

A **theme** is a message about **life** or **human nature**.

▶ A **theme** is revealed through the relationship of **characters**, **setting**, and **plot**.

<b>Characters</b>	Adapted from "The Lottery Ticket" by Anton Chekhov
<b>who</b> the story is about.	<b>Ivan Dmitritch</b> , a middle-class man, lived with his family in a <b>modest home in Europe in the early 1900s</b> . <b>He didn't believe in lottery luck, but he noticed the number 9,499 on a ticket</b> . "It's our series," said Ivan. "So we might have won," said his wife.
<b>Setting</b>	
<b>when</b> and <b>where</b> the story takes place.	
<b>Plot</b>	<b>Ivan thought about their relatives</b> . He imagined <b>they would beg for money</b> if they found out about the ticket. If refused, they would curse and gossip about them. <b>Ivan was filled with hateful thoughts</b> , even finding his <b>wife annoying</b> . He thought, " <b>She knows nothing about money and is stingy</b> ." Angry, he read the ticket number: "Series 9,499, number 46! Not 26!"
<b>the sequence of main events</b> that make up a story.	"Both hatred and hope vanished instantly, and Ivan and his wife suddenly <b>felt their home was dark and small</b> ."
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Money can bring out the worst in people.</b>

### CFU

Which theme could also fit with the story?  
Explain.

**A** Companionship as salvation

**B** A person's greed will cause their downfall.

In your own words, what is theme?

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

**Theme: Until faced with danger, you never know how courageous you are.**

**Background:** Eighteen-year-old Henry Fleming has enlisted as a Private in the Union Army during the American Civil War.

Adapted from **The Red Badge of Courage**

by Stephen Crane

<sup>1</sup>He realized it didn't matter what kind of soldiers he was going to fight, as long as they fought. <sup>2</sup>The more serious problem was whether he would run from battle. <sup>3</sup>Lying in his bunk, he tried to prove to himself that he wouldn't. <sup>4</sup>He had never seriously questioned his bravery before. <sup>5</sup>He had always assumed he would succeed without worrying about the details.

<sup>6</sup>But now he faced a significant<sub>1</sub> fear: he might run in battle. <sup>7</sup>He admitted he knew nothing about himself in war. <sup>8</sup>Panic began to grow as he imagined fighting and the dangers ahead. <sup>9</sup>His visions of glory now seemed impossible. <sup>10</sup>He paced nervously, questioning his ability and feeling that his previous self-knowledge was useless.

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. The battle forces Henry to question how courageous he is.
  - B. The battle makes Henry become even more courageous.
  - C. The bunk makes Henry have more future dreams.
2. How does the **character** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Henry is even more decided to participate in all battles..
  - B. Henry starts to doubt his own bravery.
  - C. Henry dreams of attaining glory because of his courage.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

### Characters

**who** the story is about.

### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
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### Theme: Changing your perspective can make boring tasks exciting.

**Background:** Tom is tasked with the dull job of whitewashing a fence on a sunny Saturday—a chore he dreads.

Adapted from **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** by Mark Twain

<sup>1</sup>Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash<sub>5</sub> and a long-handled brush. <sup>2</sup>He surveyed<sub>6</sub> the fence and all gladness left him. <sup>3</sup>Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. <sup>4</sup>Sighing, he dipped the brush and passed it along the topmost plank; repeated the operation; did it again.

<sup>5</sup>Jim came skipping out at the gate with a tin pail, singing "Buffalo Gals." <sup>6</sup>Breaking off, he said, "Why, it's you, Tom! Ain't you got no fun about you?" <sup>7</sup>Come on, let's go out and have some fun."

<sup>8</sup>Whitewashing's fun?" Tom asked with an eye on Jim. <sup>9</sup>Jim shook his head. <sup>10</sup>"No," he said, "I don't reckon it is. <sup>11</sup>Isn't this work?"

<sup>12</sup>"Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. <sup>13</sup>All I know is it suits Tom Sawyer."

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. The long fence is seen by Tom as a means of earning money.
  - B. The long fence is seen by Tom as a burden.
  - C. The long fence is seen by Jim as nothing but work.
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Tom cannot convince Jim that whitewashing the fence is fun.
  - B. Jim wants to convince Tom to enjoy the day with him.
  - C. Tom's interaction with Jim shows him a new way to look at the whitewashing task.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

#### Characters

**who** the story is about.

#### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

#### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

## Skill Closure

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

## Theme: Love has not bounds.

**Background:** Jim and Della are husband and wife. Because they are poor, money must be spent to live, and not enough is left over for Christmas gifts.

Adapted from **The Gift of the Magi** by O. Henry

<sup>1</sup>In a modest apartment, Jim and Della lived with much love but little money. <sup>2</sup>With Christmas approaching, each wanted to give the other a special gift. <sup>3</sup>Della cherished her long hair, and Jim prized his gold pocket watch. <sup>4</sup>Della sold her hair to buy a chain for Jim's watch. <sup>5</sup>Unaware of her sacrifice, Jim sold his watch to buy combs for Della's hair.

<sup>6</sup>On Christmas, they exchanged gifts. <sup>7</sup>The moment was bittersweet<sub>2</sub> as they realized the sacrifices they had made for each other. <sup>8</sup>Jim's watch was gone, and Della's hair was short,

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. A small apartment where a Christmas celebration is taking place.
  - B. A small modest apartment during Christmas season.
  - C. A small apartment where many presents were exchanged.
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Della wants Jim to buy her a beautiful set of combs for her hair.
  - B. Della and Jim decide that they are too poor to give each other a gift.
  - C. Della and Jim want to give each other a gift but have little money.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

## Characters

**who** the story is about.

## Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

## Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

## Concept Closure

Yosef determined that the **setting** of Christmas helped develop the theme because it was the motivating factor for Della to cut her prized possession, her hair, to show her love for Jim. Do you agree? Explain.

## Summary Closure

What did you learn today about analyzing a theme in literature?

## Word Bank

theme  
characters  
setting  
plot

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

### Theme: Taking a risk for the greater good makes one brave.

**Background:** Oliver Twist grows up in poverty in England. In this passage, Oliver is 9 years old and living in a government workhouse for the poor.

Adapted from **Oliver Twist** by Charles Dickens

<sup>1</sup>For three months, Oliver Twist and his friends endured extreme hunger. <sup>2</sup>Eventually, their hunger grew so intense that one boy threatened to eat his roommate unless he received more food. <sup>3</sup>The group decided to ask for more food, and Oliver was chosen to make the request. <sup>4</sup>That evening, as the gruel was served and quickly eaten, the boys encouraged Oliver to speak up. <sup>5</sup>Driven by desperation and hunger, Oliver approached the master with his empty bowl and bravely asked for more. <sup>6</sup>The master, a robust man, turned pale with shock at Oliver's request. <sup>7</sup>He stared in disbelief at Oliver. <sup>8</sup>The room fell silent, filled with astonishment and fear. Oliver, persistent<sub>2</sub>, repeated his request for more. <sup>8</sup>The master reacted violently, attempting to hit Oliver and calling loudly for help.

#### Characters

**who** the story is about.

#### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

#### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. A workhouse for the poor where boys are allowed to eat each other.
  - B. A workhouse for the poor where boys are suffering extreme hunger.
  - C. A workhouse for the poor where only young boys live
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Oliver Twist decides to share his food with all the hungry boys.
  - B. The hungry boys want to rebel against the Master.
  - C. Oliver Twist and other boys want more food, and a master who refuses to give them more
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

**Theme: True greatness comes from what you do, not your social position.**

**Background:** The story follows Sara Crewe, a young girl who transitions from wealth to poverty and back,

Adapted from **A Little Princess** by Frances Hodgson

<sup>1</sup>Sara Crewe was once a top student at Miss Minchin's boarding school, but after her father died and she lost her fortune, her life drastically<sub>1</sub> changed. <sup>2</sup>She lost her privileges and was made to live in a cold attic, working as a servant at the school where she used to be admired. <sup>3</sup>Despite this, Sara stayed strong. One cold night, after a long day, <sup>4</sup>Sara found a crumb of bread in her pocket. Instead of eating it herself, she thought of a starving stray cat nearby. <sup>5</sup>She decided to feed the cat the crumb, the only food she had. <sup>6</sup>Mr. Carrisford, a neighbor, saw her feeding the cat. <sup>7</sup>Impressed<sub>2</sub> by her kindness, he started asking about her. <sup>8</sup>Sara's small act of sharing led to unexpected events that greatly improved her life.

### Characters

**who** the story is about.

### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. A boarding school where Sara is a top student.
  - B. A boarding school where Sara lives in poverty in a cold attic.
  - C. An attic where a cat lives.
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Sara Crewe and Miss Minchin who is her teacher.
  - B. Sara Crewe and a cat who lives in the attic with her.
  - C. Sara Crewe who used to be rich but now is poor and Mr. Carrisford who takes an interest in Sara because of her kindness.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

### Theme: The healing power of nature.

**Background:** Mary Lennox, a neglected and unloved child who, after being orphaned, is sent from India to live at her uncle's remote country estate in Yorkshire,

Adapted from **The Secret Garden** by Frances Hodgson

<sup>1</sup>After her parents' death, Mary Lennox moved from India to the gloomy Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire. <sup>2</sup>The large manor, filled with secrets and covered in mist, left Mary often alone. <sup>3</sup>One day, she discovered a locked, abandoned garden. <sup>4</sup>With the help of a robin, Mary found the key hidden under ivy. <sup>5</sup>She then met Dickon, a boy who communicated with birds and foxes. <sup>6</sup>Together, they started reviving<sub>1</sub> the neglected<sub>2</sub> garden. <sup>7</sup>As the garden revived, so did Mary, becoming joyful as she tended the plants. <sup>8</sup>Her cousin Colin, who had stayed indoors feeling weak, also joined and began to enjoy the outdoors.

#### Characters

**who** the story is about.

#### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

#### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. India and an abandoned garden.
  - B. An abandoned garden with birds and foxes.
  - C. A bleak manor and an abandoned garden.
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. Mary a nature loving girl; Dickon a feeble boy; Colin or Mary's cousin.
  - B. Mary an orphaned girl; Dickon a nature-loving boy; Colin a feeble boy.
  - C. Mary an orphaned girl; a gloomy manor; a neglected garden.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)

- 1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
- 2 Use the setting, character(s), and plot to analyze the theme.

**Theme: Despite a tough start, positive influences can lead to personal growth.**

**Background:** In the unforgiving wilderness of the Yukon Territory during the Klondike Gold Rush, a wolf-dog hybrid named White Fang struggles to stay alive.

Adapted from **White Fang** by Jack London

In the harsh Yukon Territory during the Klondike Gold Rush, White Fang, a wolf-dog hybrid, fights to survive. Born wild, he quickly learns that only the strong survive, facing constant<sub>1</sub> battles that harden him. Captured by humans, his life changes as he moves between various owners, learning new rules and becoming increasingly fierce. However, his fate changes when Weedon Scott, a compassionate<sub>2</sub> man, rescues him. Scott sees the potential for goodness in White Fang and, with patience and kindness, slowly gains his trust. Over time, White Fang transforms from a fierce animal into a loyal and loving companion.

### Characters

**who** the story is about.

### Setting

**when** and **where** the story takes place.

### Plot

the **sequence of main events** that make up a story.

1. How does the **setting** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. The place where various owners of White Fang were born.
  - B. The harsh environment of the Yukon Territory during the Gold Rush.
  - C. A place where the fate of White Fang changes.
2. How do the **character(s)** contribute to the theme? (underline and box)
  - A. White Fang a dog who was trained by various handlers to survive.
  - B. White Fang, a wild wolf-dog, who helps his owners dig for gold.
  - C. White Fang, an abused wolf-dog; White Fang's various owners mistreat him; Scott who realizes the goodness in White Fang.
3. How does the **plot** contribute to the theme? (underline and write)