Finding the Theme

What is this story really about?





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Key words

theme

big idea about life in a story

detail

small fact, word, or action in text

summarize

retell main parts in short order

moral

lesson about right and wrong



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Theme Detectives

Find theme clues

- what characters say
- what changes or is learned
- ideas that repeat
- what characters do
- how the story ends



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Which clue helps most?

Which clue helps you most to find the theme?

- **A** What a character says
- **B** What a character does
- **C** How the ending feels

Vote with your hands, then explain why.



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Watch: What Is Theme?



▶ 0:00 – 3:24

- Listen for theme in one sentence
- Spot clues in what characters do



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Steps to Find Theme



1. Read

Finish story, note key details

2. Track

List what characters do and learn

3. Ask

What life idea keeps repeating?

4. Sum up

Retell briefly, then state theme

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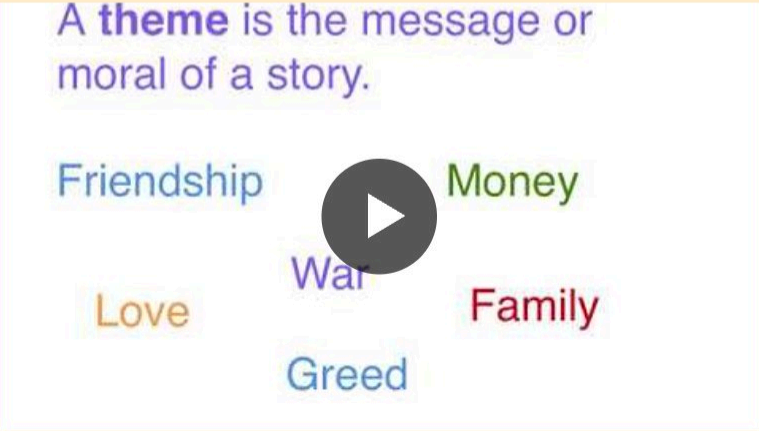
Watch: Find Theme From Clues



▶ 0:00 – 1:17

- How details point to theme
- How to say theme in a sentence



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Your task

Read the wallet story with your partner and find its theme.

1. Read this: A student finds a wallet with $5, takes it to the office, the owner smiles, and the student feels proud.
2. Summarize in 1-2 sentences in order.
3. Write theme in one sentence starting: This shows...

10 min

In pairs



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Summary vs. Theme

Summary

- Tells what happens
- Short retell in order
- Stays close to events

Theme

- Tells big idea about life
- Needs details as proof
- Says what story means



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Think, pair, share

Can two readers find different themes in one story and both be right? Why?



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Quick quiz

1. What is a theme?
2. Where do you find clues to theme?
3. What is a summary?



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