What lesson did the main character learn?
 - What would you have done differently than the main character?
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Differentiation

Support

- Partner reading
- Sentence starters
- Graphic organizers
- Teacher-led small groups

- Visual vocabulary cards

Extension

- Compare *Catsitters: Villain Con* to another superhero or mystery graphic novel.
 - Rewrite a scene from the villain's point of view.
 - Create a "Villain Convention Guidebook" describing fictional villains, their goals, and how heroes might outsmart them.
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SEL Connection

Students reflect on:

- Trust
- Honesty
- Courage
- Teamwork
- Making responsible choices
- Looking beyond first impressions

Big Idea

Catsitters: Villain Con shows that appearances can be deceiving, teamwork is essential, and our choices—not labels like "hero" or "villain"—define who we are.