

SUMMARY AND THEME OF A SHORT STORY

RL.5.2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

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TEACHER NOTES

An introduction to the lessons and a brief discussion of the research used to develop the instructional resources included in the lesson set.

LEARNING MAP TOOL

An overview of the standards, the learning map section, and the nodes addressed in the lesson set.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR LESSONS 1–3

Detailed walkthroughs of each lesson.

PASSAGE

A story designed to support the skills students practice in the lessons. You may use the provided text or select your own. (Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use from any other source.)

STUDENT HANDOUTS FOR LESSONS 1 & 3

Reproducible handouts students will use to complete activities during the lessons.

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK GUIDE FOR
LESSON 3 HANDOUT

A feedback tool to use with the Lesson 3 Student Handout.

SUMMARY AND THEME OF A SHORT STORY

TEACHER NOTES

RL.5.2, Lessons 1–3

UNIT OVERVIEW

The lessons in this unit examine how to develop a theme statement by analyzing how a character responds to challenges in a story and determining the lesson or moral of the story.

Lesson 1: Before students can determine theme, they must locate details that describe the most significant events or actions in a story. In this lesson, you model how to use a story map to record the key details in a summary. Then students work in partners to complete the story map with details from the rest of the story.

Lesson 2: In this lesson, students identify a general theme by looking at a character’s actions and traits and what the character learns. You model how to find text evidence that best supports the inferences; then student pairs practice identifying additional examples.

Lesson 3: In this lesson, students write a theme statement based on the general theme and text evidence identified in the previous lessons. Then you model how to find a personal connection to the theme, and students complete their own description of how they relate to the story.

Research Findings	Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities
Visual structures that distinguish significant events from the trivial details in a story strengthen student comprehension. (Barton & Sawyer, 2003) Competent readers can identify important ideas in a text and use the text structure to develop a summary. (Jitendra & Gajria, 2011)	In Lesson 1, students chart the key events and actions from the beginning, middle, and end of a story on a story map.
Before a reader can determine a story’s theme, the student needs to analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2014)	Students examine text evidence in Lesson 2.

A classroom community that involves collaboration between teacher and students lets students develop a sense of ownership in learning. (Olson, 2003)	All three lessons include collaborative discussions between the teacher and class and between student partners.
Whole-group direct instruction in reading strategies like summarization and interpretation is most effective when paired with guided practice in small groups. (Barton & Sawyer, 2003)	Each lesson includes a teacher think-aloud followed by a time for partners to practice the demonstrated skill.

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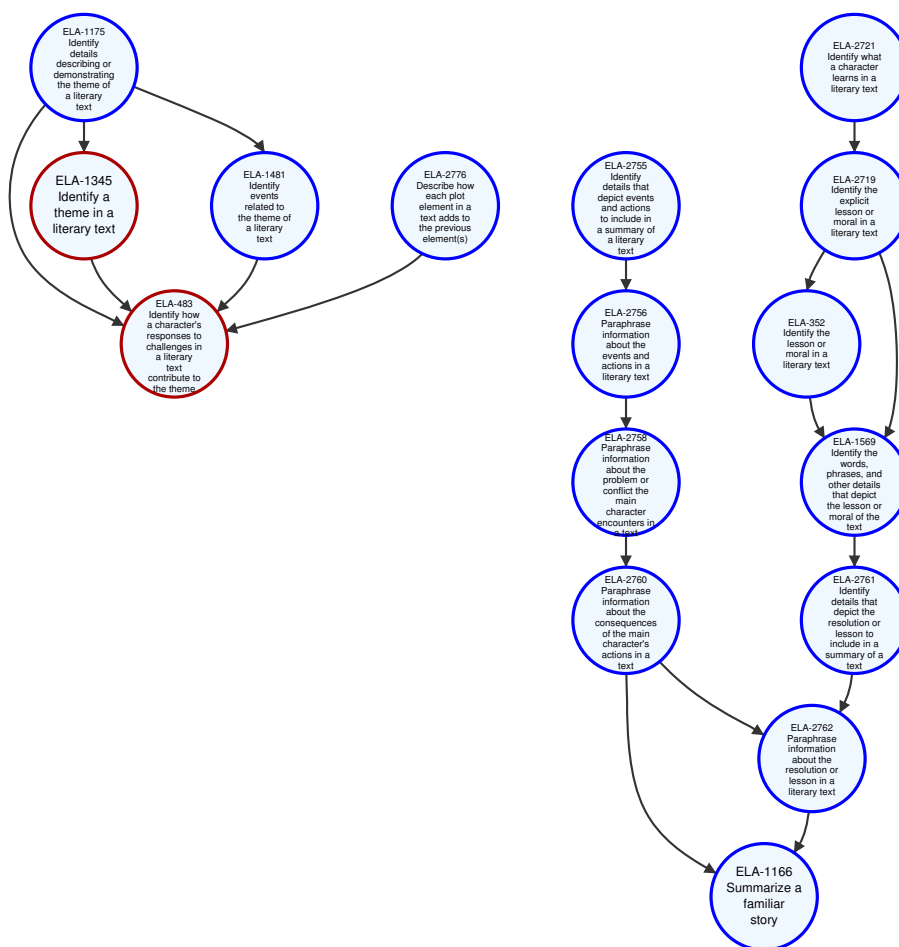
SUMMARY AND THEME OF A SHORT STORY

LEARNING MAP TOOL

RL.5.2

STANDARD

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.



**Learning map model for RI.5.2.*

Node ID	Node Name	Node Description
ELA-352	IDENTIFY THE LESSON OR MORAL IN A LITERARY TEXT	Identify a lesson, moral, or central message which can be generalized from a literary text using what was learned by a character in it.
ELA-483	IDENTIFY HOW A CHARACTER'S RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES IN A LITERARY TEXT CONTRIBUTE TO THE THEME	Identify how one or more characters respond to challenges and how the response contributes to the theme.
ELA-1166	SUMMARIZE A FAMILIAR STORY	Summarize a familiar story by including a short description of the characters, setting, character goals, events and actions, problems and solutions, consequences, resolutions, and possibly the lesson or moral.
ELA-1175	IDENTIFY DETAILS DESCRIBING OR DEMONSTRATING THE THEME OF A LITERARY TEXT	Identify the words, phrases, and other details that describe or demonstrate the theme of a literary text.
ELA-1345	IDENTIFY THE THEME OF A LITERARY TEXT	Identify the theme of a story, drama, or poem. The theme should be a concise word or phrase about the larger truth of the text.
ELA-1481	IDENTIFY EVENTS RELATED TO THE THEME OF A LITERARY TEXT	Identify which events are related to and contribute to the theme in a literary text.
ELA-1569	IDENTIFY THE WORDS, PHRASES, AND OTHER DETAILS THAT DEPICT THE LESSON OR MORAL OF THE TEXT	Identify the words, phrases, and other details presented that depict the lesson or moral of the story, drama, or poem.
ELA-2719	IDENTIFY THE EXPLICIT LESSON OR MORAL IN A LITERARY TEXT	Identify an explicit lesson, moral, or central message that can be generalized from a literary text.
ELA-2721	IDENTIFY WHAT A CHARACTER LEARNS IN A LITERARY TEXT	Identify what a character learns as a consequence of actions in a literary text.
ELA-2755	IDENTIFY DETAILS THAT DEPICT EVENTS AND ACTIONS TO INCLUDE IN A SUMMARY OF A LITERARY TEXT	Identify which details describing the events and actions in a story or drama are important enough to include in a summary.
ELA-2756	PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENTS AND ACTIONS IN A LITERARY TEXT	Paraphrase information about the events and actions using details from a story or drama.
ELA-2758	PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROBLEM OR CONFLICT THE MAIN CHARACTER ENCOUNTERS IN A TEXT	Paraphrase information about the problem or conflict the main character encounters using details from a story or drama.
ELA-2760	PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MAIN CHARACTER'S ACTIONS IN A TEXT	Paraphrase information about the consequences of the main character's actions using details from a literary text.
ELA-2761	IDENTIFY DETAILS THAT DEPICT THE RESOLUTION OR LESSON TO INCLUDE IN A SUMMARY OF A TEXT	Identify which details describing the resolution or lesson in a story or drama are important enough to include in a summary.

ELA-2762	PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESOLUTION OR LESSON IN A LITERARY TEXT	Paraphrase information about the resolution or lesson using details from a story, drama, or poem.
ELA-2776	DESCRIBE HOW EACH PLOT ELEMENT IN A TEXT ADDS TO THE PREVIOUS ELEMENT(S)	Describe how each plot element in a story or drama builds on what previously happened to the characters in the preceding element.

SUMMARIZING A STORY

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RL.5.2, Lesson 1

LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students identify key details and summarize the story in a story map.

STANDARD

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select a short story with a clear theme, such as courage, fairness, honesty, or kindness. This unit includes a passage, **THE NEIGHBOR UNDERGROUND**, which you are free to copy. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use from any other source.

MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ **PASSAGE: THE NEIGHBOR UNDERGROUND**
- ▶ **STUDENT HANDOUT: STORY MAP**

IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify key details and write a summary of the story.”

Pass out **PASSAGE: THE NEIGHBOR UNDERGROUND** and **STUDENT HANDOUT: STORY MAP**.

Explain that as they read the story, students will identify the most important events and actions and write them on the story map.

Display the handout and **review** the terms: *main characters*, *setting*, and *events*.

Read the beginning of the story aloud to the students, stopping periodically to **write** information into the story map, including main characters, setting, events, and conflicts. As you write descriptions, **review** how to paraphrase. **Tell** students that to paraphrase means to put in your own words.

Remind students that when you write a summary you only include the most important details in the story. You should determine the key actions and events from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story.

On the map, **paraphrase** a detail from the beginning of the story. **Ask** students for additional information that needs to be added to the map. **Direct** students to fill in the map with the information you provided as an example.

Read the middle of the story aloud and ask students for help in adding information to the story map.

Next, **release** students to work in pairs. **Instruct** students to read the end of the story and add information to the story map.

Circulate and **ask** students the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if the student can PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENTS AND ACTIONS IN A LITERARY TEXT (ELA-2756): <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What is happening in the story?▶ Where in the story does this happen?	Determine if the student can PARAPHRASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROBLEM OR CONFLICT THE MAIN CHARACTER ENCOUNTERS IN A TEXT (ELA-2758): <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What is the conflict in the story?▶ Why do you think this conflict happens in the story?	Determine if the student can SUMMARIZE A FAMILIAR STORY (ELA-1166): <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What details should be included in the summary of the story?▶ Why would you include these events and actions?

Ask pairs to share with the class what details they determined are most important. As pairs share, **encourage** students to add any details missing from their own story maps. Before collecting the maps, **ask** the class whether all parts of the story are represented in the story map.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

The Neighbor Underground

by Clara Stroebe

Once upon a time there was a peasant who lived in Telemarken, and had a big farm; yet he had nothing but bad luck with his cattle, and at last lost his house and holding. He had scarcely anything left, and with the little he had, he bought a bit of land that lay off to one side, far away from the city, in the wildwood and the wilderness. One day, as he was passing through his farm-yard, he met a man.

"Good-day, neighbor!" said the man.

"Good-day," said the peasant, "I thought I was all alone here. Are you a neighbor of mine?"

"You can see my homestead over yonder," said the man. "It is not far from your own." And there lay a farm-holding such as he had never before seen, handsome and prosperous, and in fine condition. Then he knew very well that this must be one of the underground people; yet he had no fear, but invited his neighbor in to drink a glass with him, and the neighbor seemed to enjoy it.

"Listen," said the neighbor, "there is one thing you must do for me as a favor."

"First let me know what it is," said the peasant.

"You must shift your cow-stable, because it is in my way," was the answer he gave the peasant.

"No, I'll not do that," said the peasant. "I put it up only this summer, and the winter is coming on. What am I to do with my cattle then?"

"Well, do as you choose; but if you do not tear it down, you will live to regret it," said his neighbor. And with that he went his way.

The peasant was surprised at this, and did not know what to do. It seemed quite foolish to him to start in to tear down his stable when the long winter night was approaching, and besides, he could not count on help.

One day as he was standing in his stable, he sank through the ground. Down below, in the place to which he had come, everything was unspeakably handsome. There was nothing which was not of gold or of silver. Then the man who had called himself his neighbor came along, and bade him sit down. After a time food was brought in on a silver platter, and mead in a silver jug, and the neighbor invited him to draw up to the table and eat. The peasant did not dare refuse, and sat down at the table; but just as he was about to dip his spoon into the dish, something fell down into his food from above, so that he lost his appetite.

"Yes, yes," said the man, "now you can see why we don't like your stable. We can never eat in peace, for as soon as we sit down to a meal, dirt and straw fall down, and no matter how hungry we may be, we lose our appetites and cannot eat. But if you will do me the favor to set up your stable elsewhere, you

shall never go short of pasture nor good crops, no matter how old you may grow to be. But if you won't, you shall know naught but lean years all your life long."

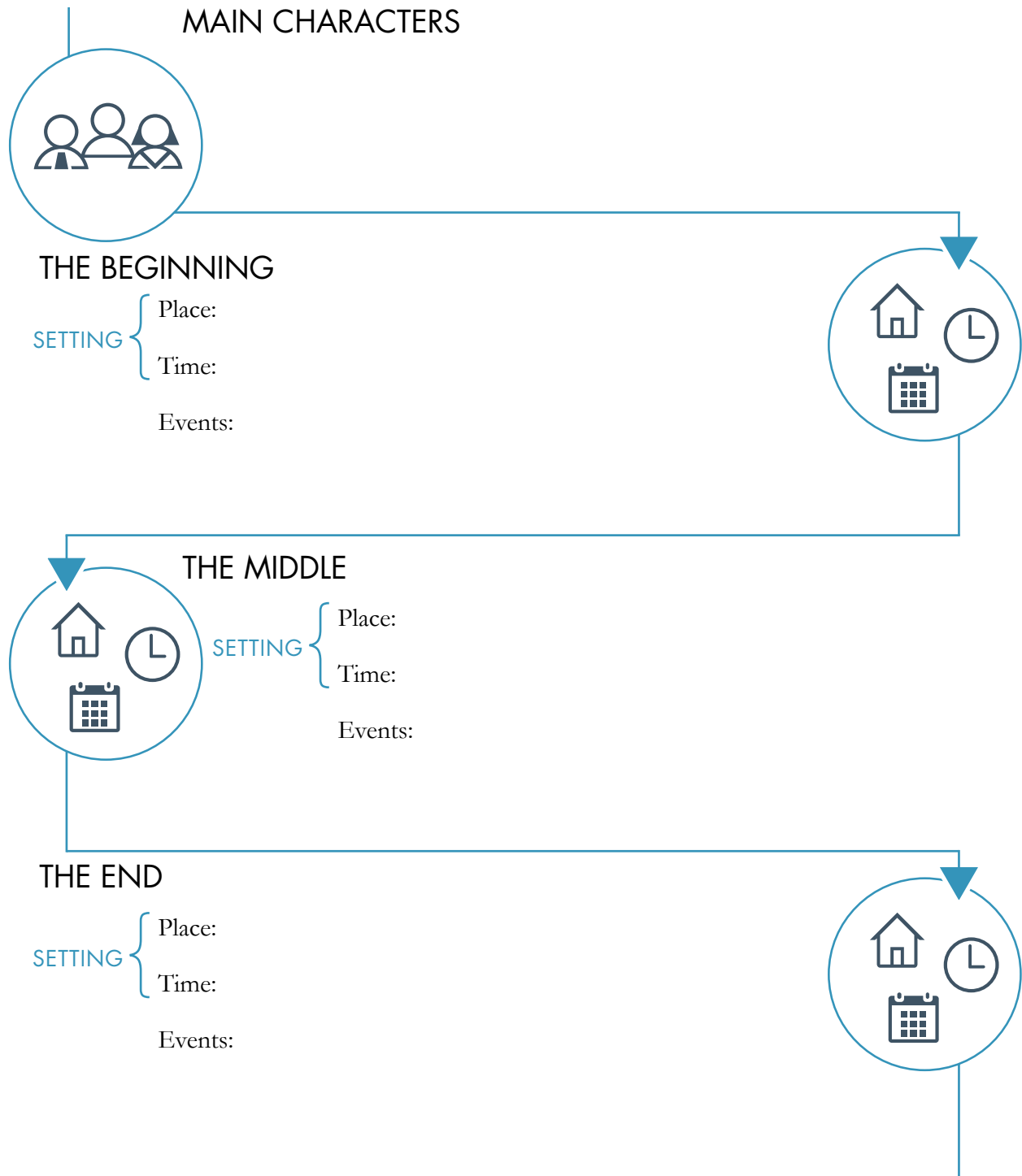
When the peasant heard that, he went right to work pulling down his stable, to put it up again in another place. Yet he could not have worked alone, for at night, when all slept, the building of the new stable went forward just as it did by day, and well he knew his neighbor was helping him.

Nor did he regret it later, for he had enough of feed and corn, and his cattle waxed fat. Once there was a year of scarcity, and feed was so short that he was thinking of selling or slaughtering half his herd. But one morning, when the milk-maid went into the stable, the dog was gone, and with him all the cows and the calves. She began to cry and told the peasant. But he thought to himself, that it was probably his neighbor's doings, who had taken the cattle to pasture. And sure enough, so it was; for toward spring, when the woods grew green, he saw the dog come along, barking and leaping, by the edge of the forest, and after him followed all the cows and calves, and the whole herd was so fat it was a pleasure to look at it.

STORY MAP

STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1



DETERMINING A STORY'S GENERAL THEME

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RL.5.2, Lesson 2

LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students explain how characters in the story respond to challenges and how those character actions help determine the theme of the story.

STANDARD

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ **PASSAGE: THE NEIGHBOR UNDERGROUND**
- ▶ sticky notes

Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can explain how the character reacts to challenges and what he or she learns in the story.”

Review the story from the previous day and **ask** students to recall the most important events in the story.

Tell students that identifying the main character’s actions will help them determine the theme. **Remind** students that the theme is the lesson or message in the story. A general theme is a one-word subject like love or justice. The specific theme is a statement that shows what the character learns about that subject.

Ask students what word best describes the subject the main character learns about in the story. **Collect** student responses on the board or chart paper.

When the class determines the word that best shows the lesson or theme, **model** how to find examples of the main character exhibiting that concept. Starting at the beginning of the story, **find** an action of the main character that exhibits the general theme. On a sticky note, **write** the action as evidence for the word the class chose. For example, if the class determined the story was about bravery, where in the story did the character show bravery and what evidence can you write on the sticky note?

Direct students to work in pairs to come up with three or four more examples of how the character's actions demonstrate the general theme. Students should write a piece of text evidence on each sticky note. Make sure that students write their names on the back of each sticky note so they can be collected and used again in Lesson 3. **Walk around** and **ask** the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
<p>Determine if the student can IDENTIFY THE WORDS, PHRASES, AND OTHER DETAILS THAT DEPICT THE LESSON OR MORAL OF THE TEXT (ELA-1569):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How does the main character show _____ in this part of the story? ▶ What evidence from the story shows this? 	<p>Determine if the student can IDENTIFY DETAILS DESCRIBING OR DEMONSTRATING THE THEME OF A LITERARY TEXT (ELA-1175):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What details or events from the story support the theme of _____? ▶ How does the main character feel about this detail or event? 	<p>Determine if the student can IDENTIFY HOW A CHARACTER'S RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES IN A LITERARY TEXT CONTRIBUTE TO THE THEME (ELA-483):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Why does the character react this way to this event in the story? ▶ How does this reaction show the theme? ▶ What does the character learn from this?

Ask pairs to share the evidence they identified with the class. Have students select the sticky note that they feel best describes the general theme or lesson from the story and place it on the board or chart.

Collect the rest of the sticky notes.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

WRITING A THEME STATEMENT

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

RL.5.2, Lesson 3

LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students determine the specific theme of a story and write a theme statement using details from the story.

STANDARD

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ [PASSAGE: THE NEIGHBOR UNDERGROUND](#)
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: THE STORY THEME AND ME](#)

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IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can write a theme statement by explaining the lesson the story details teach.”

Review the general theme word and sticky note evidence from Lesson 2.

Explain that today students will develop a theme statement based on the theme word and text evidence from the previous lesson. They will also complete a description of how the theme connects to their own lives.

Explain how to write a theme statement. **Remind** students that the general theme word and specific theme statement are different. The general theme is the word the class came up with in the previous lesson. A theme

statement includes the lesson or wisdom the character learns at the end of the story. The theme is the reader's opinion, not the author's, based on the evidence from the story that supports the theme.

Pass out the sticky notes from Lesson 2 and [STUDENT HANDOUT: THE STORY THEME AND ME](#).

With a sample handout, **model** your thinking as students follow along. **Tell** students that they will develop a sentence that explains the lesson about the general theme. **Model** using text evidence from the sticky notes to complete the evidence section of the handout. For now, leave the theme statement blank so that students will apply their own thinking later. Last, **write** a personal example of how the theme, ideas, or events in the story apply to your own life.

Direct students to complete the handout with a partner. While students work, **circulate** and check for understanding.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if the student can IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC THEME OF A STORY (ELA-1345) :		
▶ What detail from the story best shows the lesson or theme?	▶ How would you describe the theme? ▶ What details from the story support that theme?	▶ How can you apply the lesson or theme to your own life?

Ask students to share their theme statements and the supporting text evidence with the class. **Collect** the handouts and assess student understanding with the [TEACHER'S FEEDBACK GUIDE](#).

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

THE STORY THEME AND ME

STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 3

General Theme

Text Evidence for the Theme

Theme Statement

I relate to the details, character actions, or theme of the story because . . .

THE STORY THEME AND ME

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK GUIDE

RL.5.2

Concrete ←————→ Abstract		
<p>Determine if the student can SUMMARIZE A FAMILIAR STORY (ELA-1166):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are the most important events or actions in the story? ▶ Why are these events important? 	<p>Determine if the student can IDENTIFY WHAT A CHARACTER LEARNS IN A LITERARY TEXT (ELA-2721):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What does the main character learn in the story? ▶ What details or actions show what the character learns? 	<p>Determine if the student can IDENTIFY HOW A CHARACTER'S RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES IN A LITERARY TEXT CONTRIBUTE TO THE THEME (ELA-483):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How does the character respond to_____? ▶ What does the character learn from this situation?
COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS		
identifies less important events or actions from the story and cannot summarize the story	identifies how a character feels about an event and not what the character learns in the story	cannot explain the connection between how the character responds to an event and the theme of the story
SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT STEPS		
<p>Use a graphic organizer to map out the events and connect which events and actions belong together.</p> <p>Use the beginning-middle-end strategy to help the student identify what events and actions are most important from each part of the story.</p>	<p>Have the student look for repeated words or a phrase in the story that supports the lesson the character learns.</p>	<p>Create a cause-and-effect chart to demonstrate how the character's actions affect the story and how those actions indicate the overall theme or message.</p>