We will analyze the theme in literature. | **Concept Development**

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

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

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

CFU

Does **Ivan feeling angry with the thought of relative asking for money** help develop the theme **that money can bring out the worst in people**?

A **yes**
B **no**

How do the last events in the story help develop the theme?

They had not won anything. Suddenly, **Ivan's anger disappeared**.
He looked around their home, which now seemed dark and small.

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1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
2 Analyze the theme by answering the questions. (circle)
3 Cite evidence to support the answer. (underline)

Theme: **Courage is difficult to understand until a person faces fear.**

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

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

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

1. How does the <u>setting</u> contribute to the theme? (underline and box)

A. The setting of war forces the character to confront his fears and question what he knows about himself.
B. The setting of war gives the character confidence because he believes he will easily become a hero.
C. The setting of war shows that the character is more interested in fighting than in understanding himself.

2. How does the character's response to the possibility of fighting in battle help develop the theme?

A. He decides that the dangers of battle are not as serious as he first believed.
B. He ignores his fear because he is more interested in becoming a hero.
C. He begins to question his own bravery when he realizes he may face fear in battle.

3. How does the plot contribute to the development of the theme?

A. The character begins afraid of battle, becomes confident in his bravery, and then decides he knows exactly how he will respond.
B. The character begins confident in his bravery, becomes afraid of battle, and then questions what he knows about himself.
C. The character thinks about becoming a hero, becomes less concerned about battle, and then stops questioning his bravery.

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1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
2 Analyze the theme by answering the questions. (circle)
3 Cite evidence to support the answer. (underline)

Theme: **The way something is presented can affect how others perceive it.**

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

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

[5]Jim came skipping out at the gate with a tin pail, singing "Buffalo Gals." [6]Breaking off, he said, "Why, it's you, Tom! Ain't you got no fun about you? [7]Come on, let's go out and have some fun." [8]Whitewashing's fun?" Tom asked with an eye on Jim. [9]Jim shook his head. [10]"No," he said, "I don't reckon it is. [11]Isn't this work?"

[12]"Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. [13]All I know is it suits Tom Sawyer."

1. How does Tom's character contribute to the development of the theme?

A. Tom changes the way he presents whitewashing so that Jim may see the task as enjoyable.

B. Tom refuses to do the whitewashing because he wants to spend the day having fun.

C. Tom becomes excited about whitewashing because he has always enjoyed doing hard work.

2. How does the setting contribute to the development of the theme?

A. The sidewalk gives Tom a quiet place where he can think about how much he enjoys whitewashing.

B. The fence makes Jim believe that Tom needs help because the work is too difficult for him.

C. The long fence makes whitewashing seem like an unpleasant task, which gives Tom a chance to change how Jim views the work.

3. How does the sequence of events contribute to the development of the theme?

A. Tom dislikes the task at first, Jim calls it work, and Tom then presents it in a way that makes the task look fun.

B. Tom enjoys the task at first, Jim asks to help him, and Tom eventually decides that he will finish the task himself.

C. Tom refuses to do the task, Jim agrees to do it for him, and Tom realizes that whitewashing is enjoyable.

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Skill Closure

1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
2 Analyze the theme by answering the questions. (circle)
3 Cite evidence to support the answer. (underline)

Theme: Love has no 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

[1]In a modest apartment, Jim and Della lived with much love but little money. [2]With Christmas approaching$_1$, each wanted to give the other a special gift. [3]Della cherished her long hair, and Jim prized his gold pocket watch. [4]Della sold her hair to buy a chain for Jim's watch. [5]Unaware of her sacrifice, Jim sold his watch to buy combs for Della's hair.

[6]On Christmas, they exchanged gifts. [7]The moment was bittersweet$_2$ as they realized the sacrifices they had made for each other. [8]Jim's watch was gone, and Della's hair was short.

1. How do the characters' actions help develop the theme of the excerpt?

A. Jim and Della each give up something valuable to themselves so they can make the other person happy.

B. Jim and Della each keep their most valuable possessions because they do not want to lose them.

2. How does the setting contribute to the theme of the excerpt?

A. The couple's modest apartment and limited money make their sacrifices meaningful because they give up possessions they value to show their love.

B. The couple's modest apartment and limited money make it difficult for them to appreciate the special gifts they receive.

Concept Closure

Yosef said that the *setting* of Christmas also 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

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1 Read the theme and the adaptation of the story.
2 Analyze the theme by answering the questions. (circle)
3 Cite evidence to support the answer. (underline)

Theme: People can find the courage to stand up for themselves when treated unfairly.

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

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

1 How does Oliver's character help develop the theme of the story?
A. Oliver is brave enough to ask for more food even though he knows he may be punished.
B. Oliver is afraid of the other boys and refuses to speak to the master.
C. Oliver wants to show the master that he is stronger than the other boys.

2. How does the setting contribute to the theme of the story?
A. The boys live in a quiet place where Oliver feels safe asking the master for more food.
B. The boys live in a place where Oliver has many opportunities to become friends with the master.
C. The boys live in a place where they do not have enough food, which causes Oliver to speak up for himself.

3. How does the sequence of events help develop the theme?
A. The boys become extremely hungry, Oliver is chosen to ask for more food, and Oliver bravely makes the request despite the master's reaction.
B. The master gives Oliver more food, which causes the other boys to become upset with him.
C. Oliver becomes angry with the boys, so he decides to ask the master for more food.

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Listening

Listen to a story read aloud.
Analyze the theme of the story by answering the questions.

1. What is the theme of the story?
A. Kindness can make a difference, even when a person has very little.
B. People should always keep what they have for themselves.
C. Losing money makes it impossible for people to be happy.
D. People should only help others when they have plenty to give.

2. How does Sara's character help develop the theme?
A. Sara becomes angry when she is forced to live in the attic.
B. Sara asks Mr. Carrisford to give her more food.
C. Sara decides that she deserves better treatment than the cat.
D. Sara shows kindness by giving her only food to the hungry cat.

3. How does the setting contribute to the theme?
A. The comfortable boarding school gives Sara everything she needs to help the cat.
B. Sara's difficult life at the boarding school makes her kindness more meaningful because she has very little herself.
C. The school allows Sara to have many opportunities to become friends with Mr. Carrisford.
D. The warm attic gives Sara a safe place to share her food with the cat.

4. How does the sequence of events help develop the theme?
A. Sara loses her fortune, finds a crumb of bread, gives it to the cat, and is noticed by Mr. Carrisford.
B. Sara meets Mr. Carrisford, receives food from him, and then decides to help the cat.
C. Sara finds plenty of food, gives some to the cat, and then becomes unhappy at the school.
D. Sara moves into the attic, becomes angry with the cat, and refuses to share her food.

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Reading

Read the excerpt. Then complete the chart.

Adapted from ***Hiking Westward* (1920)** Roger William Conant

Phil and Ted Porter were two brothers who lived with their mother and sisters in a small town in the East. Phil was a talented baseball player, and Ted spent much of his free time working on a homemade flying machine. Like many boys their age, they dreamed about the things they enjoyed and hoped to do someday.

One evening, however, their mother asked them a serious question. "What would you do if you suddenly had to help support this family?" she asked.

Their mother explained that the family could no longer depend on the money they once had. Their father was gone, and she was not well enough to take care of everything herself. The boys realized that their family's future might depend partly on them.

They needed to find a way to earn money and eventually provide a secure home for their mother and sisters. The brothers learned about the government's homesteading opportunities in the West. Families could claim land if they settled on it. To Phil and Ted, the West seemed like a place where they could build a new future. They knew almost nothing about life on the frontier, but they were willing to learn.

They had heard that the West could be lonely and difficult, with rough land, unpredictable weather, and few comforts. Still, the brothers focused on what mattered most to them. If they could establish a successful homestead, they believed they could create a better future for their family. They wanted to help the people they loved.

Phil and Ted were still young, and they did not know all the challenges they would face. But they had made their decision. They would travel west, work for a home, and do their best to support their family.

What is the theme?

A. People should avoid taking risks when they are young.

B. Taking responsibility for others can motivate people to face difficult challenges.

C. Leaving home is the best way for young people to become successful.

Story Element	What does the text show?	How does it contribute to the theme?
Characters	Phil and Ted decide to…	Their actions show that…
Setting	The west is…	This makes their decision difficult because…
Sequence of Events	The brothers first _____, then _____, and finally _____.	The events show that…

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Writing

Read the passage. Analyze the theme.
Explain how White Fang's character, the Yukon setting, and the sequence of events contribute to the theme. Use specific evidence from the text to support your explanation.

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$_1$ 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$_2$ 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.

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