

*Warm ups are suggested toward the beginning of each STAGE WRITE lesson. Warm ups are quick kinesthetic activities used to develop a variety of skills. Warm ups build a safe environment for taking intellectual and emotional risks. They energize students, promote concentration on the group task, exercise the imagination and, perhaps most important, build trust. Many of the warm ups have been adapted from theatre classes.*

*Spend about 10 minutes on the following warm up activity. Working physically together (and usually laughing together) establishes the safe environment necessary for creative writing.*

## **TIGER, PEOPLE, TRAPS**

(OBJECTIVE: TEAMWORK)

The goal of this exercise is for one team to win three points. Points are acquired through luck and a bit of strategy.

Divide the class in half, with teams standing on either side of the room. This exercise is similar to the children's game "Rock, Paper, Scissors," which students may remember. Here the teams will choose to be Tigers, Traps, or People.

Explain that **Tigers** put their hands out in front of them like tiger paws and roar. They eat people. **People** put their arms down at their sides. They set traps. **Traps** put their arms directly out in front of them and clap their hands together like a trap. They catch tigers.

Each group huddles for 15 seconds to decide what to be. On cue, the groups face each other in the stance of Tigers, People, or Traps. The stronger group wins a point. If groups choose the same stance, neither wins.

The relative strengths are:

- Tigers eat People (Tigers win the point)
- People set Traps (People win)
- Traps capture Tigers (Traps win)

When one group acquires three points, the warm up is over.

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## LESSON: CREATING CHARACTERS

### Objectives

- Discuss and begin creating a character
- Visualize a character

### Procedure:

1. Instruct students to take out lined paper. Read or tell the following information.

We are going to do an exercise together to help you visualize a character you might write about.

Number 1 to 10 along the left margin of your paper. I am going to ask you to close your eyes and visualize your character. Make sure the character is someone you can know well and care about. You “know” a character when you can imagine the world from his/her perspective.

Let this character take shape in your imagination. I will ask you to describe your character one item at a time. Listen to the questions the first time I go through them. Then open your eyes, listen again, and write down your choices.

Eyes closed, please.

Slowly, read the following list of questions once.

1. Is your character male or female?
2. Age? Be specific.
3. Ethnic background, if you see this clearly and it matters to you?
4. Hairstyle?
5. What is your character wearing on her/his feet? Be specific.
6. Anything particularly interesting about your character physically?
7. Your character is wearing something that was a gift. Describe it.
8. Your character is holding something in his/her hand. What is it?
9. Your character is experiencing a strong feeling. What is it?
10. What is your character's name?

*Ask students to open their eyes (no talking, please) and write their responses as you read the questions a second time.*

2. Read or tell the following information.

Now let yourself *hear* the character's voice. Write a short monologue for your character.

A monologue is a long speech, often about a certain incident. Think about the 10 choices you have made, and let the monologue come from these. Your character may be addressing another character, or the audience, or thinking aloud, or talking to an object. What's on your character's mind?

3. When students have finished their monologues, listen to several lists and monologues.