

Introduction: Building a Sim vs. Building a Character (10 mins)

Ask the student: When you create a Sim in The Sims 4, what's the first thing you do? (Likely answer: customize appearance, choose traits, pick an aspiration). Discuss how these choices make each Sim unique and influence how they behave in the game. Explain that writers do something similar! They don't just say 'Bob was nice,' they **show** Bob being nice through his actions, words, and how others react to him. Traits and aspirations give Sims personality; good descriptions give characters personality in stories.

Activity 1: Trait Brainstorm (10 mins)

Look at a list of Sims 4 traits (e.g., Goofball, Clumsy, Genius, Bookworm, Ambitious, Lazy, Cheerful, Gloomy) and aspirations (e.g., Friend of the World, Bestselling Author, Master Chef, Bodybuilder). Have the student pick 2-3 traits and 1 aspiration they find interesting or that remind them of a Sim they've played. Briefly discuss what someone with these traits/aspirations might **do** or **look like**.

Activity 2: Show, Don't Tell - Trait Focus (15 mins)

Choose one trait from the student's list (or pick one like 'Clumsy'). Ask: 'Instead of saying a character is clumsy, how could we **show** it?' Brainstorm together specific actions or descriptions:

- Trips over rugs often
- Constantly knocks things over
- Spills drinks frequently
- Has small, unexplained bruises
- Fumbles with objects

Repeat quickly with another trait if needed (e.g., 'Bookworm': always carrying a book, quotes authors, prefers libraries, wears reading glasses).

Activity 3: Create-A-Character Profile (20-25 mins)

Now it's time to create a brand new character profile inspired by The Sims! Have the student:

1. Give their character a name.
2. Choose 2-3 Sims 4 traits for them.
3. Choose 1 Sims 4 aspiration.
4. Write a descriptive paragraph (or two) introducing this character. Focus on **showing** their traits and hinting at their aspiration through details about their appearance, how they act, maybe a snippet of their thoughts, or the state of their room/environment. Remind them **not** to simply list the traits (e.g., avoid 'She was clumsy and ambitious'). Instead, **show** it!

Example Start: 'Alex slumped onto the park bench, narrowly avoiding knocking over a discarded coffee cup. Another failed job interview. He sighed, pulling out a wrinkled notebook – the one filled with half-finished designs for rocket ships – and started sketching furiously. If only building real rockets was as easy as dreaming about them...' (Shows ambition/dreamer, maybe a hint of clumsiness/disorganization).

Wrap-up and Sharing (5-10 mins)

Have the student read their character description aloud. Discuss:

- What traits did you try to show?
- What specific details did you use to show them?
- How does this character's aspiration come through (or how might it)?
- How is 'showing' more interesting for a reader than just 'telling'?

Praise their use of descriptive language and vivid details. Connect this skill back to writing more engaging stories, essays, or even just emails!

Optional Extension:

Write a short scene where the newly created character interacts with another imaginary character or tries to perform an action related to their aspiration. How do their traits affect the situation?