

Finding Theme

The search for meaning...



What is Theme?

- **Theme:** The lesson, meaning, moral, or message about life or human nature that is communicated by a literary work, movie, etc.
- In other words...
 - **Theme** is what the story teaches readers.

Finding Themes

- A theme is not a word, it is a sentence (or more).
- Analyze the conflict, events, or characters to help you identify the theme.
- Examples:
 - Money can't buy happiness.
 - Don't judge people based on the surface.
 - It is better to die free than live in slavery.

Identifying Themes

- **Themes** are not explicit (clearly stated).
- **Themes** are implied.
- **Themes** are bigger than the story.
- **Themes** are about the “big picture.”
- **Themes** do not apply to the small world within the story alone; they apply to the “real” world.

The Process

Step 1: Create a list of single words that relate to the literary work.

- Ex: love, friendship, family, betrayal, revenge, sacrifice, trust, hope, courage

Step 2: Select *ONE* topic from your list.

Step 3: Start with “The author believes that...”

- Construct a sentence about the message the author is sending readers specifically about that particular topic.
 - Ex: The author believes that people are willing to make great sacrifices for those they truly love.

Step 4: Take out “The author believes that...”

- What you are left with is your theme!
 - “People are willing to make great sacrifices for those they truly love.”

Example: Finding Nemo

- Step 1: Topic List
 - Family, trust, friendship, obedience, maturity, security, love, danger
- Step 2: Select one topic.
 - TRUST
- Step 3: “The author believes that...”
 - The author believes that in order to form successful relationships, people need to learn to trust themselves and others.
- Step 4: Take out “The author believes that...”
 - In order to form successful relationships, people need to learn to trust themselves and others.

Review

- Theme is what we can learn from a story.
- Themes must be inferred.
- Themes are about the BIG world/BIG picture.
- Do not be too specific.
 - “Marlin needs to trust Nemo.”
- Do not be too vague.
 - “Family is important.”
 - “Racism is bad.”
- Follow the steps!





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Pair Practice

- With a partner, determine a theme for the Disney Short
- Follow the Theme Steps!
 - Step 1: Topic List
 - Step 2: Select one topic.
 - Step 3: “The author believes that...”
 - Step 4: Take out “The author believes that...”
- One person should document your process on a sheet of paper.

Independent Practice

- Watch a Disney Short on YouTube and determine a theme.
 - Search “Disney Pixar Short Film”
- Follow the Theme Steps!
 - Step 1: Topic List
 - Step 2: Select one topic.
 - Step 3: “The author believes that...”
 - Step 4: Take out “The author believes that...”
- Add the following to your Flipbook:
 - The title of the short film
 - A brief summary of the film
 - Your steps and the theme