

The **central message** in a story is a **lesson about life**.

- ▶ Central message is shown when a **character** learns the lesson.
- ▶ Central message can also be shown by **clue words**.

**Central message:** Problems can be solved if you keep trying.

### The Crow and the Pitcher

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*

<sup>1</sup>A thirsty **Crow** flew to a pitcher of water. <sup>2</sup>Crow tried many ways to get the water but could not reach it. <sup>3</sup>At last, he used his beak to drop stones into the pitcher. <sup>4</sup>The stones made the water rise. <sup>5</sup>Then, he could drink the water. <sup>6</sup>Crow learned that problems can be solved if you keep trying.



**Not an example of a central message:**

Crow learned how to get water out of a pitcher.

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What could be a central message in a story?

- A We play games at recess.**
- B Always play fair.**

**Central Message:**

1. Never give up.
2. Friendship is important.
3. Good things happen to good people.
4. Don't judge people.
5. Hard work pays off.

**Not a Central Message:**

1. I want to learn how to tie my shoes.
2. Addition is important to learn.
3. Roberto is my friend.
4. The criminal was caught near the bank.



Which statement(s) below might be a central message? Explain.

- A Always do your best.**
- B My friend Carlos is nice to me.**
- C In science class, we learn about insects.**

- 1 Read the story carefully.
- 2 Identify the characters. (**circle**)
- 3 Identify a clue word for the central message. (**underline**)
- 4 Determine the central message. (circle)

### The Color of Wings

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*

<sup>1</sup>A Peacock was proud of its colorful feathers. <sup>2</sup>The Peacock teased the Crane because his feathers were white. <sup>3</sup>The Crane said, "True, but I can fly high in the sky, and you walk below like a chicken." <sup>4</sup>Then, the Peacock learned that what you can do is more important than how you look.



#### What is the central message of the story?

- A The Peacock was proud of its colorful feathers.
- B Your actions are more important than your looks.
- C The Crane can fly high in the sky.

### Feathers

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*

<sup>1</sup>One day, Raven found out that trying to get what others have may not be good for you. <sup>2</sup>Raven saw a Swan with white feathers. <sup>3</sup>Raven thought he could change his black feathers white by washing in the lake. <sup>4</sup>Raven tried hard to wash his feathers, but he could not change their color. <sup>5</sup>Instead, his feathers got wet and he could not fly until they dried out.



#### What is the central message of the story?

- A Raven saw a Swan with white feathers.
- B Raven tried hard to wash his feathers.
- C Be happy with what you already have.

## Skill Closure

- 1 Read the story carefully.
- 2 Identify the characters. (**circle**)
- 3 Identify a clue word for the central message. (**underline**)
- 4 Determine the central message. (circle)

### Help or Revenge

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*

<sup>1</sup>An Eagle caught a Snake in his claws to eat it. <sup>2</sup>The Snake fought back and wrapped around the Eagle to crush it. <sup>3</sup>A man saw the fight and helped the Eagle get free. <sup>4</sup>In revenge, the Snake spit poison into the man's cup. <sup>5</sup>The Eagle knocked the cup out of the man's hand and saved him from the poison. <sup>6</sup>The Snake found out that one good deed leads to another.



### What is the central message of the story?

- A An Eagle tried to eat a Snake.
- B A man saw the fight and helped the Eagle get free.
- C One good action leads to another.

## Concept Closure

### Which other central message fits the story? How do you know?

- A It is not good to spit poison.
- B It is always good to help others.

## Summary Closure

### What did you learn today about determining the central message of a story?

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### Word Bank

central message  
lesson  
life

**Read the story. Circle the characters. Underline any clue words for the central message. Circle the central message.**

### The Three Fish

*adapted from an Indian fable*



<sup>1</sup>Three fish heard some fishermen say they will come tomorrow to catch fish. <sup>2</sup>The first fish said, "We must leave the pond." <sup>3</sup>The second fish agreed. <sup>4</sup>The third fish said, "My luck will save me." <sup>5</sup>The first fish left that night. <sup>6</sup>The second fish left in the morning. <sup>7</sup>The third fish did not want to leave. <sup>8</sup>The fishermen came and caught the third fish. <sup>9</sup>The first two fish knew that planning ahead was better than waiting for luck.

**What is the central message of the story?**

- A** The fishermen caught the third fish.
- B** It is always good to plan ahead.
- C** The second fish left in the morning.

### The Monkey and the Dolphin

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*



<sup>1</sup>A monkey fell from a ship and was rescued by a dolphin. <sup>2</sup>The dolphin asked the monkey if he lived nearby. <sup>3</sup>The monkey lied and said that he did. <sup>4</sup>"Do you know Serifos?" asked the dolphin. <sup>5</sup>The monkey, thinking Serifos was a person's name, bragged that he was his best friend and visits him often. <sup>6</sup>As Serifos was a town, the dolphin knew the monkey was lying. <sup>7</sup>So the dolphin dove deep into the ocean, leaving the monkey to swim to shore alone.



**What is the central message of the story?**

- A** Monkeys always tell lies.
- B** The dolphin asked the monkey if he lived nearby.
- C** Liars may give themselves away.

Identify the central message in the story below.

### The Lion and the Mouse

*adapted from Aesop's Fables*

<sup>1</sup>Lion woke up when a mouse ran over his face. <sup>2</sup>Getting angry, he caught the mouse and was about to eat him. <sup>3</sup>The mouse cried, "Excuse me, great King. <sup>4</sup>If you let me go, I will some day repay your kindness." <sup>5</sup>The lion laughed at the idea that a little mouse could help a great lion, so he lifted up his paw and let him go. <sup>6</sup>Soon, the lion was caught by hunters who tied him to the ground with strong ropes. <sup>7</sup>The mouse, hearing the roar, came and chewed the rope with his teeth and set the lion free. <sup>8</sup>The lion learned that you don't have to be big to help someone.

- A** Lions like to eat mice.
- B** You don't have to be big to be helpful.
- C** The lion was caught by hunters.

Identify the central message in the story below.

### The Monkeys and the Moon

*adapted from a fable of Tibet*

<sup>1</sup>Long ago some monkeys found out that it's better to think before doing something. <sup>2</sup>One night, they saw the reflection<sub>1</sub> of the moon in a lake. <sup>3</sup>The leader said, "The moon has fallen into the lake. <sup>4</sup>Shouldn't we pull it out?" <sup>5</sup>The monkeys said yes, and decided to form a chain to pull the moon out.

<sup>6</sup>The first monkey hung on to the branch of a tree, and the second to the first monkey's tail, and a third one to the tail of the second one. <sup>7</sup>When they were all hanging on to one another, the branch began to bend and shake. <sup>8</sup>Then the branch broke, and all the monkeys fell into the lake and were hurt.

- A** Monkeys can hang from their tails.
- B** The silly monkeys tried to get the moon from the lake.
- C** Think before you act.

Identify the central message in the story below.

### King Midas

*adapted from Greek mythology*

<sup>1</sup>King Midas was a very rich king, but he always wanted more. <sup>2</sup>One day, he asked a magician for a spell to make more treasures and gold. <sup>3</sup>The magician said, "Here is a spell that will make anything you touch turn into gold". <sup>4</sup>With one touch, the king turned trees, grass, flowers, and furniture into gold. <sup>5</sup>He felt like the richest man in the world! <sup>6</sup>But when he sat down for supper, <sup>1</sup> King Midas was surprised. <sup>7</sup>His food turned into gold when he touched it. <sup>8</sup>However, King Midas was too greedy to be sad about it. <sup>9</sup>The next morning, the king's daughter ran to hug her father. <sup>10</sup>But as soon as they touched, she turned into a gold statue! <sup>11</sup>King Midas loved his daughter very much. <sup>12</sup>He was very sad and he ran to the magician for help. <sup>13</sup>He cried, "Please help me, Magician! <sup>14</sup>I don't want to be rich anymore. <sup>15</sup>I only want my daughter back." <sup>16</sup>The magician felt sorry for the king, and changed everything back to normal. <sup>17</sup>King Midas learned that having a lot of gold will not make you happy.

- A** King Midas gets magic powers.
- B** Magic can cause problems.
- C** Greed never leads to happiness.