Name & Surname: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Finding the Theme

What is the story really about?

About 30 minutes Level ★★★☆☆

What Is Theme?

Plot tells what happens. A **theme** is the big idea about life the story shows.

- Look at **details**: what a character says, does, and learns.
- Theme can be one **word** like bravery, or a sentence like Practice helps us grow.
- To **summarize**, retell the beginning, middle, and end in your own words.



Key Words

theme: big idea about life in a story

details: small facts about characters and events

moral: lesson that tells what to do

plot: what happens in beginning, middle, end

summarize: retell a story in your own short words

Task A

Example done for you

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Match each word to its meaning. Write the number in the circle.

1	theme	◯	small facts about characters and events
2	plot	◯	what happens in beginning, middle, end
3	details	1	big idea about life in a story
4	summarize	◯	lesson that tells what to do
5	moral	◯	retell a story in your own short words

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Retell in Pictures

Read the story and summarize it in drawings.

The Broken Wagon

1. A sister and her little brother loved their old red **wagon**. Every day after school they pulled apples from the corner store in it. One rainy day a wheel broke on the hill behind their house.
2. The sister wanted to leave the wagon in the **rain**. Her brother said they could fix it if they worked together. They pulled it home and asked a neighbor for tools and help.
3. They worked all afternoon in the garage. The sister held the wheel steady while her brother tightened the **bolts**. They shared water, took turns, and kept trying when it slipped.
4. At sunset they tested the wagon on the **sidewalk**. It rolled straight and fast. They laughed all the way home. Helping each other had made a hard job fun and easy.

Task B

Draw the summary of the passage in order. Write one short sentence under each picture.

1

First - the wagon breaks on the hill

2

Then - they pull it home for help

3

Next - they work together to fix it

4

Finally - they ride and laugh together

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Somebody Wanted Story

Use story details to find theme and summarize.

The Long Practice

1. A student wanted to play the drums in the spring **concert**. At first the beat was wrong and practice felt hard. The noise in the music room made the student nervous.
2. The music teacher showed how to count slowly and tap a **foot**. The student practiced ten minutes every day, even when it was boring. Each day was marked on a chart on the wall.
3. After three weeks the whole **song** could be played without stopping. Arms hurt, but the beat stayed steady. The student even helped another student learn the slow part.
4. On concert night the band played under bright **lights**. The crowd clapped loudly for the last song. Hard work had turned mistakes into music.

Task C

/5

Use the passage to finish the frame. Then write the theme in one sentence.

A **student** wanted to play drums in the school concert, but the beat kept going wrong. So the student practiced ten minutes daily with slow counting, then played the whole song well at the concert.

S Somebody: who is it about?

_____

W Wanted: what did they want?

_____

B But: what was the problem?

_____

S So: what did they do?

_____

T Then: how did it end?

_____

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Find Theme Words

Spot key words about stories and themes.

Did you know?

Did you know? Readers find the **theme** by noticing what repeats in characters' actions.

Task D

/8

Find eight words about **theme** in the puzzle. Circle each word.

D	P	R	A	C	T	I	C	E	H	Y	P
E	I	R	B	R	A	V	E	R	Y	V	S
T	N	U	D	E	F	P	T	A	B	V	U
A	B	P	P	H	R	T	H	E	M	E	M
I	V	S	U	W	I	W	P	U	O	B	M
L	F	H	P	G	E	R	F	E	E	R	A
S	U	K	W	U	N	H	K	F	C	E	R
L	M	O	F	P	D	L	M	V	C	F	I
M	J	H	G	L	S	P	O	B	E	W	Z
B	F	R	D	O	H	D	R	J	M	L	E
I	M	T	C	T	I	S	A	O	P	U	M
H	C	E	T	D	P	Y	L	E	T	L	S

- ☐ FRIENDSHIP
- ☐ SUMMARIZE
- ☐ PRACTICE
- ☐ DETAILS
- ☐ BRAVERY
- ☐ THEME
- ☐ MORAL
- ☐ PLOT

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Prove It Right

Ask questions and order the steps to theme.

Task E

Read each answer. Write a good question that it answers.

The answer is: **Helping each other**

What could the question be?

.....

.....

.....

The answer is: **Practice turns mistakes into music**

What could the question be?

.....

.....

.....

The answer is: **Beginning, middle, and end**

What could the question be?

.....

.....

.....

Task F

Example done for you

/3

Number these steps for finding theme in order from 1 to 4.

- [ ] Write the theme as a word or full sentence.
- [ ] List what the character does, says, and learns.
- [ ] Ask what big idea about life the details show.
- [1] Retell the plot in one or two sentences.

How did I do?

Circle a face for each line.

I can find the theme using story details. ☹ 😐 ☺

I can summarize a story in my own words. ☹ 😐 ☺

I can tell theme, plot, and moral apart. ☹ 😐 ☺

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Answer sheet: Finding the Theme

Task A

1. theme → big idea about life in a story
2. plot → what happens in beginning, middle, end
3. details → small facts about characters and events
4. summarize → retell a story in your own short words
5. moral → lesson that tells what to do

Task B

Answers will vary.

Task C

So: practiced daily with slow counting
But: the beat kept going wrong
Then: played the whole song well
Wanted: to play drums in concert
Somebody: a student

Task D



Words: FRIENDSHIP, SUMMARIZE, PRACTICE, DETAILS, BRAVERY, THEME, MORAL, PLOT (see the grid)

Task E

Answers will vary, e.g. Helping each other → What is the theme of the wagon story? Practice turns mistakes into music → What theme does the drum story show? Beginning, middle, and end → What parts are in a short summary?

Task F

1. Retell the plot in one or two sentences. 2. List what the character does, says, and learns. 3. Ask what big idea about life the details show. 4. Write the theme as a word or full sentence.

Pictures: Microsoft Fluent Emoji (MIT)

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