

SEARCHING FOR A THEME

Name _____

Book Title _____

Characters

Setting

Problem

Summary: You can use somebody-wanted-but-so-then for a quick summary recap.

**A lesson learned by a character
(review characters, problem, and
summary)**

**THE MESSAGE you can take
from the story?**

Name

Date

Period

Themes

Directions: Find three quotes to illustrate each of the themes.

The graphic organizer consists of two identical vertical structures. At the top of each structure is a small rectangular box labeled "Theme". From the bottom of this box, three lines extend downwards and outwards to three large, rounded rectangular boxes, intended for students to write three quotes that illustrate the theme. Below these three boxes is a larger rectangular box labeled "Book Title". From the bottom center of the "Book Title" box, a line extends downwards to another small rectangular box labeled "Theme". From the bottom of this second "Theme" box, three lines extend downwards and outwards to three more large, rounded rectangular boxes, intended for students to write three more quotes that illustrate the theme.

Theme List

Directions: Listed below are common topics for themes. Remember as many as you can for you will need to look for them in the stories we will read.

Courage

Violence

Faith

Unhappiness

Family

War

Friendship

Death

Growing Up

Patriotism

Hope

Love

Prejudice

Identity

Success

Independence

Trust

Loyalty

Truth

Name: _____

Date: _____

Theme Worksheet

A theme is the central message that the author wishes to convey through a literary work. Example themes include; courage, hope, making wise choices, working hard etc...

Directions: After reading the story, write what you think is the theme or central message on the lines provided.

Theme-

Directions: Fill in each box to analyze how the theme is developed over the course of the text.

Beginning: What happens that contributes to the theme.

Middle: What happens that contributes to the theme.

End: What happens that contributes to the theme.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Theme Worksheet (Identifying and Evidence)

A theme is the central message that the author wishes to convey through a literary work. Example themes include; courage, hope, loyalty, working hard, respect etc...

Directions: After reading the story, write what you think is the theme or central message on the lines provided.

Theme-

Directions: Fill in each box below. Write three citations or lines from the story that back up and support your chosen theme.

Citation # 1

pg# _____

“

Citation # 2

pg# _____

“

Citation # 3

pg# _____

“

Name: _____

Date: _____

Theme Worksheet (Matching Part 1)

A theme is the central message of a story that the author wishes to convey to the reader.

Directions: Draw a line to match the theme to its message.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| A. Courage | 1. Stand by your friend in good and bad times. |
| B. Hope | 2. Don't give up. |
| C. Friendship | 3. The opposite of violence. |
| D. Peace | 4. Remember those in your life. |
| E. Loyalty | 5. Face your fears and don't be afraid. |
| F. Perseverance | 6. Believe in something. |
| G. Dedication | 7. Share your common interests and passions. |
| H. Honor | 8. Stand up for someone or something. |
| I. Remembrance | 9. Pay respect to someone or something. |

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Directions: Fill in each box below. Write three citations or lines from the story that back up and support your chosen theme.

Citation # 1

pg# _____

“

Citation # 2

pg# _____

“

Citation # 3

pg# _____

“

Name: _____

Date: _____

Common Themes Worksheet

A theme is the central message the author wishes to convey in a literary work.

Directions: Read each common theme below. Write a literary work you have read that contains that theme. If you have not read a story for that theme, leave it blank.

1. People can work together to solve problems.

2. When we are united, we can overcome obstacles.

3. Everyone should be respectful towards others.

4. Everyone deserves equal rights.

5. Do not give up on humanity.

6. Friendships can last forever.

7. Don't be a quitter.

8. Respecting others is important so others will respect you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Citations that back up Theme Worksheet

A theme is the central message of a story that the author wishes to convey to the reader.

Directions: Write the theme of the text.

Theme: _____

Directions: Write two citations or lines from the text that support your theme.

“

“

Name: _____

Date: _____

Citations that back up Theme Worksheet

A theme is the central message of a story that the author wishes to convey to the reader.

Directions: Write the theme of the text.

Theme: _____

Directions: Write two citations or lines from the text that support your theme.

“

“

Name: _____

Date: _____

Recurring Theme Worksheet

A theme is the central message that the author wishes to convey through a literary work. A **recurring theme** is a message about life that occurs in more than one literary work. Example themes and recurring themes include; courage, hope, making wise choices, working hard etc...

Directions: Write the recurring theme of the texts in the box below.

Recurring Theme:

Text 1 _____

Text 2 _____

Citation / line that backs up recurring theme.

Citation / line that backs up recurring theme.

Explanation of citation's relation to recurring theme.

Explanation of citation's relation to recurring theme.

Universal Theme:



Title: *Explain how the title might indicate or emphasize some important aspect of the universal theme*

Character: *List the protagonist's lessons learned, struggles, motivations, and anything else that seems to set him/her apart from the rest*

Plot: *List significant events and conflict that occur. Explain how conflicts are dealt with or resolved*

Point of View: *List the narrator's comments about other characters and lessons learned. Explain how the narrator is involved with significant events and conflicts*

Symbols, Allusions, & Patterns: *List any symbols, etc. that relate to the universal theme*



Theme Statement:

Identifying Themes in Literature

Modern Literature

Carothers/Hanson

Goal

Once you have a universal theme in mind, you must narrow it down to a theme statement. This statement represents the **idea the writer wishes to convey about the subject—the writer's view of the world or observation about human nature**

Investigate

Brainstorm aspects of the story that seem to relate to your universal theme. Look at the following areas: title, character, plot, point of view, symbols, allusions, and patterns.

Compose

Write one or more generalized, declarative sentences that state what was learned and how it was learned.

Test

- Is the theme supported by evidence from the work itself?
- Are all the author's choices of plot, character, conflict, and tone controlled by this theme?

Possible universal themes to get you started

- abuse of power
- action vs apathy
- beating the odds
- beauty
- coming of age
- corruption
- courage
- effects of the past
- faith
- fall from grace
- family
- fate
- fear
- fear of failure
- freedom
- friendship
- greed
- hate
- heritage
- heroes
- honesty
- innocence
- justice
- love
- loyalty
- manipulation
- mothering
- nature
- need for change
- obligation
- parent-child relationships
- peace
- peer pressure
- perseverance
- Power of the mind vs authority
- prejudice
- price of progress
- pride
- quest for knowledge
- religion
- revenge
- secrecy
- security/safety
- seizing the moment
- survival
- the overlooked
- the road not taken
- war
- winners and losers

Name: _____

Identifying Theme

Directions: Determine what the theme is for each story and explain your answer. Remember, a theme is a lesson or message in the story. **Write in complete sentences.**

1. Katie Clean invited Messy Missy to her house to work on their biology project, but Katie Clean had no idea what a visit from Messy Missy entailed. First of all, it was raining and Messy Missy neither bothered to take her boots off nor thoroughly wiped them on the doormat. Then Messy Missy ate a bag of hot chips on Katie Clean's white bedspread without asking, and Messy Missy is a sloppy eater, so hot chip powder got all over the bedspread. Katie Clean tried to be polite and ignore Messy Missy's sloppy behavior, but then Messy Missy threw her chip wrapper on the floor. Offended, Katie Clean pretended that she was sick and asked Messy Missy to leave. The next day Katie Clean asked the teacher if she could work by herself. After explaining her situation, the teacher allowed Katie to work alone. Messy Missy would have finished the assignment by herself, but she spilled grape soda all over her assignment.

What is the theme of the story? _____

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this? _____

2. Money Mark was born rich. He never had to work a day in his life and he got everything handed to him on a silver platter. When he was six, Money Mark wanted to go to a basketball game. His father paid the starting five of the Bulls and Celtics to play a private game of Nerf-ball in Money Mark's bedroom. When Money Mark turned thirteen, he wanted to start a band. His father hired the Rolling Stones to play with him every Saturday at the family's private concert hall, though his family was never there. By the time he was twenty-one, Money Mark was bored with life. He was surrounded by a bunch of possessions that he didn't appreciate and Money Mark could find nothing new or exciting in his life. Despite his vast wealth, Money Mark never found happiness. Penny Petal was born poor. Her family hardly had anything to eat, but they loved each other. Penny Petal appreciated every thing she got. When she was six, her father walked her around the United Center before the Bulls played the Celtics. She was excited by the crazy fans and feeling in the air. She looked forward to the day that she could see a real game. When she was thirteen, she learned to play the buckets. She was an extremely talented musician, a natural percussionist, and everyone on the block loved the rhythms that poured from her palms. By the time she was twenty-one, Penny was a successful businesswoman. Now she had everything that she had ever dreamed of and she truly loved to share her wealth and happiness with her family who supported her through all of the hard times.

What is the theme of the story? _____

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this? _____

3. Tammy and Sammy were both students in Mr. Morton's reading class. Mr. Morton wasn't too strict about deadlines, and Sammy took advantage of that. He did all of his homework in his other classes but never bothered to complete Mr. Morton's reading assignments, figuring that he could complete them later. Tammy, on the other hand, completed each assignment Mr. Morton assigned the night that he assigned it. She had to stay up a little later, but she didn't want to get a penalty for turning in her reading work late. Tammy knew reading was a core subject and that she had to keep "C" average for the entire year or she would have to go to summer school. When the end of the quarter came, Tammy and Sammy had both planned on going to the Enchanted Castle amusement park, but Mr. Morton called Sammy's mother, and she grounded Sammy until he turned in all of his work. That weekend was horrible for Sammy. He stayed up until 2:00 AM each night and still couldn't complete all of the assignments. The whole while, Tammy had a great time eating pizza at Enchanted Castle, watching movies late at night, and enjoying her weekend free of stress and pressure. At the end of the quarter, Sammy was lucky to squeak by with a "C" minus in reading while Tammy earned an "A." Sammy still hasn't learned his lesson and probably won't complete this activity either.

What is the theme of the story? _____

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this? _____

4. Mr. Pig and Mr. Dog were hanging out at the food court of the animal shopping mall. Mr. Pig was eating a huge feast of pizza and drinking a large jug of fruit punch and Mr. Dog was watching him eat. "Hey, Mr. Pig. If you give me a slice of your pizza, I'll let you have the next bone I find." Mr. Pig declined, even though it hurt his stomach to eat the last three slices of pizza. "I'm sorry, Mr. Dog," Mr. Pig said, "but I paid for this pizza and it's all mine." Mr. Dog sighed and waited for Mr. Pig to finish, and then they left the animal mall together. On the way out, a hunter spotted them and gave chase. Mr. Pig normally could have escaped the hunter but since he was weighed down by such a large meal, Mr. Pig collapsed and the hunter killed him. Mr. Dog easily escaped. Later that night while returning to the scene, Mr. Dog caught the scent of something delicious and began digging around a trash can. He found a large ham bone with lots of meat and marrow still stuck to the bone. Mr. Dog happily ate.

What is the theme of the story? _____

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this? _____

5. In his sophomore year of high school, Michael Jordan tried out for the varsity basketball team at Laney High School in Wilmington, North Carolina. But at five feet and eleven inches tall, the coach believed that Jordan was too short to play at that level, so Jordan was cut from the team. Jordan didn't let this obstacle defeat him. In fact, it pushed him to work even harder. He trained vigorously and grew another four inches the following summer. When he finally made the varsity squad, Jordan averaged 25 points a game and went on to become one of the greatest basketball players in history.

What is the theme of the story? _____

What happens in the story that leads you to believe this? _____

Understanding Theme with Fables

In Aesop's fables, the moral of the story (theme) is written in the last line. In the following fables, the last line or theme has been removed. I have also made some slight changes to the originals.

Directions: Determine the moral or theme of these fables and explain your interpretations.

1. The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest. "Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?" "I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same." "Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew.

What did the Grasshopper learn? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

2. The Monkey and the Cookies

A monkey put his hand into a jar of cookies. He grasped as many as he could possibly hold, but when he tried to pull out his hand, he was prevented from doing so by the neck of the cookie jar. Unwilling to lose the cookies, and yet unable to withdraw his hand, he burst into tears and bitterly lamented his disappointment.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

3. The Bundle of Sticks

An old monkey on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered them to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the sticks. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the bundle," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.

What was the father's meaning? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

4. The Dogs and the Hides

Some dogs famished with hunger saw a number of cowhides steeping in a river. Not being able to reach them, they agreed to drink up the river, but it happened that they burst themselves with drinking long before they reached the hides.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

5. The Monkey and the Snake

One winter a Monkey found a Snake stiff and frozen with cold. He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom. The Snake was quickly revived by the warmth, and resuming its natural instincts, bit the monkey, inflicting on him a mortal wound.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

6. The Fir-Tree and the Bramble

A FIR-TREE said boastfully to the Bramble, "You are useful for nothing at all; while I am everywhere used for roofs and houses." The Bramble answered: "You poor creatures, if you would only call to mind the axes and saws which are about to hew you down, you would have reason to wish that you had grown up a Bramble, not a Fir-Tree."

What lesson does the Bramble teach the Fir-Tree? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

7. The Flies and the Honey-Pot

A number of flies were attracted to a jar of honey which had been overturned in a housekeeper's room, and placing their feet in it, ate greedily. Their feet, however, became so smeared with the honey that they could not use their wings, nor release themselves, and were suffocated.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

8. The Fox and the Cat

A Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies. "I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies." "I have only one," said the Cat; "but I can generally manage with that." Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the boughs. "This is my plan," said the Cat. "What are you going to do?" The Fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the Fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

9. The Fox and the Crow

A Crow, having stolen a bit of meat, perched in a tree and held it in her beak. A Fox, seeing this, longed to possess the meat himself, and by a wily stratagem succeeded. "How handsome is the Crow," he exclaimed, in the beauty of her shape and in the fairness of her complexion! Oh, if her voice were only equal to her beauty, she would deservedly be considered the Queen of Birds!" This he said deceitfully; but the Crow, anxious to refute the reflection cast upon her voice, set up a loud caw and dropped the flesh. The Fox quickly picked it up, and thus addressed the Crow: "My good Crow, your voice is right enough, but your wit is wanting."

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

10. The Goose with the Golden Eggs

One day a monkey went to the nest of his Goose and found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But, on second thought, he took it home and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

11. The Fox and the Crane

At one time the Fox and the Stork were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends. So the Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox could easily lap up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began. "I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not to your liking." The Crane, in his turn, asked the Fox to dine at his home the next night. When they were seated at table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the Fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

12. The Fox Who Had Lost His Tail

A Fox caught in a trap escaped, but in so doing lost his tail. Thereafter, feeling his life a burden from the shame and ridicule to which he was exposed, he schemed to convince all the other Foxes that being tailless was much more attractive, thus making up for his own deprivation. He assembled a good many Foxes and publicly advised them to cut off their tails, saying that they would not only look much better without them, but that they would get rid of the weight of the brush, which was a very great inconvenience. One of them interrupting him said, "If you had not yourself lost your tail, my friend, you would not give us such advice."

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____

13. The Hares and the Frogs

The Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts that they did not know where to go. As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run. One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a nearby lake, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear. But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares scuttled off, and jumped into the water. "Truly," said one of the Hares, "things are not so bad as they seem."

What is the moral of the story? _____

Explain how your answer relates to the story: _____