

Lesson 3

Getting on the Right TRRACC: The Molding of a Leader

Objective: The students will read one or more of the stories from the life of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and identify a character trait that he learned from the experience or that he displayed in the story.

Materials needed: Stories, graphic organizers, and posters from the Eisenhower library.

Procedure:

1. The teacher will review the preceding day's *A Lesson in Time*, and reinforce the definition of good character.
2. The teacher will explain that the students will be reading stories from President Eisenhower's life as a young boy, a West Point cadet, a young officer, a general and a president. As students read the stories, they are to look for a good character traits Eisenhower either displayed during the experience or learned from it. The traits will not be named in the story. The students will have to draw their own conclusions from the reading.
3. Students will use a graphic organizer to identify each trait, and cite examples from the story. This may be done in groups or with partners.
4. Students will be encouraged to discuss their findings, and compare the President's experiences to their own.
5. Students could be asked to share their story with the rest of the class.



WORK & PLAY:

“To Get Our Hands On Every Cent We Could Possibly Earn”

In the furnace room there were three large fire-tube boilers. We used slack (almost powdered) coal, and clinkers formed. With a slice bar, twelve feet or so in length, I would push the burning coal to one side, loosen the clinkers from the grates, then haul them out with a hoelike tool while another man turned a stream of water on the clinker. In this small inferno, life lost its charm but the job led to another promotion.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Children and young people in the early years of the twentieth century worked and played much the same as they do today. Early in life, children learned the value of work firsthand. “These were the days when children had real chores to do and did them as a matter of course.”¹ Parents taught them how to cook, wash and dry dishes, and clean. They helped to wash, hang, and iron laundry as soon as they were old enough to be taught.

Out-of-doors, children were responsible for the care of pets and livestock. Stalls and pens were cleaned, the garden was hoed and weeded, and the cow milked twice a day. Local farmers or small business owners hired older boys to work in the summer. Many jobs required long hours of physical toil for very modest pay.

During the school year, some students had after-school jobs in downtown businesses or local industries. Many had summer jobs that required hard physical labor. When they were in their early teens, some girls worked as “hired girls,” doing household chores for another family in exchange for room, board, and a small wage.

¹Deane Malott, *Growing Up In Abilene, Kansas: 1898—1916* (Abilene, KS: Dickinson County Historical Society, 1992), p. 14.

Life for children in 1900 wasn't all work. After chores and schoolwork were finished, children enjoyed playing and having fun. Most little girls had a rag doll and perhaps a “penny” doll, a miniature china doll. “Nickel” dolls were larger and nicer. One popular brand of oatmeal contained a pattern for a cloth doll that mothers sewed and stuffed for their daughters. Every little girl dreamed of receiving a life-sized doll with a porcelain head, real hair and lashes, and moveable eyes. Little boys preferred a cloth bag of prized marbles, which they carried around in their pockets. On the first warm day of spring, they gathered outside, testing their skill and luck with their friends. Older boys were allowed to carry jackknives and competed at a game called “Mumblety-peg” in which they took turns flipping the knife blades into the ground.

Outside games were as popular as they are today. Children organized themselves to play “hide-and-seek,” “ring-around-a-rosy,” “drop-the-handkerchief,” and “follow-the-leader.” Baseball was not considered a proper game for girls; however, it was a favorite sport for boys, along with football, boxing, wrestling, and foot races. The hayloft in the barn out back was the perfect place to practice gymnastics and put on amateur shows and circuses.

This was a time when children freely explored the countryside. In summer, the local creek became the community swimming hole and, in winter, an ice-skating rink. Homemade kites flew in the summer sky, and many Sunday-afternoon, horse-and-buggy rides ended with a river-side picnic. The river was a perfect setting for fishing, boating, and camping. Hikes and hayrides were other typical outdoor activities in pleasant weather. When there was enough snow in the winter, children hitched their sleds behind a wagon or horse and thrilled to a slippery ride down country roads.

As early as 1890, every town had at least one drugstore with a soda fountain or ice cream parlor.



Young people met their friends “downtown” for sodas, sundaes, and malted milks, already American favorites. Another popular activity for young people was to go to one another’s homes in the evenings. All gathered around the piano or organ in the parlor for a sing-along to the musical hits of the day. “Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight,” “Whippoorwill Song,” and “Over the Garden Wall” were among the most requested.

Every town had at least one band; most had several. By far, this was the most popular of all local music entertainment. Dazzling uniforms, the flash of silver instruments, and snappy high-stepping young men were a reflection of the town’s own spirit and pride. Girls who wanted to play had to organize their own bands.

Every “progressive” town boasted an Opera House where traveling troupes performed plays, musicals, and light opera. By the early 1900s, opera houses were being converted to movie theaters at a rapid pace. It was the age of the three-reel, silent picture. Regular admission was 15 to 40 cents, but most fans waited for the Saturday ten-cent matinee to view popular films such as *Trip to the Moon* and *The Great Train Robbery*.

County fairs and carnivals featured exhibits, horse races, pulling contests, hot-air balloon rides, and games of chance. The occasional medicine show that pulled into town was a magnet for a curious, and sometimes gullible, crowd. Summer Chautauqua shows entertained the community with a week of lectures, speeches, and musical performances. Nothing, however, compared with the glamour of the circus. For Midwesterners, who had limited contact with the outside world, exotic animals, death-defying acts, and chariots made the day the circus came to town a major event in small town life.

When Dwight Eisenhower was growing up in Abilene, Kansas, the greater part of the ordinary person’s day was spent working. Life was no different for the Eisenhowers. As soon as her sons were able to help, Ida devised a weekly schedule of rotating chores. That way, each boy learned every job in the busy household. Because there were no Eisenhower daughters, even what were traditionally “girls” chores such as cooking and sewing were mastered by the six sons. After school and in the summers, Dwight and his brothers worked at a variety of jobs including farm and factory work. With his earnings he bought treats and athletic equipment and took dates to the “picture show” at the Seeyle Theater.

After high school graduation, Dwight began working fulltime at the Belle Springs Creamery. He and his brother Edgar devised a plan to put each other through college. Dwight would remain in Abilene to work and pay for his brother’s education. After a couple of years, Ed would drop out to work for a time so Dwight could attend college. Dwight’s appointment to West Point changed all that.

Like young people today, Dwight enjoyed himself when he had the time. He thrilled at pistol-shooting contests down at Mud Creek by men who actually knew Wild Bill Hickok. Now and then, they allowed him to practice. Baseball and football were his passion, and he enjoyed boxing and working out in a make-shift gym at the back of a print shop downtown. He and his friends swam and skated at nearby Mud Creek. With Bob Davis, as guide and teacher, Dwight fished, flat-boat paddled, camped, and learned how to win at poker on the Smoky Hill River. W.C. Parker’s Amusement Company was only a few blocks from his home, but the people and activity of downtown Abilene were often entertainment enough for a small-town boy growing up at the turn of the century.

Recommended Reading from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 73-75, 68-71, 83-86, 88-92, 94-95, 97-98, 102-104.

“Athletics” by Dwight D. Eisenhower

1909 AHS Yearbook, *The Helianthus*

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library



Athletics

By Dwight Eisenhower



EARLY in the fall of 1908, the High School boys organized an Athletic Association for the year. After electing Dwight Eisenhower president, Harry Makins vice-president and Herbert Sommers secretary and treasurer, we proceeded to do business.

Deciding not to play any base ball in the fall, we started on football at once. Bruce Hurd was elected captain, and soon a large number of candidates for the squad were out working. After two weeks of hard work, Captain Hurd decided on the following team:

- Left end..... Huffman
- Left tackle..... Ingersoll
- Left guard..... Pattin
- Center..... Funk
- Right guard..... Weckle
- Right tackle..... Hurd
- Right end..... D. Eisenhower
- Quarter..... Merrifield
- Left half..... Makins
- Right half..... Sommers
- Full back..... E. Eisenhower

We were deprived of our coach, but nevertheless, turned out a very creditable team. Unfortunately, however, only four games were played during the season, not giving the team a chance to prove its ability. But for the games that were played, the students supported the team loyally, and time and again the boys surmounted great difficulties, cheered on by the fierce enthusiasm displayed by our rooters.

After the football season closed, we had to spend the winter dreaming of past victories and future glories, for A. H. S. boasts of no indoor gymnasium, and basket ball was never played here. But we improved the condition of the Association itself, by drawing up a constitution, which makes the organization a permanent one, and each year it will be simply a question of electing new officers.

Thanking the citizens of the town who have taken such an interest in the High School Athletics, and also our fellow classmates for their loyalty to us, we are yours for future victories on the gridiron by teams of dear old A. H. S.

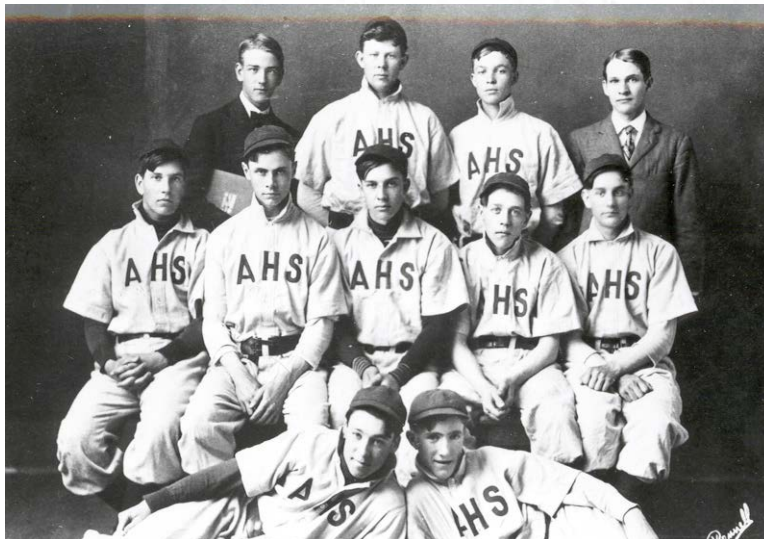
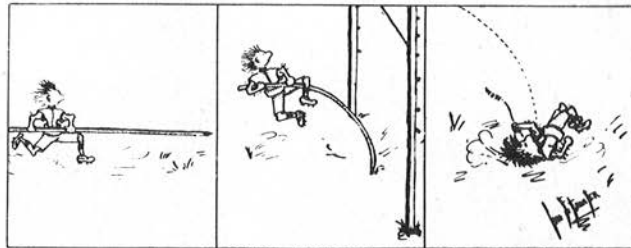
FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Abilene vs. Junction City at Junction City.

Abilene vs. Junction City at Abilene.

Abilene vs. Chapman at Abilene.

Abilene vs. Agricultural College at Abilene.



1908 Abilene H.S. Baseball Team, DDE in back row, 2nd from right.

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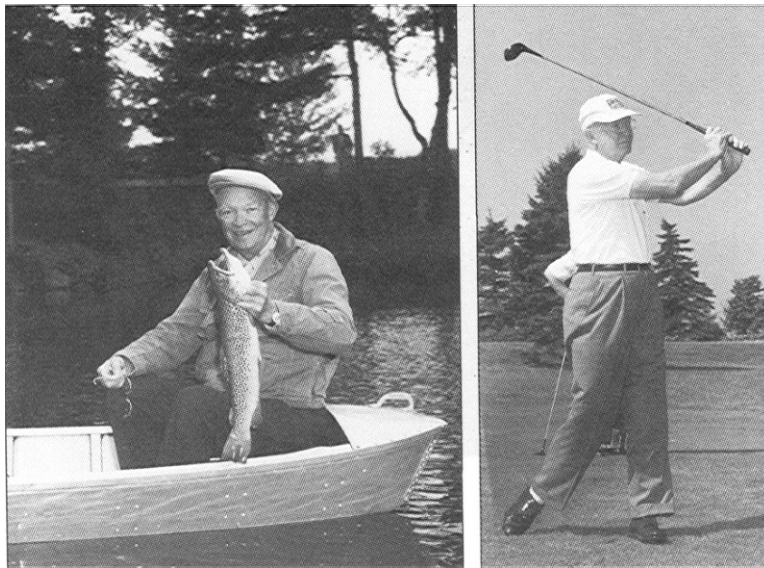
OUTDOOR LIFE AND FAVORITE PASTIMES

One of Ike's heroes was Bob Davis, a fifty-year-old fisherman, hunter, guide, and poker player. Bob could not read or write but he knew all sorts of fascinating things. Since he had no children of his own, Bob took to Ike, liked to have him around, and taught him all he could—how to hunt ducks, to set a fishnet, to trap muskrats and mink, and to survive alone and unaided in the woods.

Bob gave Ike the individual attention that his father could not give him because of David's long working hours. Ida (Ike's mother) admired Bob Davis and didn't object when Ike spent his weekends at Davis's camp on the Smoky Hill River. Bob taught Ike poker percentages—he would crack Ike's knuckles when the boy went against the percentages by drawing to a four-card straight against an opponent who held openers in five-card draw, jacks or better to open. So thoroughly did Ike learn his lessons that he consistently won in poker until he was forty years old, quitting the game then only because it was embarrassing to take money from his fellow officers and friends.

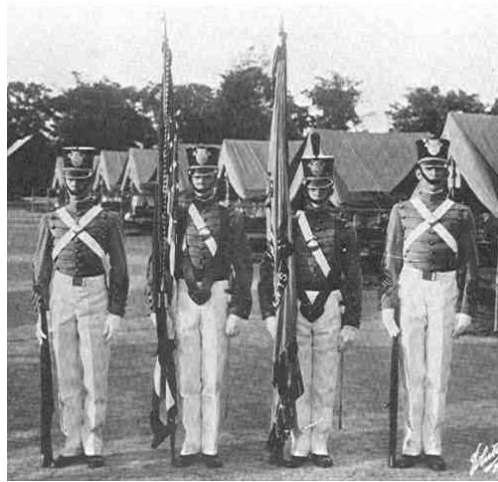
The Smoky Hill River, a couple of miles south of Abilene, was the scene of many of Ike's activities. He hunted along its banks, fished in its waters, and organized a number of camping expeditions there. His high-school friends begged him to do the cooking because, thanks to Ida's teaching, he was the only one who knew how to do more than boil an egg. Ike agreed to cook if the others would do all the cleaning up afterward.

Adapted from: "Ike: Abilene to Berlin" by Stephen E. Ambrose, Harper & Row, NY 1973.



Golfing and fishing were two of President Eisenhower's favorite pastimes.

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Eisenhower as a West Point Cadet

AT THE POINT

At West Point, many first year students (called plebes) were routinely harassed by upper classmen. Many could not stand the humiliation or refused to accept the restraints on their personal freedom. They either left in disgust, or the system broke them and they were forced to go. Ike stayed. He didn't particularly like the hazing, but he was older than his fellow plebes and in much better physical condition, so all the double-timing and extra work didn't bother him. His ego was secure enough to allow him to laugh at the insults—at least to himself. Moreover, he could see the point to the hazing—he realized it was part of a system designed to make him into a soldier, and he accepted it.

Ike was proud to be a cadet. At the end of his first day at the Point, all the plebes gathered to take the oath of allegiance. As he raised his right hand to repeat the oath, he was swept by the feeling that the words “United States of America” would have a new meaning for him; from that moment on it would be the nation he would serve, not himself. “Across half a century,” he wrote in his memoirs, “I can look back and see a rawboned, gawky Kansas boy from the farm country, earnestly repeating the words that would make him a cadet.”¹

Ike recalled a particular incident:

There's probably no individual in the world more serenely arrogant than the cadet who has just left the ranks of Plebes to become a lordly “Yearling.” For a long year, he has been dirt under the feet of every upperclassman. With the year completed, he now joins the upperclassmen and has the right to inflict on the incoming Plebes the same kind of verbal abuse that he has so much resented in the twelve months just passed. Every Yearling feels it is his bounden duty to make certain that the new class is properly instructed. There is little communication between the Plebe and the upperclassman except in official, traditional language. The Plebe is constantly addressed as Mr. Ducrot, Mr. Dumgard, or, once in a while, Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones if it becomes imperative to use the man's name.

Like other Yearlings, I did my part to see that the Plebes appreciated the superior quality of upperclassmen—particularly of corporals, which lofty position I now held. In order to deflate the already downtrodden and lonely Plebes there were a number of standard questions which, voiced as roughly as possible, were intended to crush him even more deeply into the mire of inferiority. One was, “Mister, what’s your P.C.S.?” (Translation: “Previous Condition of Servitude” or, in clearer language, “What did you do before you came to West Point?”)

I ran into a Plebe from my own state. Or, to be more precise, this young fellow, running down the street to carry out the orders he had received from a cadet officer, ran into me. He was knocked down. I reacted with a bellow of astonishment and mock indignation. Noting that he looked rather defeated, I demanded, with all the sarcasm and scorn I could muster in my voice, “Mr. Dumgard, what is your P.C.S.?” And added, “You look like a barber.”

He stood up, and said softly, “I was a barber, Sir.”

I didn’t have enough sense to apologize to him on the spot and make a joke of the whole thing. I just turned my head and went to my tent where my roommate, P. A. Hodgson, was sitting. I looked at him and said, “P.A., I’m never going to crawl another Plebe as long as I live. As a matter of fact, they’ll have to run over and knock me out of the company street before I’ll make any attempt again. I’ve just done something that was stupid and unforgivable. I managed to make a man ashamed of the work he did to earn a living.”

And never again, during the remaining three years at the U.S.M.A., did I take it upon myself to crawl (correct harshly) a Plebe.”²

¹ Adapted from *Ike: Abilene to Berlin*, by Stephen Ambrose, Harper & Row, NY, 1973.

² *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, by Dwight D. Eisenhower, Doubleday & Co., NY, 1967.

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IKE'S FIRST COMMAND CAMP COLT – GETTYSBURG

The United States entered World War I against Germany in 1917. Young Eisenhower desperately wanted to lead troops in battle. Instead, Captain Eisenhower was assigned to command a tank-training unit to be based in Gettysburg, PA, the scene of the great Civil War battle. Although he was disappointed to be missing the action of the war, he knew his assignment was important and he pursued his duties vigorously. The following story takes place in the fall of 1918 and is in Ike's own words.



Camp Colt, Gettysburg 1918

“The only group of drafted men that we received came sometime in September from another camp. They reached Camp Colt late one evening. Many of the men were feeling headachy but the doctors discovered that just before they boarded a train for Gettysburg, they had received typhoid fever shots. Because people normally experience some reaction to these shots, the sick men were sent by the doctors to our “replacement company” for the night. They would quickly throw off their aches and pains.

The next morning, alarming reports started to reach me. Some of the new men, I was told, were registering high fevers and were obviously very ill. Before noon, “Spanish flu” was recognized. Because the men had not been confined to quarters and some of them were obviously carriers, the whole camp had to be considered as exposed.

We put up every kind of tent with makeshift bedding and any man with the slightest symptom was isolated from the others—if only by putting canvas partitions between beds. No more than four men were allowed in any tent; three wherever we had room. Each who had been directly exposed to the disease was, wherever possible, put into a tent by himself.

By the second day, some of the men had died. The week was a nightmare and the toll was heavy. The little town of Gettysburg had no facilities to take care of the dead—which were to number 175. There were no coffins. We had no place to put the bodies except in a storage tent until they could gradually be taken care of more suitably.

Churches were taken over for hospital use as the numbers of sick mounted rapidly. The whole camp was on edge. No one knew who was going to be stricken, and death came suddenly. Near my office I saw a man unloading a truck. I had seen him several times before and was struck by his fine appearance. This time I remarked on his healthy condition. The following evening, the doctor came in and said: “That man you thought looked so well yesterday morning is dead this evening.”

During this period I had my family with me and I was desperately worried. Even my wife or young son could contract the terrible disease. A doctor from Oklahoma, Lieutenant Colonel Scott, told me he would like to experiment with my family and headquarters staff.

Each morning he would use two sprays on the throat and nostrils of each of us. One of them was intensely pungent and strong and made me feel like the top of my head was going off. The other was a soothing syrup to follow the first. The doctor insisted on continuing this treatment on every member of my family and headquarters staff. We were fortunate. Not a single person in my headquarters command or my family contracted the flu. Lieutenant Colonel Scott is another of those men to whom I will always feel obligated.

The losses were heavy but because of the strict measures taken by the camp surgeon the flu experience was not as bad as in other camps. One week after our first death, the last one occurred and the epidemic was under control.”

Adapted from: *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* by Dwight David Eisenhower, Doubleday & Co., NY, 1967.

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General Eisenhower visiting with the 101st Airborne prior to the D-Day Invasion June 5, 1944.

THE D-DAY DECISION

The year was 1944. The Allies had successfully attacked the Germans in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. The time had come to make final plans for the Allied armies to push across the English Channel. Their mission: to crush the remaining armies of Germany and bring an end to World War II in Europe.

From his headquarters in England, Eisenhower, as the Supreme Commander of the Allied armies, directed the invasion of Europe. Code-named Operation Overlord, it was set for June 6. The invasion involved thousands of men and tons of equipment and supplies.

On the evening of June 5th the wind blew and the rain pelted against the windows at headquarters. Officers lounged in easy chairs and stared at the big map on the wall. Would they be going tomorrow? Would they follow the lines that curved and twisted on the map, showing the invasion? Coffee was served and conversation moved from subject to subject. At 9:30 p.m., meteorologist Captain Stagg came in with the latest weather report. “Good news! We’re getting a break! The weather will clear!” Excitement exploded through the building. The officers could hardly stop cheering. Stagg said the rain would let up in about three hours, and there would be 36 hours of clear weather. But 36 hours was not very long. Could the troops make it across the Channel? Could they fight their way up from the beaches and drive far enough inland before another storm hit? What if the bombers were grounded? The invasion would be risky. The responsibility weighed heavily on Eisenhower.

General Eisenhower took a poll of his advisers. Air Chief Marshal Tedder thought the air forces would not be able to do their job in heavily overcast skies. “Chancy” was the word he used. Eisenhower turned to Montgomery, the commander of all the ground forces. “Do you see any reason for going Tuesday?” Eisenhower asked. “I say—GO!” Montgomery answered.

Eisenhower turned and paced some more. Finally, he stopped walking, looked around at his commanders, and said, “The question is, just how long can you hang this operation on the end of a limb and let it hang there?”

A supreme commander can ask for advice, as Eisenhower had done, but it is he alone who makes the decision. Eisenhower gave the order “OK. Let’s go.”

It seemed impossible that the rain would stop, but early the next morning it did.¹

After the planes carrying the paratroopers roared off for France, Eisenhower wrote out a press release to be used if necessary: “Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air, and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.”²

Fortunately the invasion was a success and Eisenhower never had to issue his message.

¹ Adapted from *A Man Called Ike*, by Jean Darby, Lerner Publications Co. Minneapolis, MN, 1989.

² Adapted from *Ike, Abilene to Berlin*, by Stephen E. Ambrose, Harper & Row, NY, 1973.

Teacher Reference for D-Day Reading



Map printed from the web site of Indiana State University in Terre Haute, IN

Teacher Reference for D-Day Reading

AXIS POWERS

Bulgaria	Hungary	Japan
Finland	Italy	Romania
Germany		

ALLIES

Australia	France	Norway
Belgium	Great Britain	Poland
Canada	Greece	South Africa
China	India	Soviet Union
Czechoslovakia	Netherlands	United States
Denmark	New Zealand	Yugoslavia
Ethiopia		

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Toward the Presidency

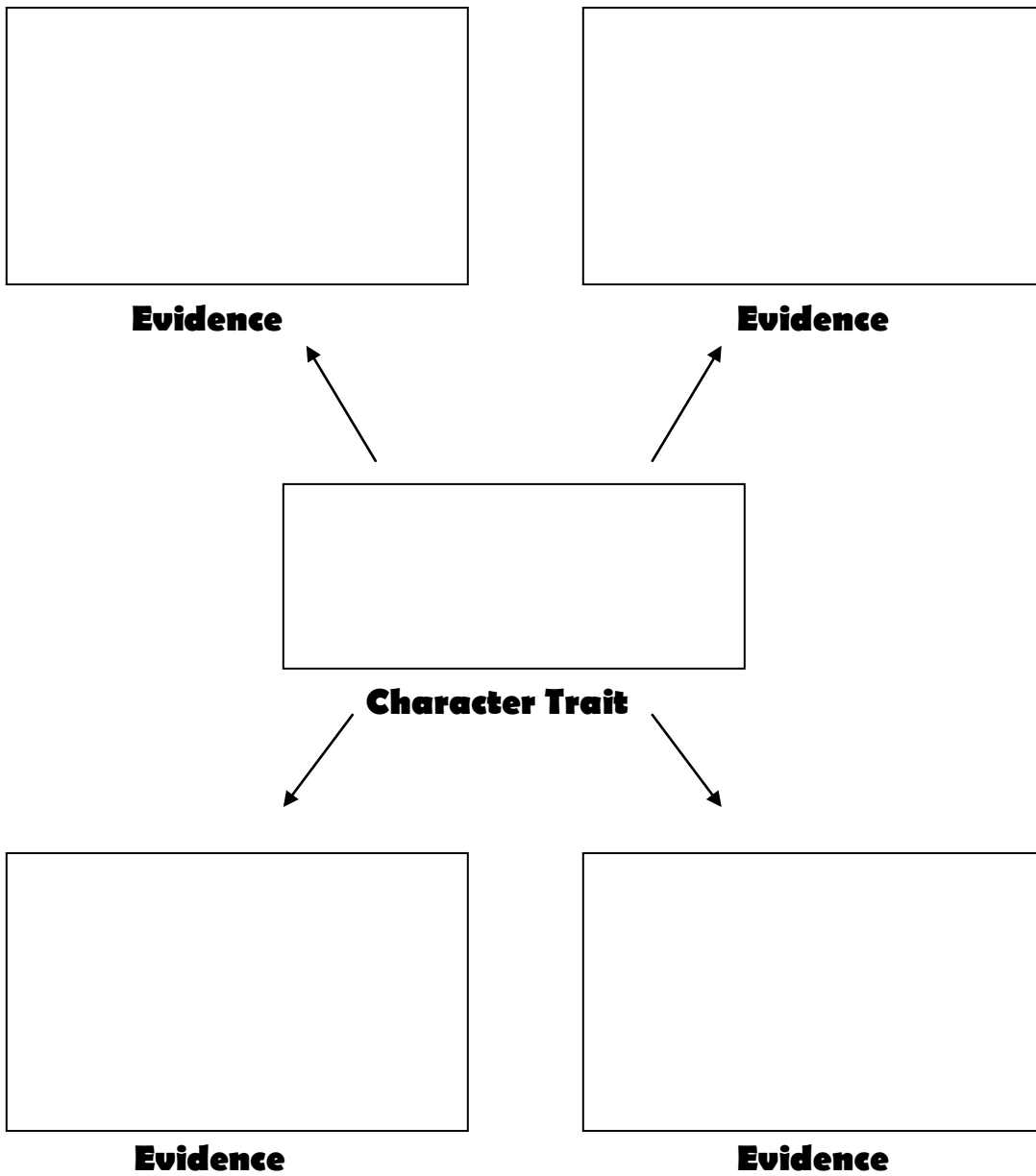
Ike retired from the army on October 14, 1947 and accepted the presidency of Columbia University in New York City. However, in 1950 war broke out in Korea and heads of government on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean were saying, "We want Eisenhower to command NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)." President Truman asked Eisenhower to accept the position.

Ike was pleased. "I am a soldier," he said, "and am ready to respond to whatever orders my superiors...may care to issue to me." It was an ideal appointment for Ike. He was happy to take a leave of absence from Columbia. Eisenhower told his son John, "I consider this to be the most important military job in the world." NATO headquarters were in Paris, so Ike and Mamie moved there.

While Ike served as commander of NATO, his friends were telling him that he was the "only man" who could lead the United States. "You must be president," they said. Ike was slowly beginning to agree with them when Jacqueline Cochran, a famous aviator, flew to Paris. She brought with her a two-hour film of an Eisenhower rally that 15,000 people had attended. The film showed the crowd waving "I Like Ike" banners while chanting "We want Ike!"

The film moved Mamie and Ike. After it was over, Cochran raised her glass to Eisenhower and blurted, "To the president!" Feelings of love, patriotism, and duty moved within Ike. The Kansas farm boy, the general, and the supreme commander all lived within this man. With tears in his eyes, he said the words that thousands of Americans had been waiting to hear: "I'm going to run."

Adapted from *A Man Called Ike* by Jean Darby, Lerner Publications Co. Minneapolis, MN 1989.



Name:

Date:

Group:

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Reading 1	Work and Play Character traits:	Responsibility, Respect, and Caring
Reading 2	Athletics Character traits:	Responsibility helps build a good leader Loyalty could also be discussed
Reading 3	Outdoor Life Character traits:	Respect for elders and the fellow officers and friends Caring for the environment
Reading 4	At The Point Character traits:	Citizenship, Respect for country and other people Caring about the feelings of others
Reading 5	Camp Colt Character traits:	Caring about his men and family Responsibility for his first command Trustworthy to have his own command
Reading 6	D-Day Character traits:	Responsible for preparations Accountable for the mission Trustworthy for gaining the trust of the allies Respectful for winning the respect of his men and superiors Caring for the welfare of his men Citizenship for doing his duty as he saw fit and following the orders of his superiors
Reading 7	Toward the Presidency Character traits:	Citizenship and Responsibility for accepting the command of NATO and running for the presidency Accountable to the people of the United States