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Lesson 2 Theme

Introduction

What Will I Learn?

- What is the theme of a story?
- How do I determine the theme?

The theme is the big idea, the message the author wants to convey to readers.



Break Down the Skills

When you read, you need to figure out the **theme**, the big idea, lesson, or message the author wants you to understand. Usually, that message is about a **moral**, a common principle of right and wrong human behavior or how people should live.

These themes can be about family bonds, honesty, trust, forgiveness, courage, or other **virtues**. A virtue is a behavior that shows high moral standards.

For example, if you are reading a story about someone who overcame big problems by being brave, you might say the theme is that courage helps people get through difficult times.

The theme is different from a story's **topic**, or what the story is about. Themes are not **explicit**. In other words, they are not stated directly. The author **implies**, or suggests, the theme based on the characters' actions. You must **interpret**, or figure out, the theme based on the details.

A theme often has to do with a lesson a main character learns.



These tips can help you identify and understand the theme of a work.

- Identify the main character and the problem he or she faces.
- Follow the main character’s actions and how problems are solved.
- The character’s actions in the key details will give you hints of the theme.
- What does the character learn?
- Connect the problem or situation to your own life.

The theme of a story is different from a story’s topic.



Guided Instruction

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

The Dancing Cobbler

1 Long ago, in a faraway land, there was a tiny village in a deep forest. There lived a steadfast cobbler who had a good life in his trade, making and repairing shoes.

2 He worked in his vine-covered cottage from dawn to dusk. “Ah me,” he would sigh, “I fix all these shoes, but if only I had a pair of shoes with which I might go dancing from time to time.” He once said this to Zeke, who lived next door.

3 “Bah!” Zeke cried. “Dancing is foolishness. Stick to business, and don’t waste your day in idle dreaming!”

4 Still, the cobbler continued to hope. . . .

5 One day a gentlemanly stranger appeared on the cobbler’s doorstep. He was smiling.

6 “Greetings, my friend,” he said.

7 “Have we met?” the cobbler asked uncertainly. “I don’t recognize you.”



Guided Questions

What can you infer about the cobbler from paragraph 2?

What is the topic of this story?

What can you infer about Zeke from his actions?

- 8 "I was only a child at our first encounter," the man replied. "You once did me a great kindness."
- 9 "Were—were you the little boy who was lost in the forest?" he asked.
- 10 "Indeed I was. You saved my life, and as a gesture of my appreciation, I have a rare and marvelous gift for you." From his pack he took a perfectly black stone and held it out. "Rub this stone and make a wish. It will be granted." Before the surprised cobbler could thank him, he was gone.
- 11 "If only it were true," he thought. He rubbed the stone, and it glistened as if energized by magical forces. "Stone of darkness, stone of night, kindly make my future bright," he said, "Give me magic shoes that I might go dancing."
- 12 He waited. Nothing happened. "Hmph!" he said. He went out back and threw the stone into the pond. Then he got a surprise.
- 13 His feet began tapping, and his legs moved rhythmically, as if in time to music. He had dancing shoes on his feet. His arms flung wide, and he whirled across the yard into the town square. Around and around he danced. A crowd of curious spectators gathered around him.
- 14 At first he was happy, but now he couldn't stop. People began laughing at him.
- 15 "Don't make a fool of yourself!" said Zeke.
- 16 "Please help me," the cobbler pleaded. He told Zeke the whole doleful story.
- 17 Zeke said, "I'll go fetch the stone." So saying, he plunged into the pond where the cobbler had thrown it. Exhausted by now, the unhappy cobbler was desperate to have his plight alleviated. His face lit up hopefully as Zeke finally retrieved the stone and returned with it.
- 18 "Thank you, my friend!" he cried, seizing it eagerly. He rubbed it again, saying, "I wish I could stop dancing—NOW." Again the stone sparkled, and a moment later, he collapsed on the ground. He started to get up again.
- 19 "Rest now," Zeke said. "The spell is broken."

Guided Questions

What do the cobbler's actions in paragraph 14 tell you about him?

20 "I won't rest," he said, "until I do *this!*" Whereupon he took the stone to the well. He threw it down the dark shaft, gone forever. And from that time on, he never wished to go dancing again.

1 What do you think is the theme of this story?

2 Underline the character's action that led you to that theme.

Independent Practice

Read the selection. Then, answer the questions that follow.

The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

A fable by Aesop

- 1 A young boy took care of his master's sheep in a forest not far from the village. He thought this job was very dull. All he could do for fun was to talk to his dog or play music on his pipe.
- 2 One day as he sat watching the sheep in the quiet forest, he thought about what he would do if he saw a wolf. He came up with a plan to amuse himself.
- 3 His master had told him to call for help if a wolf attacked the flock of sheep, and the villagers would come running and drive the wolf away. Even though there was no wolf, the boy ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"
- 4 The villagers heard him and dropped their work and ran to the pasture. When they got there they saw no wolf, and the boy was laughing at the trick he had played on them.

What can you infer about the boy after he plays the trick and laughs at the villagers?



- 5 A few days later the boy again shouted, "Wolf! Wolf!" Again the villagers ran to help him, only to have the boy laugh at them again. Again, the boy had tricked the villagers.
- 6 One evening as the sun was setting and the shadows were creeping out over the pasture, a wolf really did spring up from hiding and attack the sheep.
- 7 The boy ran toward the village in terror, shouting, "Wolf! Wolf!" The villagers heard the cry, but they did not run to help him.
- 8 "He cannot fool us again," they said.
- 9 The wolf killed many of the sheep and then slipped away into the forest.

Examine the characters' actions in the details to understand a theme.



Practice 1

1 Which is the topic of this story?

- A A boy guards his sheep.
- B A boy has many good friends.
- C A shepherd boy is very trustworthy.
- D A boy who is bored starts to play tricks.

2 Which can you infer about the boy from this passage?

- A He is a good worker.
- B He does not like sheep.
- C He cannot be trusted.
- D He is afraid of foxes.

To make an inference, there must be some evidence in the text.



3 Which is an implicit statement?

- A "A young boy took care of his master's sheep."
- B "He came up with a plan to amuse himself."
- C "He thought this job was very dull."
- D "The boy ran toward the village in terror."

- 4 Summarizing the order of events can help you determine a theme. Number these events in the order in which they happened.

- The boy came up with a trick.
- The wolf killed the sheep.
- The villagers no longer ran to help the boy.
- A boy was bored with his job.
- He lied to the villagers twice.

- 5 Which is the definition of **theme**?

- A** a behavior that shows a high moral standard
- B** what the story is about
- C** the lesson or message in a story
- D** to figure out

Practice 2

- 1 What is the theme of this story?

This is the big idea, the message the author wants you to learn from this story.



2 Which detail supports the story's theme?

- A The boy thought his job was very dull.
 - B The boy played with his dog and his pipe for fun.
 - C The villagers dropped their work and ran to help the boy.
 - D The villagers did not run to help the boy.
-

3 Which can you infer is the reason the villagers did not go a third time to help?

- A They wanted to teach the boy a lesson and let him deal with the wolf himself.
 - B They did not trust the boy and thought he was lying again.
 - C They no longer cared about the boy.
 - D They did not hear the boy's cry for help.
-

4 Which is the definition of a story's topic?

- A a behavior that shows a high moral standard
 - B what the story is about
 - C the big idea or lesson in a story
 - D the number of characters
-

Remember that topic and theme are different.



5 How did the boy's actions help you determine the theme?

Exit Ticket

Now that you understand the difference between topic and theme, read this passage. Then underline the topic. Circle the theme.

One day a lion walked proudly through the forest. The animals gave him respect and made way for him to pass. But a donkey made a nasty comment as the lion passed.

For a second, the lion felt anger. When he turned his head though and saw who had spoken, he walked quietly on. The lion would not honor the fool with so much as even a stroke of his claw.

Do not pay attention to the remarks of a fool. Ignore them.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 2 Theme

At-a-Glance	
Learning Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand theme. • Identify the theme of a story. • Know the difference between theme and topic. 	Why Students May Struggle <p>Students struggle with identifying the theme of a story and often confuse it with the story's topic. It is difficult for them to understand that a theme is a universal truth.</p>
Academic Vocabulary <p>theme moral virtue topic explicit imply interpret</p>	Passage Information <p>The Dancing Cobbler Reading Level: 610–800L Word Count: 510</p> <p>The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf Reading Level: 610–800L Word Count: 264</p> <p>Exit Ticket Passage Reading Level: 410–600L Word Count: 83</p>

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Activate students' prior knowledge by discussing a well-known book or film, such as *Star Wars*. Brainstorm with them what the "big idea" of the story is. Get them to discuss such topics as good v. evil and how good always prevails over evil (e.g., the Force and the Dark Side and so on). Discuss such things as human nature; the Dark Side's aggression, anger, and hatred; leadership, commitment, learning through failure, and themes of navigating life—whether in a galaxy far, far away or right here on Earth.
- List on the board all of the themes the students come up with and ask them to give examples of those themes from the film or book. Ask them to also describe characters' actions, a key component to understanding theme. Ask students what the filmmaker wants viewers to take away—what message—from the films.


EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

- Before teaching theme, be sure students understand the difference between main idea, topic, and point of view. These are important for them to understand before they can discuss themes. Summarizing a story or a paragraph is also a good skill that will enable students to better extract themes.

Lesson 2 Theme

Introduction
 What Will I Learn?
 • What is the theme of a story?
 • How do I determine the theme?

The theme is the big idea, the message the author wants to convey to readers.



Break Down the Skills


When you read, you need to figure out the **theme**, the big idea, lesson, or message the author wants you to understand. Usually that message is about a **moral**, a common principle of right and wrong human behavior or how people should live.

Themes can be about family bonds, honesty, trust, forgiveness, courage, or other **virtues**. A virtue is a behavior that shows high moral standards.

For example, if you are reading a story about someone who overcame big problems by being brave, you might say the theme is that courage helps people get through difficult times.

The theme is different from a story's **topic** or what the story is about. Themes are **not explicit**. In other words, they are not stated directly. The author **implies**, or suggests, the theme based on the characters' actions. You must **interpret**, or figure out, the theme based on the details.

A theme often has to do with a lesson a main character learns.



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- After reading a section or chapter of a text, see if any themes emerge. Ask students guided questions such as, “What did we learn about the main character?” and “Can you connect with the main character’s actions?” Make a list of emerging themes on the board. Students can also make lists of universal themes on index cards or on anchor charts to reference. Some themes may include beauty in the eye of the beholder, falling from grace, family values, prejudice, perseverance, peer pressure, nature v. nurture, kindness, compassion, honesty, trust, and so on. While brainstorming, provide visuals to support student understanding.
- Explain to students that the theme is different from a main idea of a story. The theme is the lesson the author wants to impart—for readers to take away from a story. The Independent Practice of this lesson has a particularly good selection about honesty and the “boy who cried wolf” concept by Aesop. Tell students they can disagree with the author’s point of view, but they must understand the theme the author imparts.
- Explain to students that they can sometimes make inferences about themes and main ideas, but they must be based on solid evidence from the text. They need to examine the story elements and characters’ actions. Characters’ actions will often drive the themes.
- Explain that character traits and actions can reveal a story’s theme, such as in the story of the boy who cried wolf. Do not give this theme away, however, as it is the subject of the second independent reading in this lesson.
- Explain to students that *themes are not usually stated in the passage*. The author implies the themes, and students must interpret those themes. To help students better understand this, have students read a paragraph with a clear theme, or read aloud a short mentor text to them. Tell students the theme, using a Think Aloud to explain how you figured it out. Read the text a second time, showing them the theme was not stated anywhere in the text, and explain how you figured it out.
- Introduce a fable or folktale, and see if students can understand a given moral at the end. Ask them how it connects with their own lives. Being able to think about how a story connects to their own lives might be difficult for them. Provide direct instruction on the different connections and model it for them, but keep it engaging and interesting for struggling readers. Let students do Pair and Shares to discuss connections and exchange their own experiences, if they are willing.
- Explain that at times there might be more than one theme in a story and several correct answers. Theme can be subjective, so allow students to explore their own thoughts. Tell them you will accept any answers, as long as they can provide evidence for it in the text.

BREAK DOWN THE SKILLS


TEACH ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- Explain to students that when they read they must figure out the **theme**, the big idea, lesson, or message the author wants them to understand from a text. Tell them usually that message is about a **moral**, a common principle of right and wrong human behavior or how people should live.
- Explain that themes can be about family bonds, honesty, trust, forgiveness, courage, or other **virtues**. A virtue is a behavior that shows high moral standards.

Lesson 2 Theme

Introduction
 What Will I Learn?
 • What is the theme of a story?
 • How do I determine the theme?

The theme is the big idea, the message the author wants to convey to readers.



Break Down the Skills
 When you read, you need to figure out the **theme**, the big idea, lesson, or message the author wants you to understand. Usually, that message is about a **moral**, a common principle of right and wrong human behavior or how people should live.
 These themes can be about family bonds, honesty, trust, forgiveness, courage, or other **virtues**. A virtue is a behavior that shows high moral standards.
 For example, if you are reading a story about someone who overcame big problems by being brave, you might say the theme is that courage helps people get through difficult times.
 The theme is different from a story's **topic**, or what the story is about. Themes are not **explicit**; in other words, they are not stated directly. The author **implies**, or suggests, the theme based on the characters' actions. You must **interpret**, or figure out, the theme based on the details.

A theme often has to do with a lesson a main character learns.

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- For example, explain that if they are reading a story about someone who overcomes a big problem by being brave, the theme might be that courage helps people get through difficult times.
- Explain that the theme is different from a story's **topic**, or what the story is about. Themes are not **explicit**. In other words, they are not stated directly. The author **implies**, or suggests, the theme based on the characters' actions. Explain that they must **interpret**, or figure out, the theme based on the details.
- If time allows, have students complete the On Your Own activities at the end of these notes.

Lesson 2 • Theme

These tips can help you identify and understand the theme of a work.

- Identify the main character and the problem he or she faces.
- Follow the main character's actions and how problems are solved.
- The character's actions in the key details will give you hints of the theme.
- What does the character learn?
- Connect the problem or situation to your own life.

Guided Instruction

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

The Dancing Cobbler

- 1 Long ago, in a faraway land, there was a tiny village in a deep forest. There lived a steadfast cobbler who had a good life in his trade, making and repairing shoes.
- 2 He worked in his vine-covered cottage from dawn to dusk. "Ah, me," he would sigh, "I fix all these shoes, but if only I had a pair of shoes with which I might go dancing from time to time!" He once said this to Zeke, who lived next door.
- 3 "Bah!" Zeke cried. "Dancing is foolishness. Stick to business, and don't waste your day in idle dreaming!"
- 4 Still, the cobbler continued to hope.
- 5 One day a gentlemanly stranger appeared on the cobbler's doorstep. He was smiling.
- 6 "Greetings, my friend," he said.
- 7 "Have we met?" the cobbler asked uncertainly. "I don't recognize you."

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Differentiate for Struggling Readers and English Learners

Have students create anchor charts of common universal themes such as "Honesty is the best policy," and so on. Display the anchor charts in the classroom. Alternatively, they can write themes on index cards or on sticky notes and put them in their notebooks or in a separate list.

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

First Read

- Direct students to follow along as you read "The Dancing Cobbler" aloud.

Second Read

- Using the choral reading approach, reread "The Dancing Cobbler" aloud. Have students follow along reading in unison as they are able. Allow students to use a marker or card to track the text if needed.

Guided Reading Questions

- Read the Guided Reading Questions aloud and have students answer them. Discuss the answers orally.

Lesson 2 • Theme

These tips can help you identify and understand the theme of a work.

- Identify the main character and the problem he or she faces.
- Follow the main character's actions and how problems are solved.
- The character's actions in the key details will give you hints of the theme.
- What does the character learn?
- Connect the problem or situation to your own life.

Guided Instruction

Read the passage below and answer the questions.

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- 1 Long ago, in a faraway land, there was a tiny village in a deep forest. There lived a steadfast cobbler who had a good life in his trade, making and repairing shoes.
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- 3 "Bah!" Zeke cried. "Dancing is foolishness. Stick to business, and don't waste your day in idle dreaming!"
- 4 Still, the cobbler continued to hope.
- 5 One day a gentlemanly stranger appeared on the cobbler's doorstep. He was smiling.
- 6 "Greetings, my friend," he said.
- 7 "Have we met?" the cobbler asked uncertainly. "I don't recognize you."

Guided Questions

What can you infer about the cobbler from paragraph 2? He is not satisfied with the life he has.

What is the topic of this story? A cobbler who wishes he could go dancing.

What can you infer about Zeke from his actions? He is a wise man and a friend to the cobbler.

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Chapter 1 • Literature

- 8 "I was only a child at our first encounter," the man replied. "You once did me a great kindness."
- 9 "Were—were you the little boy who was lost in the forest?" he asked.
- 10 "Indeed I was. You saved my life, and as a gesture of my appreciation, I have a rare and marvelous gift for you." From his pack he took a perfectly black stone and held it out. "Rub this stone and make a wish. It will be granted." Before the surprised cobbler could thank him, he was gone.
- 11 "If only it were true!" he thought. He rubbed the stone, and it glowed as if energized by magical forces. "Stone of darkness, stone of night, kindly make my future bright," he said. "Give me magic shoes that I might go dancing!"
- 12 He waited. Nothing happened. "Hmph!" he said. He went out back and threw the stone into the pond. Then he got a surprise.
- 13 His feet began tapping, and his legs moved rhythmically, as if in time to music. He had dancing shoes on his feet. His arms flung wide, and he whirled across the yard into the town square. Around and around he danced. A crowd of curious spectators gathered around him.
- 14 At first he was happy, but now he couldn't stop. People began laughing at him.
- 15 "Don't make a fool of yourself!" said Zeke.
- 16 "Please help me," the cobbler pleaded. He told Zeke the whole dreadful story.
- 17 Zeke said, "I'll go fetch the stone." So saying, he plunged into the pond where the cobbler had thrown it. Exhausted by now, the unhappy cobbler was desperate to have his plight alleviated. His face lit up hopefully as Zeke finally retrieved the stone and returned with it.
- 18 "Thank you, my friend!" he cried, seizing it eagerly. He rubbed it again, saying, "I wish I could stop dancing—NOW!" Again the stone sparkled, and a moment later, he collapsed on the ground. He started to get up again.
- 19 "Rest now," Zeke said. "The spell is broken."

Guided Questions

What do the cobbler's actions in paragraph 14 tell you about him? He does not seem to be satisfied with what he has.

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Lesson 2 • Theme

- 20 "I won't rest," he said, "until I do this!" Whereupon he took the stone to the well. He threw it down the dark shaft, gone forever, still from that time on he never wished to go dancing again.

[Reading Level: 610–800; Word Count: 510]

Guided Questions

- 1 What do you think is the theme of this story? The cobbler learns to be satisfied with what he has. Be careful what you wish for.
- 2 Underline the character's action that led you to that theme.

Independent Practice

Read the selection. Then, answer the questions that follow.

The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

A fable by Aesop

- 1 A young boy took care of his master's sheep in a forest not far from the village. He thought this job was very dull. All he could do for fun was to talk to his dog or play music on his pipe.
- 2 One day as he sat watching the sheep in the quiet forest, he thought about what he would do if he saw a wolf. He came up with a plan to amuse himself.
- 3 His master had told him to call for help if a wolf attacked the flock of sheep, and the villagers would come running and drive the wolf away. Even though there was no wolf, the boy ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"
- 4 The villagers heard him and dropped their work and ran to the pasture. When they got there they saw no wolf, and the boy was laughing at the trick he had played on them.

Guided Questions

What can you infer about the boy after he plays the trick and laughs at the villagers? He is a mischievous boy.

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INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

First Read

- Read aloud to students the passage "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf."

Second Read

- Have students reread the passage "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf" independently.

Lesson 2 • Theme

20 "I won't rest," he said, "until I do this!" Whenupon he took the stone to the well, he threw it down the dark shaft, goggle forever. And from that time on, he never wished to go outside again.

[Reading Level: 610-800; Word Count: 510]

1 What do you think is the theme of this story?
The cobbler learns to be satisfied with what he has. Be careful what you wish for.

2 Underline the character's action that led you to that theme.

Independent Practice
Read the selection. Then, answer the questions that follow.

The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf
A Fable by Aesop

1 A young boy took care of his master's sheep in a forest not far from the village. He thought this job was very dull. All he could do for fun was to talk to his dog or play music on his pipe.

2 One day as he sat watching the sheep in the quiet forest, he thought about what he would do if he saw a wolf. He came up with a plan to amuse himself.

3 His master had told him to call for help if a wolf attacked the flock of sheep, and the villagers would come running and drive the wolf away. Even though there was no wolf, the boy ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"

4 The villagers heard him and dropped their work and ran to the pasture. When they got there they saw no wolf, and the boy was laughing at the trick he had played on them.

What can you infer about the boy after he plays the trick and laughs at the villagers?

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Lesson 2 • Theme

5 A few days later the boy again shouted, "Wolf! Wolf!" Again the villagers ran to help him, only to have the boy laugh at them again. Again, the boy had tricked the villagers.


6 One evening as the sun was setting and the shadows were creeping out over the pasture, a wolf really did spring up from hiding and attack the sheep.

7 The boy ran toward the village in terror, shouting, "Wolf! Wolf!" The villagers heard the cry, but they did not run to help him.

8 "He cannot fool us again," they said.

9 The wolf killed many of the sheep and then slipped away into the forest.

Examine the characters' actions in the details to understand a theme.



[Reading Level: 610-800; Word Count: 264]

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Practice 1 Questions

- Read the questions and answer choices aloud as students select the answers. Review the answers.

Lesson 2 • Theme

Practice 1

1 Which is the topic of this story?
A A boy guards his sheep.
B A boy has many good friends.
C A shepherd boy is very trustworthy.
D A boy who is bored starts to play tricks.

2 Which can you infer about the boy from this passage?
A He is a good worker.
B He does not like sheep.
C He cannot be trusted.
D He is afraid of wolves.

To make an inference, there must be some evidence in the text.

3 Which is an implicit statement?
A "A young boy took care of his master's sheep."
B "He came up with a plan to amuse himself."
C "He thought this job was very dull."
D "The boy ran toward the village in terror."

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Lesson 2 • Theme

4 Summarizing the order of events can help you determine a theme. Number these events in the order in which they happened.
2 The boy came up with a trick.
3 The wolf killed the sheep.
4 The villagers no longer ran to help the boy.
1 A boy was bored with his job.
5 He lied to the villagers twice.

5 Which is the definition of theme?
A a behavior that shows a high moral standard.
B what the story is about.
C the lesson or message in a story.
D to figure out.

Practice 2

1 What is the theme of this story?
If you keep lying, no one will believe you even when you are telling the truth.

This is the big idea the message the author wants you to learn from this story.

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Practice 2 Questions

- Ask students to read the questions and select the answers independently. Review the answers.

Chapter 1 • Lesson 2

4 Summarizing the order of events can help you determine a theme. Number these events in the order in which they happened.

2 The boy came up with a trick.

3 The wolf killed the sheep.

4 The villagers no longer ran to help the boy.

1 A boy was bored with his job.

3 He lied to the villagers twice.

3 Which is the definition of theme?

A a behavior that shows a high moral standard

B what the story is about

C the lesson or message in a story

D to figure out

Practice 2

1 What is the theme of this story?
If you keep lying, no one will believe you even when you are telling the truth.

This is the big idea, the message the author wants you to learn from this story.

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Lesson 2 • Theme

2 Which detail supports the story's theme?

A The boy thought his job was very dull.

B The boy played with his dog and his pipe for fun.

C The villagers dropped their work and ran to help the boy.

D The villagers did not run to help the boy.

3 Which can you infer is the reason the villagers did not go a third time to help?

A They wanted to teach the boy a lesson and let him deal with the wolf himself.

B They did not trust the boy and thought he was lying again.

C They no longer cared about the boy.

D They did not hear the boy's cry for help.

4 Which is the definition of a story's topic?

A a behavior that shows a high moral standard

B what the story is about

C the big idea or lesson in a story

D the number of characters

Remember that topic and theme are different!

5 How did the boy's actions help you determine the theme?
The boy lied twice and the villagers believed him and came running to help. After the boy lied the second time, the villagers no longer believed him, even though the boy was telling the truth the third time.

8 Level D Copying is prohibited.

EXIT TICKET

- Have students fill in the Exit Ticket at the end of class. They will read a short passage and identify the topic and the theme.

Chapter 1 • Lesson 2

Exit Ticket

Now that you understand the difference between topic and theme, read this passage. Then underline the topic. Circle the theme.

One day a lion walked proudly through the forest. The animals gave him respect and made way for him to pass. But a donkey made a nasty comment as the lion passed.

For a second, the lion felt anger. When he turned his head and saw who had spoken, he walked quietly on. The lion would not honor the fool with so much as even a stroke of his tail.

Do not pay attention to the remarks of a fool. Ignore them.
 [Reading Level: 410-600L, Word Count: 83]

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING LEARNERS

- It is essential for students to understand that topic, theme, and main idea are different. To help them understand this, have them read a short passage with a clear theme. Then, give them five statements from the passage—three details, one statement that supports the main idea, and the theme itself. Do not tell them which is which. Have them figure it out. Do this activity several times until students are clear about details, main ideas, and the theme of a story. English learners can also benefit from this activity once you reinforce the meanings of *main idea*, *detail*, and *theme*.
- Make sure students understand that a “universal truth” means a theme that applies to real life, not just a lesson for a character in a story. Tell students the author intends for the reader to learn this truth from the theme of a story. Practice reading short passages with clear themes. Identify the themes for the students, and ask them how they could apply the themes to their own lives.

SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Practice theme in isolation with English learners, as it is a confusing aspect for them as they grapple with language. Start with small chunks of text, maybe just one paragraph at a time, making sure students understand before moving on to larger chunks of text.

- Once you reinforce the vocabulary terms *main idea*, *detail*, and *theme*, it is essential for students to understand that topic, theme, and main idea are different. To help them understand this, have them read a short passage with a clear theme. Then, give them five statements from the passage—three details, one statement that supports the main idea, and the theme itself. Do not tell them which is which. Have them figure it out. Do this activity several times until students are clear about details, main ideas, and the theme of a story.
- Give students short stories and give them the themes to the stories. Have them read the stories in pairs or in groups and underline the details or characters' actions that give evidence to those themes. Explain to them that themes are not stated explicitly in a text. They must back up the themes with evidence from the text.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Since stories can have more than one theme, provide students with stories that have several themes and have them read them as a group and brainstorm for the different themes.
- Give students some common thematic components, such as love and revenge, power and greed, fate, free will and freedom, corruption, ambition, violence, or fear and courage. Let them put these in sentence form, such as the following: absolute power corrupts absolutely, honesty is the best policy, and so on. Tell them to get creative and make up some of their own.
- Have students write essays on universal themes. The essays could have different subjects: What is heroism? What does it mean to be a good friend? Why is honesty the best policy?
- Give students common themes and have them write adages to go with them. For example, for the theme of *perseverance*, students could write "Hard work pays off" or "Never give up." For *happiness*, they could write "Be happy with what you have," and so on. Let them be creative and make up their own.

Name _____

Date _____

On Your Own

