

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 7 AND 8 WRITING/HOMEWORK 6

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: _____

What is a Theme?

Theme: Life lesson, meaning message about life or human nature that is communicated by a literary work. In other words...theme is what the story teaches or shows readers. It is different from a moral which can be a specific lesson or warning about how to live our lives.

A theme is not a word, it is a sentence. You don't have to agree with the theme to identify it. Examples:

Money can't buy happiness.

Don't judge people based on the surface.

It is better to die free than live under tyranny.

Themes are about the big picture. Not "Yellow Starbursts taste bad" Not "Yudy and Carrie are bad friends." Think BIGGER.

Review

1. Theme is what we can learn from a story. It is the message the author wants to express about the world and the people that live in it.
2. Themes must be inferred. They usually are never stated directly but are expressed by how characters behave and by the events that occur.
3. Themes are about the BIG world. They aren't about small things, like: eating junk food is not good. They are about the big things like living healthy can make you happy.

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?

In your story, identify a theme that the reader can understand. If you don't think there is one, then add something that you think might fit in when you write your second draft.

A Labyrinth Mystery

Proofread this story. Correct any errors. Look for punctuation mistakes, spelling mistakes, verb tense mistakes etc. Use a blue or green pen or pencil, so I can see your corrections. Don't use red.

Taylor stared at a page in a book. There was a colorful picture of the Minotaur and also a ruin in Crete. The Minotaur looked like a man with the head of a bull.

"dad", he asked, looking over the top of The book, "why is the maze for the Minotaur called a labyrinth."

"At one time the words maze and labyrinth meant the same thing", said Dad. "But a labyrinth has a single line that can be followed to the center or all the way back out without any blind alleys. If it does have branching paths that leads to dead ends, it is a maze. So, according to the description in the myth, The Minotaur lived in a branching maze, not a labyrinth," Dad explained.

"There are many different kinds of maze , and many of them are of ancient design. There are many ideas about what they were used for, but some things are still a mystery. It's too bad that many of their meanings are pretty much lost to history".

"You know, it might be kind of fun to try to find out what they might have meant," said Taylor thoughtfully. You know how much I enjoy puzzles! I could solve maze mysteries! He grinned at his dad and went back to looking at the book.

How Plants Defend Themselves

Proofread this story. Correct any errors.

If you were a plant, how would you protect yourself. Plants cant' run away from their enemies. Because they cant escape, plants have developed special ways to protect themselves.

The leaves and stems of stinging nettles are covered with tiny hairs. Some of the hairs are similar to tiny syringe . Touching the tips of the hairs causes them to break off. The hairs then become like needles that inject chemicals. The chemicals can cause a person's skin to become inflamed and irritated. If you're out hiking in the woods, you will want to know to avoid coming in contact with stinging nettles.

Some plants have sharp spines, prickles, or thorns on them. Thistles have prickles to discourage herbivores from eating their flowers. Herbivores are animals that eat plants. Cactus plants have spines to keep predators away. Desert animals might be tempted to Bite into a cactus plant to find water. The honey locust tree has thorns on its branches to protect itself from grazing herbivores.

Some plants contain poison. These plants could Make anyone eating them very sick. Eating too much of these plants could be fatal. The leaves of bleeding hearts and the berries of mistletoe contain poison. Some plants protect themselves by having a very bad taste. the buttercup contains a poisonous substance. However, since the plant tastes so bad, few animals attempt to eat it. Those who do taste the buttercup could end up with blisters in their mouths.

Next time you're walking outside, take a look at the plants around you. It's a good idea to know what kind of plants are there. That way you'll know which plants are safe and which plants you might need to be careful around.

Making sentences more interesting

There are many ways to rewrite, expand, reorder, and reword boring sentences.

The sky is blue.

Example:

Blue skies like these make my day. (Make it about a character))

There isn't a cloud in the sky and you can see forever. (Hyperbole)

The sky is as blue as the sea. (Simile)

Have you ever seen such a blue sky? (Question)

1. I am sick.

2. I have school tomorrow.

3. My room is small.

4. Andrea is busy.

Show don't tell**More practice. Don't use the "tell" words in the prompt sentence.**

1. Max, our dog, didn't like Mom's new boyfriend.

2. The pizza was delicious.

3. My mom was disappointed.

4. His room was a mess.

THE END