

## **Writing to Describe – Research (Days 2 & 3)**

Language Arts- Grade 6

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**Lesson Plan Summary:** In this lesson, students must find background information about the life of a specific historical character in order to complete a paper that describes the character's life in order from best to worst (or vice versa). They must select 15 different items or events to complete this paper. The research may require 2 days on the computer and may take longer if the students are only in class for 45 minutes or less. This lesson is part 2 in the "Writing" series.

**Objective(s):** The student will independently research a character present during the time of slavery in the South to prepare for writing a descriptive paper.

### **Standard(s):**

Writing/Purposes. The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of forms. Write to inform including to explain, describe, report, and narrate (4-8).

- Write to inform/tell/explain/define
- Compare/Contrast
- Attributes list (Characteristics of something)
- Write to describe hierarchical: Best to worst; most meaningful to least meaningful.

**TEKS §110.22. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6.(b)(15)(C)**

Writing/Grammar/Usage. The student applies standard grammar and usage to communicate clearly and effectively in writing. Write in complete sentences, varying the types including compound and complex, and use of appropriately punctuated dependent clauses. Edit drafts to ensure originality and variation in sentence structures.

- Judges the most effective sequencing of sentences in a paragraph (e.g., chronological order, order of importance, spatial order).
- Uses modifiers, phrases, and clauses effectively in his or her writing.
- Differentiates among fragments, run-on sentences, correct sentences, and pairs of sentences that need to be combined.
- Determines the most effectively expressed revision of a group of sentences in need of combining.

**TEKS §110.22. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6. (b)(17)(B)**

### **Prerequisite Skills:**

- Basic Internet Explorer skills
- Basic knowledge of how to properly use laptops
- Basic summary skills
- Ability to find and select pertinent information on pre-selected web sites

**Anticipatory Set:** Journal – Instruct the students to go to the TIDES website (<http://tides.sfasu.edu>). Once there, they should click on "Community Database" and then on "Advanced Search." In the top box that says "All of these words," students will type in the name

Russ Muckleroy and click on “Search.” They will complete their search by clicking on the third picture, titled “Photo of Russ Muckleroy and other African Americans.”  
(<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2006/u?/EastTexRC,6395>)

Give the students the following instructions:

In your journal, create a character sketch of Russ Muckleroy. You may use the other photos from the Tides website if you wish. Remember the key to a good character sketch is to bring life to both the outside (physical) and the inside (personal) of the character. Include his appearance, the surroundings (including other people), and the background. Since you have obviously never met Russ Muckleroy, you will need to make up details about what you think his life was like, based on these photos.

Once students have finished their character sketches, have two or three students share their stories. Discuss how correct use of adjectives and adverbs help the reader to “see” the character.

**Modeling:** Remind students how their descriptive papers will be organized and how they should only focus on information pertinent to their characters. Tell them they will need to look at many aspects of each character’s life in order to get a good grasp on what it would have been like for them.

Remind students that the information they find is important because it will help them share and describe for others what life would have been like as a plantation owner, slave/runaway, or a conductor. Each character played a large role in Southern Plantation society and the Underground Railroad.

Hand out the research packets from the previous day. Go through how to properly fill in each page and the expectations you have for a completed packet. Remind them these are not just for a grade, but also to help them write the best descriptive paper possible.

Using the teacher laptop and projector, help the students get to the appropriate section of Nettekker or monitor that students are on the appropriate websites. You might want to list all of these sites on your own teacher webpage. If using Nettekker, go to [www.nettrekker.com](http://www.nettrekker.com) and click on *Classic*. Under *My Tools*, click on *Saved Searches*. In *Saved Searches*, find your name folder.

Model how you would fill in the information found on an example website on your *Character Role: Information Organizer* page. Reiterate that they will have to look through many websites and scroll all the way through the information to find the details they need. They may need to click on additional pages at the bottom of their original page to obtain more information.

**Check for Understanding:** Once all students are logged in, have them turn to their neighbor/partner and discuss the proper way to search for information and what are good strategies to find information.

**Guided Practice:** After modeling how to find a good piece of information with the students, have them each work for a few minutes to find the first piece of information. Then call on a few to share what they find.

**Closure:** Once all students are logged out of their laptops and have checked them back in as necessary, ask them to share interesting pieces of information they have found so far. After a few share, ask the students if they see the difference between each character's responsibilities and the role in the Southern plantation society/underground railroad.

**Independent Practice:** Students will now work through the packet on their own to locate enough information to write their descriptive paper.

**Enrichment:** Students may research more than one character and compare the role each played in this time period.

**Remediation:**

- ESL – partner with an English speaking student
- SPED – mods, work in partners with higher functioning classmate, CM, Resource
- GT – complete enrichment project for their research.

**Assessment/Rubrics:** Research Packet

**Materials:**

- COW (Computers on Wheels) – 1 laptop per student
- Teacher laptop
- Projector
- Research packets (from Day 1 lesson)
  - [\*Character role information organizer\*](#)
  - [\*Paper Outline \(Questions to Think About\)\*](#)
  - [\*Organizing Your Research\*](#)
- Information Organizer – 1 per student
- Research printouts (for students without Internet access)
- Approved website list (or create a Nettekter account and place all resources in a shared folder)
  - TIDES website
    - <http://tides.sfasu.edu>
  - Conductor:
    - [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/activists/tubman/rail\\_1](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/activists/tubman/rail_1)
    - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASunderground.htm>
    - <http://www.undergroundrailroadconductor.com/>
    - <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/map.html>
    - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6232/>
    - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html>
    - [http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/narratives/bio\\_william\\_still.htm](http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/narratives/bio_william_still.htm)
    - <http://www.nps.gov/boaf>

- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1535.html>
- [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/activists/tubman/youth\\_1](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/activists/tubman/youth_1)
- <http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/35.htm>
- <http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/0history/hwny-tubman.html>
- Plantation Owner:
  - <http://www.carnton.org/plantation.htm>
  - [http://www.nps.gov/archive/timu/education\\_guide/general\\_plantation/gp\\_background\\_info.htm](http://www.nps.gov/archive/timu/education_guide/general_plantation/gp_background_info.htm)
  - <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1857stirling.html>
  - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASplantation.htm>
  - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASoverseers.htm>
  - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/timeline/expref/slavery/slavery.html>
  - <http://www.gwu.edu/~folklife/bighouse/intro.html>
  - <http://www.nps.gov/archive/hamp/slavery.htm>
  - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p282.html>
  - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASoverseers.htm>
- Slave/Runaway:
  - [TIDES: Joshua Houston, Charlotte Sample, Russ Muckleroy](#)
  - <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fhohq.html>
  - [http://cghs.dadeschools.net/slavery/antebellum\\_slavery/plantation\\_slave\\_life/health.htm](http://cghs.dadeschools.net/slavery/antebellum_slavery/plantation_slave_life/health.htm)
  - <http://www.mersey-gateway.org/server.php?show=ConNarrative.83>
  - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASplantation.htm>
  - <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAslavery.htm>
  - [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1narr5\\_txt.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1narr5_txt.html)
  - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p282.html>
  - <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/slavery/>
  - <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-JimCrow1.html>
  - <http://www.thehenryford.org/education/smartfun/hermitage/open.html>

**Resources:** based on the original lesson by Shori Grunkemeyer, Jane Long Middle School

**Additional Resource:** Sebranek, P., Meyer, V., and Kemper, D. 1995. *Write Source 2000*. D.C. Heath and Company, sections 159 – 166.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Role: Information Organizer

Character Role: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Website Name</b> (Hint: National Geographic)	<b>Website Address</b> (Hint: <a href="http://www.nationalgeographic.com">www.nationalgeographic.com</a> )	<b>Fact to be used in your paper</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paper Outline

Directions: In the boxes below, write a sketch or outline of your paper. This should not be word for word like your final draft. This is just bullet points of your main ideas.

**Introduction** – Who is your character? What are the main parts of your character’s life?

**Best** – What is the best part about your character’s life? List 5 points.

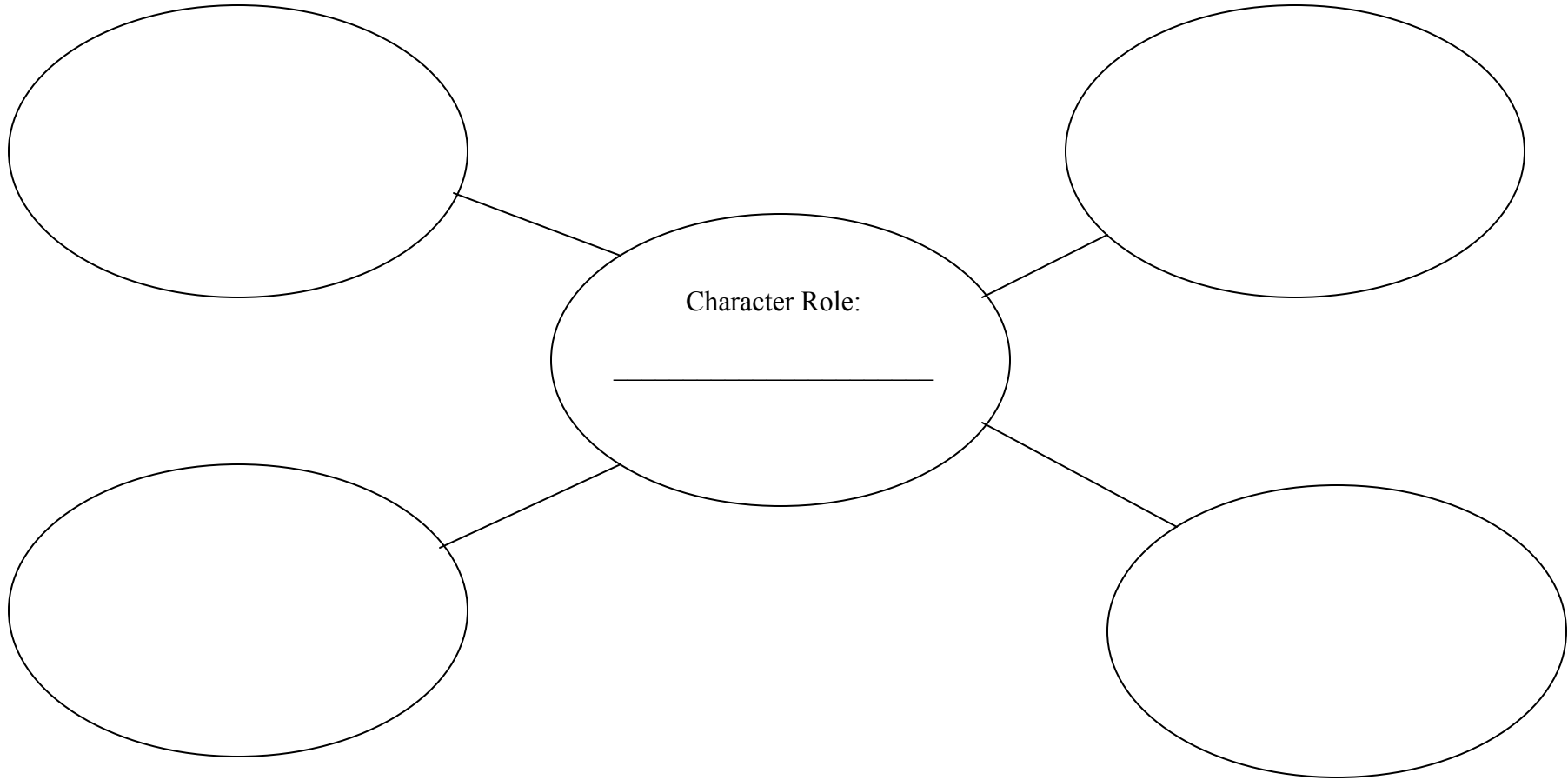
**OK** – What is the OK part about your character’s life? List 5 points.

**Worst** – What is the worst part about your character’s life? List 5 points.

**Conclusion** – Summarize the information from your character’s life.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

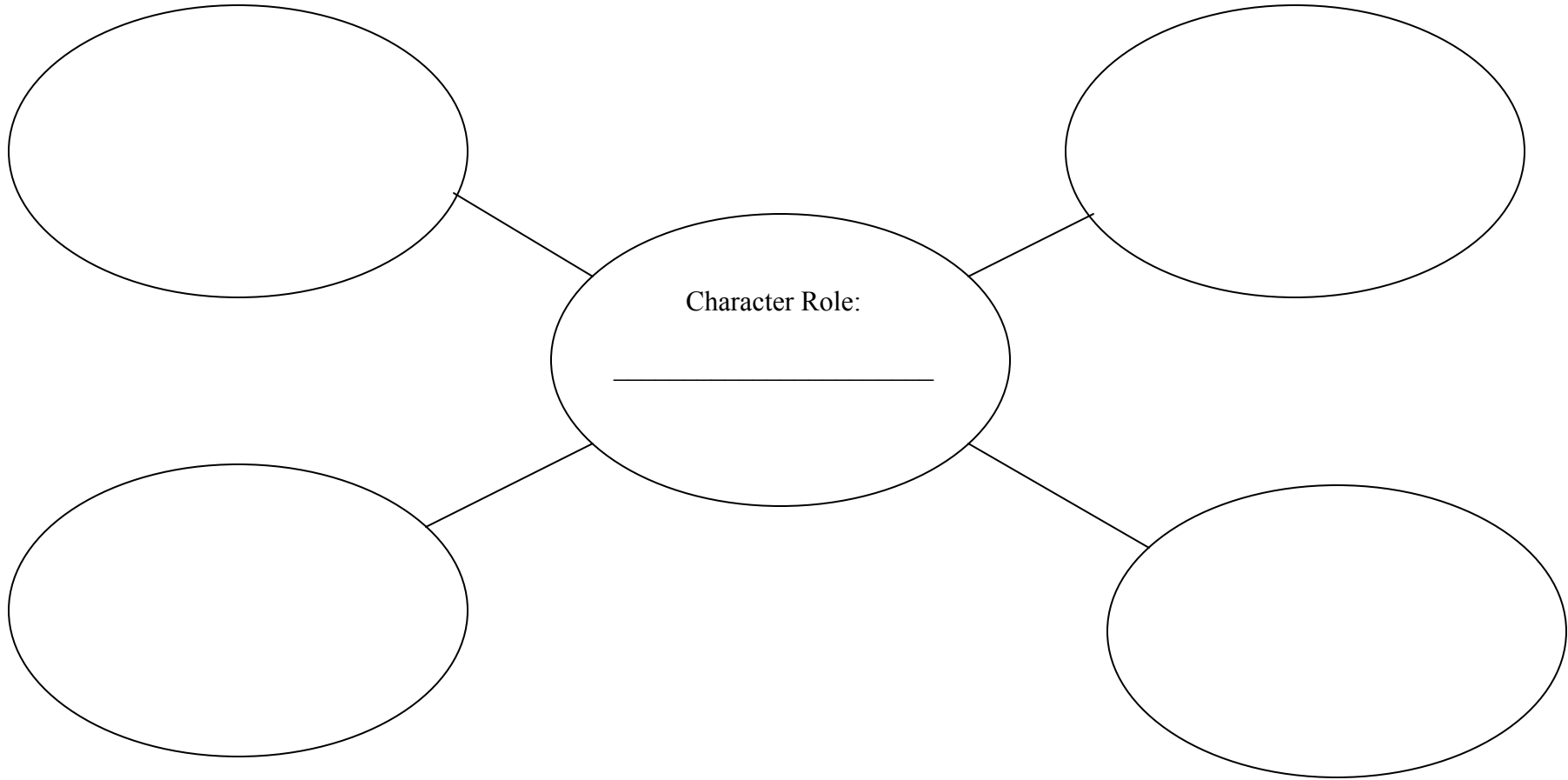
**Organizing Your Research → The BEST Things**



**Remember, you are DESCRIBING this character's life. Include details to paint the picture of their life!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

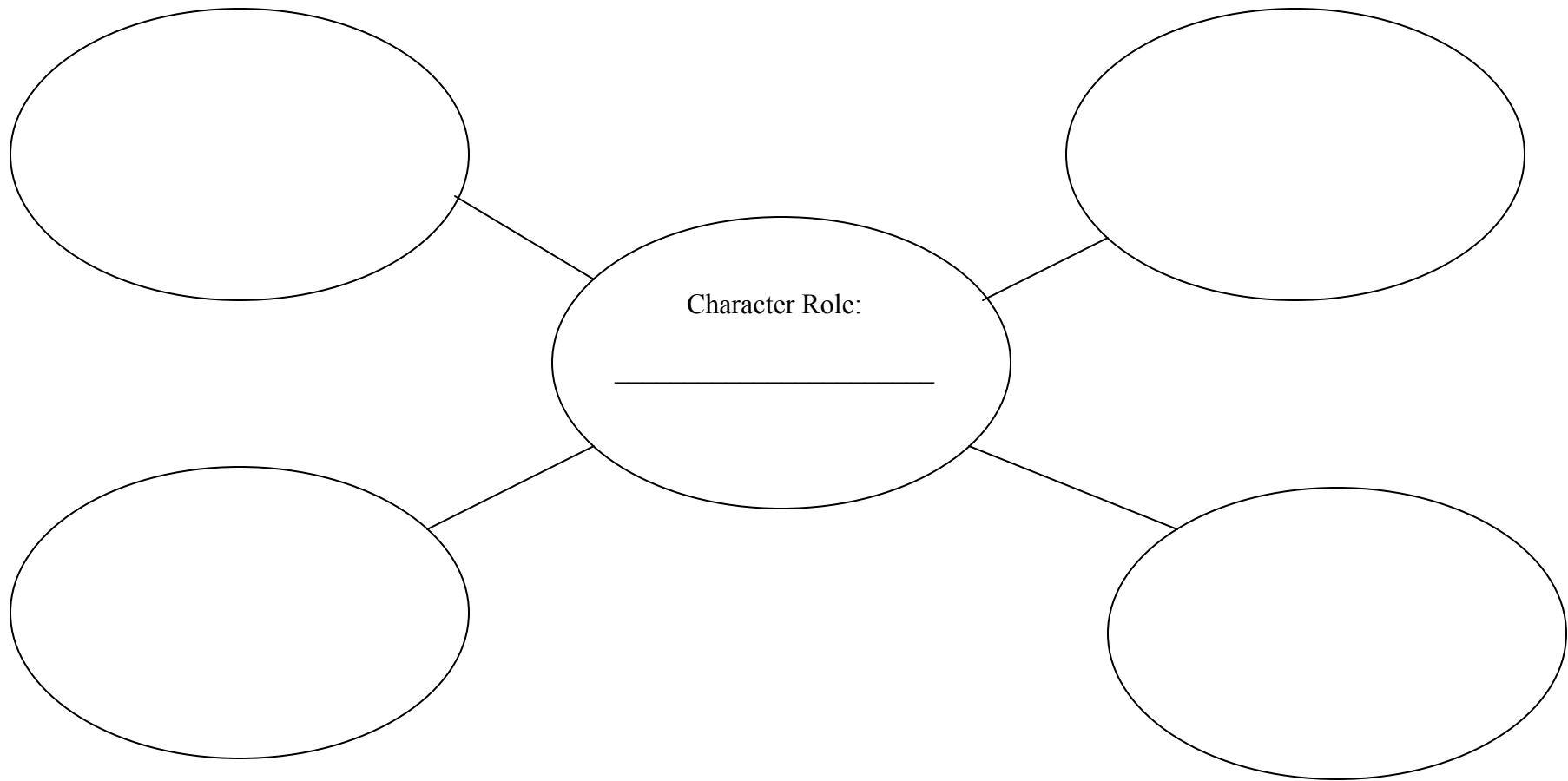
**Organizing Your Research → The OK Things**



**Remember, you are DESCRIBING this character's life. Include details to paint the picture of their life!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizing Your Research → The WORST Things**



**Remember, you are DESCRIBING this character's life. Include details to paint the picture of their life!**



