



What makes a  
story  
interesting, or  
what hooks a  
reader?



# Plot: Conflict

Conflict is the dramatic struggle between two forces in a story. Without conflict, there is no plot.



## WHY CONFLICT?

At the heart of every great story is a conflict (or problem). The main character wants something and is being prevented from getting it.



Little Red Riding Hood wants to go visit her Grandmother...

...but the Big Bad Wolf interferes.

## IDENTIFY THE CONFLICT

The most effective way to identify a conflict is to write a **CONFLICT STATEMENT**.

A conflict statement is a sentence that briefly states what the main character wants and what is preventing him/her from attaining that desire.

**Example: Cinderella wants to go to the ball, but her wicked stepmother won't let her go.**



# PROTAGONIST

The main character(s) who has the conflict



# ANTAGONIST

Who or what the protagonist is struggling against



Not always a bad guy. In fact, sometimes it is not even a person!

philipmario

MARTEL

## CONFLICT STATEMENT PRACTICE

- Protagonist:
- What protagonist wants
- What is keeping the protagonist from getting what she wants:

- Conflict Statement:



## ON YOUR OWN...

### Conflict Practice 1

With his big ears, Horton the Elephant can hear the tiny Who's calling for help, but nobody believes him. The elephant tries to protect the Who village, but the speck of dust they live on is stolen by a group of mean monkeys and dropped into a gigantic clover field.






## ON YOUR OWN...

### Conflict Practice 2

When Ruth was 5-years-old she became very ill with scarlet fever and lost all of her teeth. When school started in the fall, she begged her mother not to make her go because she was embarrassed. She knew that the other kids would make fun of her and she would never be able to talk and make friends. Her mother, however, insisted that she go and continued to buy school supplies. When the big day arrived, Ruth hid in her closet under a pile of clothes, but her mother quickly discovered her hiding place and pulled her kicking and screaming out of the closet and out to the bus stop.





## Types of Conflict:

# Plot: Types of Conflict

Character vs Character



Character vs Nature



Character vs Society



Character vs Self



## Why is **CONFLICT** important?

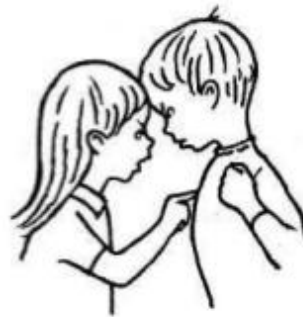
- Without **conflict**, there is no *plot!*
- The plot mountain is created around the **conflict...**
- Introduced in *rising action...*
- Is faced head-on during *climax...*
- Begins to work itself out during *falling action...*
- Is resolved during *resolution.*

# EXTERNAL CONFLICT

- An external conflict is between a character and an *outside force*.
  - Man vs. Man
  - Man vs. Nature
  - Man vs. Society

## MAN vs. MAN

- A character struggles with another character.
- Protagonist vs. Antagonist
- The classic "good guy" vs. "bad guy" situation
- *Can you think of any examples?*



## Plot: Character vs. Character Conflict

**This type of conflict finds the main character in conflict with another character, human or not human.**

*“The new one is the most beautiful of all; he is so young and pretty.” And the old swans bowed their heads before him.*

*Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wing; for he did not know what to do, he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness, and now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds.*

*The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Anderson



## MAN vs. NATURE

- A character struggles with a force of nature (natural disaster, desolation, animal, etc.)
- Usually, the character is struggling to *survive*.
- *Can you think of any examples?*



### 3) Character vs. Nature

The weather, cold, disease, wild animals, hunger, fire, natural disasters



## Plot: Character vs. Nature Conflict

**This type of conflict finds the main character in conflict with the forces of nature, which serve as the antagonist.**

*It's a Truffula Seed.  
It's the last one of all!  
You're in charge of the last of the Truffula Seeds.  
And Truffula Trees are what everyone needs.  
Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care.  
Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.  
Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack.  
Then the Lorax  
and all of his friends  
may come back.*

*The Lorax by Dr. Seuss*

## MAN vs. SOCIETY

- In this conflict, a character or a group of characters fight against the society in which they live.
- The character fights against social traditions or rules (fight for freedom, rights, for a cause etc.)
- Society becomes a "character" of its own
- Usually used to comment on positive or negative aspects of real society (SATIRE)
- *Can you think of any examples?*



## 2) Character vs. Society

Rules or laws, cultural norms, a society's system of beliefs, standing up for what is believed



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## Plot: Character vs. Society Conflict

**This type of conflict has the main character in conflict with a larger group: a community, society, culture, etc.**

*“I’m tired of living in a hole,” said Jenny.*

*“Let’s fight for freedom!” cried Bouncer. “We’ll be soldiers! Rough-riding Rowdies! I’ll be the general and commander-in-chief!”*

*The Island of the Skog* by Steven Kellogg

## INTERNAL CONFLICT

- An internal conflict is between a character and *his/her self*.
  
- Man vs. Self

## MAN vs. SELF

- The character's struggle takes place in his/her own mind.
- Usually has something to do with a choice (choosing between right and wrong), or it may have to do with overcoming emotions or mixed feelings.
- *Can you think of any examples?*





## 4) Character vs. Self

Loneliness, self-doubt, making a tough decision, poor self-esteem, overcoming addiction, jealousy



## Plot: Character vs. Self Conflict

**In this type of conflict, the main character experiences some kind of inner conflict.**

*Finally, Sam's father said, "Go to bed now. But before you go to sleep, Sam, tell yourself the difference between REAL and MOONSHINE."*

*Sam, Bangs & Moonshine* by Evaline Ness

## OTHER TYPES OF CONFLICT

- Man vs. Supernatural
  - Gods, ghosts, monsters, spirits, aliens, etc
- Man vs. Fate
  - Fight for choice; fight against destiny
- Man vs. Technology
  - Computers, machines, etc.



## CONCEPT REVIEW

- What is the **definition** of conflict?
- **Why** do stories have conflicts?
- How do you create a **conflict statement**?
- What are the four **basic types** of conflicts?



## ON YOUR OWN...

- 1) Identify the type of conflict represented by each of the following book summaries.
- 2) Write a conflict statement for each summary



## *Shadowmancer*

Obadiah Demurral isn't satisfied running the affairs of his village. Now he wants to control the world, as well as God and His angels—and he will stop at nothing. Who will stand against him? Raphah has come a long distance to reclaim the ancient relic Demurral has stolen, but Raphah is young. And so are Thomas and Kate, who are drawn into this war between good and evil. Their struggle against Demurral will bring them face-to-face with the powers of darkness in an epic battle.

### **Character vs. Character**

Raphah wants to reclaim the ancient relic, but Demurral is trying to control the world.

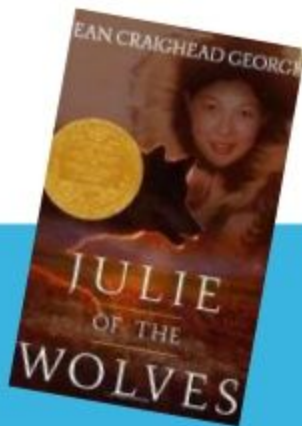


### *Julie of the Wolves*

At 13, an orphan and unhappily married, Miyax runs away from her husband's parents' home, hoping to reach San Francisco and her pen pal. But she becomes lost in the vast Alaskan tundra, with no food, no shelter, and no idea which is the way to safety. Without food and time running out, Miyax tries to survive by copying the ways of a pack of wolves.

### Character vs. Nature

Julie wants to reach San Francisco, but she is lost in the Alaskan wilderness.

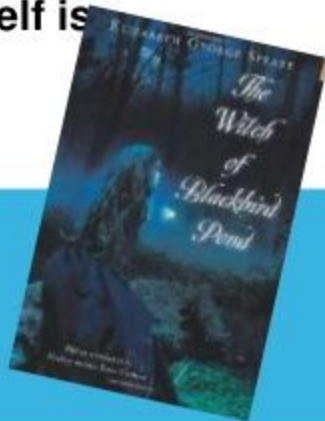


## *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Orphaned Kit Tyler is forced to move in with her stern Puritan relatives and she feels like a tropical bird that is now caged and lonely. The only place where Kit feels completely free is in the meadows, where she enjoys the company of the old Quaker woman known as the Witch of Blackbird Pond. But when Kit's friendship with the "witch" is discovered, Kit is faced with suspicion, fear, and anger. She herself is accused of witchcraft!

### Character vs. Society

Kit wants to be free to be friends with an older woman, but she is accused of being a witch.



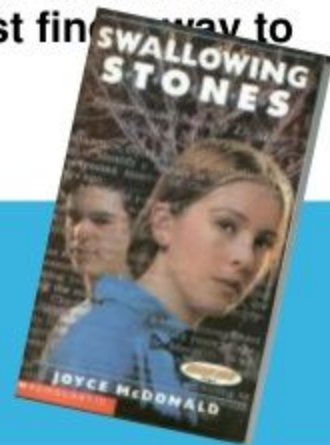


## *Swallowing Stones*

The best day of Michael Mackenzie's life becomes the worst when the bullet he fires into the air during his 17th birthday party comes down a mile away and kills a man. When he hears the story on the radio, the news hits him like a lightning bolt. Numbly following the advice of his best friend, Joe, he buries the rifle and tries, without much success, to get on with life. Tortured by remorse, Michael must find a way to ease his guilt and pain.

### Character vs. Self

Michael doesn't want anyone to find out he has killed a man, but he is tortured by guilt.



Theme

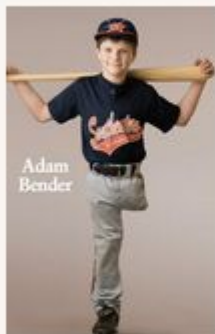


Helped injured  
opponent win.

**SPORTSMANSHIP**

*Pass It On.*

**VALUES.COM** THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE



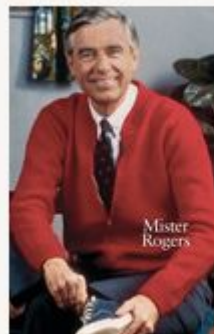
Adam  
Bender

Threw cancer  
a curve ball.

**OVERCOMING**

*Pass It On.*

**VALUES.COM** THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE



Mister  
Rogers

Won't you be  
my neighbor?

**FRIENDSHIP**

*Pass It On.*

**VALUES.COM** THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE

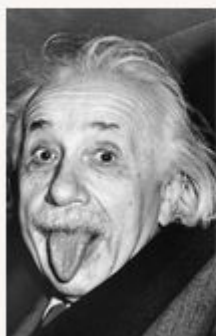


Yes, we  
do believe in  
miracles.

**BELIEVE**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



As a student,  
he was  
no Einstein.

**CONFIDENCE**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



Ogre  
achiever.

**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



Susan  
Boyle

She  
Dreamed A  
Dream.

**LIVE YOUR DREAMS**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



Bethany  
Hamilton

Me, quit?  
Never.

**RISING ABOVE**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



Brooke  
Ellison

Quadriplegic.  
A. Harvard.

**DETERMINATION**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM | 1.800.955.2222



On the  
10,000th try  
there was  
light.

**OPTIMISM**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE



Failed, failed,  
failed. And  
then...

**PERSISTENCE**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE



No setback  
will set us  
back.

**DETERMINATION**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A BETTER LIFE



When others ran  
out, he rushed in.

**COURAGE**

*Pass It On.*

VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION  
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His biggest fight yet  
isn't in the ring.

**COURAGE**

*Pass It On.*

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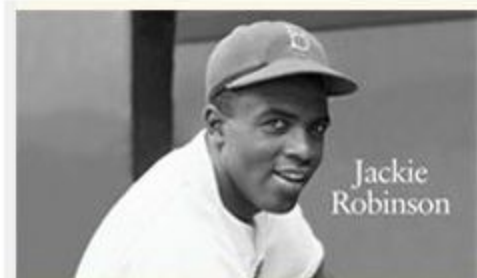


By George,  
we did it.

**LEADERSHIP**

*Pass It On.*

**VALUES.COM** THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE



Jackie  
Robinson

Here's to you,  
Mr. Robinson.

**CHARACTER**

*Pass It On.*

**VALUES.COM** THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE



Your family can do incredible things, too.

**TEAMWORK**

*Pass It On.*

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## Themes →

. Good friends are forever.

. Good fortune favors the bold.

What you give out in the world is what you get back.

Value the simple things in life.

It's the thought that counts.

Christopher Robin and Pooh take a walk alone. Christopher Robin tells Pooh that he is not going to be able to do “nothing” anymore, but asks Pooh to promise to do nothing without him, from time to time, and to never forget him. Christopher Robin knows that whatever happens, Pooh will understand. (Christopher Robin and Pooh come to an enchanted place, and we leave them there.)

Tired of Tigger's incessant bouncing, Rabbit leads Tigger, Pooh and Rabbit on a long explore in hopes of losing Tigger and frightening the bounce right of him. Instead, the three conspirators get lost, and Tigger has to rescue them. (Tigger is Unbounced)

Pooh and Piglet are in Owl's treehouse on a blustery day when the tree blows over and they are trapped. Piglet climbs out to get help, and Pooh is left behind to listen, once again, to Owl tell the story of his Uncle Robert. (Piglet Does a Very Grand Thing)

Pooh invents the game of Poohsticks, in which he and his friends stand on a footbridge and they each drop a stick into the river. Whoever's stick goes under the bridge and makes it out the other side first is the winner. Pooh and his friends can play Poohsticks for hours on end. (Pooh Invents a New Game and Eeyore Joins in)

It is Eeyore's birthday. Piglet wants to give Eeyore a present. He is bringing him a big, red balloon when he trips and falls and the balloon pops. He gives Eeyore the popped balloon. Eeyore is delighted with the little bit of colorful rubber, because someone remembered him on his birthday. (Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents)

Tell the theme of each short story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Theme \_\_\_\_\_



## The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Once there was a shepherd boy who spent his days on the hills watching the sheep. The boy got bored and lonely on the hill all day with only the sheep for company. I know, he thought to himself. I will call out, "Wolf!" and then the others will come running to help me, and I will not be alone. So the boy called out, as loud as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!" All the boys and men from his village came running. "Where is the wolf?" they asked. "It ran off," the boy said. But one of the other boys stayed with him all the same, and he had company for the rest of the day. A few days later, the boy was feeling bored and lonely again. I would really like some company, he thought to himself. So once again he called out, "Wolf! Wolf!" and all the boys and men from his village came running. Again he told them that the wolf had been frightened away by the sound of them coming. This time there was grumbling among the men, who didn't believe him. They were getting angry at having to drop their work and come running for no reason because of this foolish boy. Still, as a precaution, they allowed one of the other boys to remain with him until it was time to bring the sheep back in the evening. A few days later, the boy was once again on the hill, tending his sheep, when he saw a real wolf skulking about the edges of his flock. The wolf was huge, and he had sharp, white teeth and bright, yellow eyes. The boy was very frightened. "Wolf! Wolf!" he cried out. "Wolf!" But this time, no one came. The men in the village, who had become wise to the boy's trick, only laughed. "There is no wolf," they said to themselves. Meanwhile, the wolf ate all of the boy's sheep.

### Big World, Small World

The theme of a story is bigger than just what happens in the story. The theme can be expressed as a single sentence, and it communicates a message about life or human nature. One theme can be expressed in different ways through different stories, because the theme is about how the "big world" of life works, not just about how the "small world" of the story works.

1. What happens to the boy in the story?

2. Explain what the story means to you, and how you should conduct your life.

3. In a single sentence, write what you think is the theme of The Boy Who Cried Wolf.







# TOY STORY

Friends may come, and friends may leave, but they are our friends, and we will love them forever.



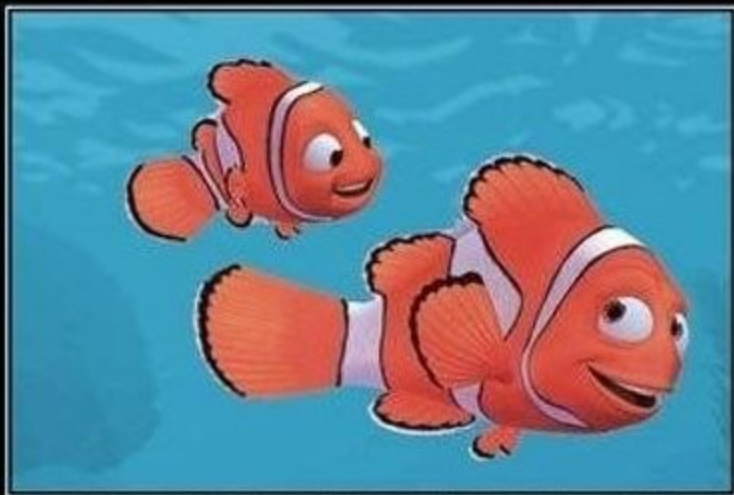
# A BUG'S LIFE

Together, even the smallest can achieve the greatest goal



# MONSTER'S INC.

No matter what, we will give everything for those we care for.



# FINDING NEMO

For our children, we will do anything.



# THE INCREDIBLE'S

Family, more than anything, makes this life worth living



# CARS

The greatest victories are the people we meet along the way



# RATATOUILLE

What we can achieve is determined by us and us alone



# WALL-E

There is no greater wonder in the universe than the love we hold for others.





# UP

The adventure never ends.

## Identifying Theme

Read the story below. Identify the theme, and what it is about the story that helps you to recognize it.

### Rachel's Story

Rachel's friends wanted her to study with them. "I don't need to study," Rachel said. "I already know how to do our homework." "But I did not understand the lesson today," her friend said. "If you did, then if you study with me you can explain the lesson to me. That would be a big help to me. But Rachel did not want to waste her time studying something she already knew.

A week later, their teacher introduced a new concept in math. Rachel did not understand the concept, and struggled in class. "Study with me," she said to her friend after school. "I noticed that you understood today's lesson." "I did," her friend said. "And that is why I don't need to waste my time studying today." And her friend went off to play, leaving Rachel to study by herself.



1. What is the theme of Rachel's Story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens in the story that helps you to recognize the theme? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify the theme of the poem and explain how the poet gets the theme across in the poem.

## Nature's Cycle

I love the blue of the sky in spring  
I love the warmth of the rain  
I love the pretty flowers I thought  
I would never see again  
I wish it was always spring time  
Bright sun, clean air, cool days  
But the earth turns, the earth turns  
And summer's on its way.

I love the plants of summer  
The vegetables and fruits  
I love to wear my flip flops  
And hang out in my bathing suit.  
I wish it was always summer  
With its long, green, ice cream days,  
But the earth turns, the earth turns  
And autumn's on its way.

I love the colors of autumn  
The browns and yellows and reds  
When the sun starts sinking in the afternoon  
Dinner comes earlier and so does bed.  
I wish it was always autumn  
With its crunchy leaves and crisp cool days,  
But the earth turns, the earth turns  
And winter's on its way.

I wish it was always winter  
With its softly falling snow  
I love sledding down sloping hills  
And the fire's red, warming glow.  
I wish it was always winter,  
With its sparkling, magical days,  
But the earth turns, the earth turns,  
And spring is on its way.



1. What is the theme of the poem?

---

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2. How is the theme developed? What happens in the poem that makes you think so?

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## **ANSWERS**

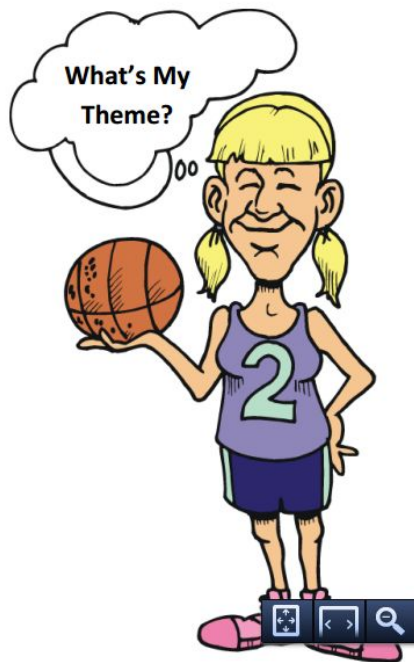
1. Nature is both change and repetition.
2. The lines “the earth turns, the earth turns, and (season) is on its way” are repeated after every stanza. Each stanza talks about one season, then the next stanza talks about the next season. At the end of the poem, spring is on its way. Spring is the season talked about in the first stanza, which suggests a loop or a cycle.

Read the poem. Then create a title for the poem that reveals its theme and write it on the line below. HINT: though some of the lines in the poem could be considered its theme, the theme is not stated explicitly in the poem.

I 'm good at arithmetic  
Sally's good at art  
Holly's two-point layup  
is really off the charts!  
Yasmine bakes a moist, rich cake  
And George sings like a bird  
Everybody's different  
And different's a good word!

Perry wrote a short story  
That made his classmates laugh  
But when he tried to tell a joke  
He only made a gaffe.  
Robin ran a winning race  
But Harry came in third  
Everybody's different  
And different's a good word!

In some things you're outstanding  
In others you're the pits  
But it's the same for everyone  
So no use throwing fits.  
Be thankful for your many gifts  
And work hard on your flaws  
Just do your best and love yourself  
Because there's always cause.  
Do your thing and be yourself  
And don't follow the herd,  
Cause everybody's different  
And different's a good word!



#### Definition

A gaffe is an unintentional act or remark causing embarrassment to its originator.

Pinit

Send



Handwritten notes on a page defining literary themes. The page is divided into two main sections: 'Common Themes' and 'Implied Themes'.

**Common Themes**

- Kindness**: These characters seek how to stand against or others in the story.
- Acceptance**: These characters seek to stand up for their differences.
- Courage**: These characters stand in face their fears.
- Be Responsible**: These characters seek to do the right thing.
- Compassion**: These characters find ways to show concern for other characters that aren't just in talking.
- Never Give Up!**: These characters face challenges and setbacks but they do not give up.

**Implied Themes**

- Friendship**: These characters know what it means to be a good friend.

**THEME**  
The message, moral, or lesson.  
Sometimes it's Stated  
Sometimes it's Implied

*Common Themes*

*Implied Themes*

Small notes on the right side:  
The author tells what the theme is.  
You have to read the text in the story.  
You have to look for the setting and search for the "clues" that reveal the theme.

Small notes at the bottom:  
These characters know what it means to be a good friend.

Wash County

# Theme

→ A broad idea, message, or moral of a story

\*It is usually unsaid by the author—  
BUT we can use text & scheming to infer themes!

## Common Themes in Literature:

- Overcoming Challenges
- Believing in Yourself
- Teamwork
- Acceptance
- Courage
- Compassion
- Perseverance
- Cooperation
- Be Yourself
- Integrity
- responsibility
- love
- Watch for danger
- Happiness
- Honest
- Humor



 **Pinit** **Send****in Book**that is revealed as  
Find in your books.

<b>Acceptance</b>	These books have characters who respect & accept others' differences and beliefs.
<b>Courage</b>	These books have brave characters who have the strength to overcome a fear or accept a risk.
<b>Perseverance</b>	These books have characters who never give up even when facing difficult times.
<b>Cooperation</b>	These books have characters who work together to solve a problem or achieve a goal.
<b>Compassion</b>	These books have characters who want to make those who are suffering feel better.
<b>Honesty</b>	These books have characters who find that it is best to always tell the truth.
<b>Kindness</b>	These books have friendly characters who are generous and considerate of others.
<b>Loyalty</b>	These books have characters who trust each other and never turn their backs on their friends.



\* Theme: Message author wants you to come away from the story with

Common Topics for Themes: "Big Ideas"

- courage
- equality
- honesty
- doing the right thing
- dreams
- hope
- love
- acceptance
- kindness
- differences
- family
- achievement
- fears
- friendship
- jealousy
- peace
- being yourself
- hard work
- never giving up

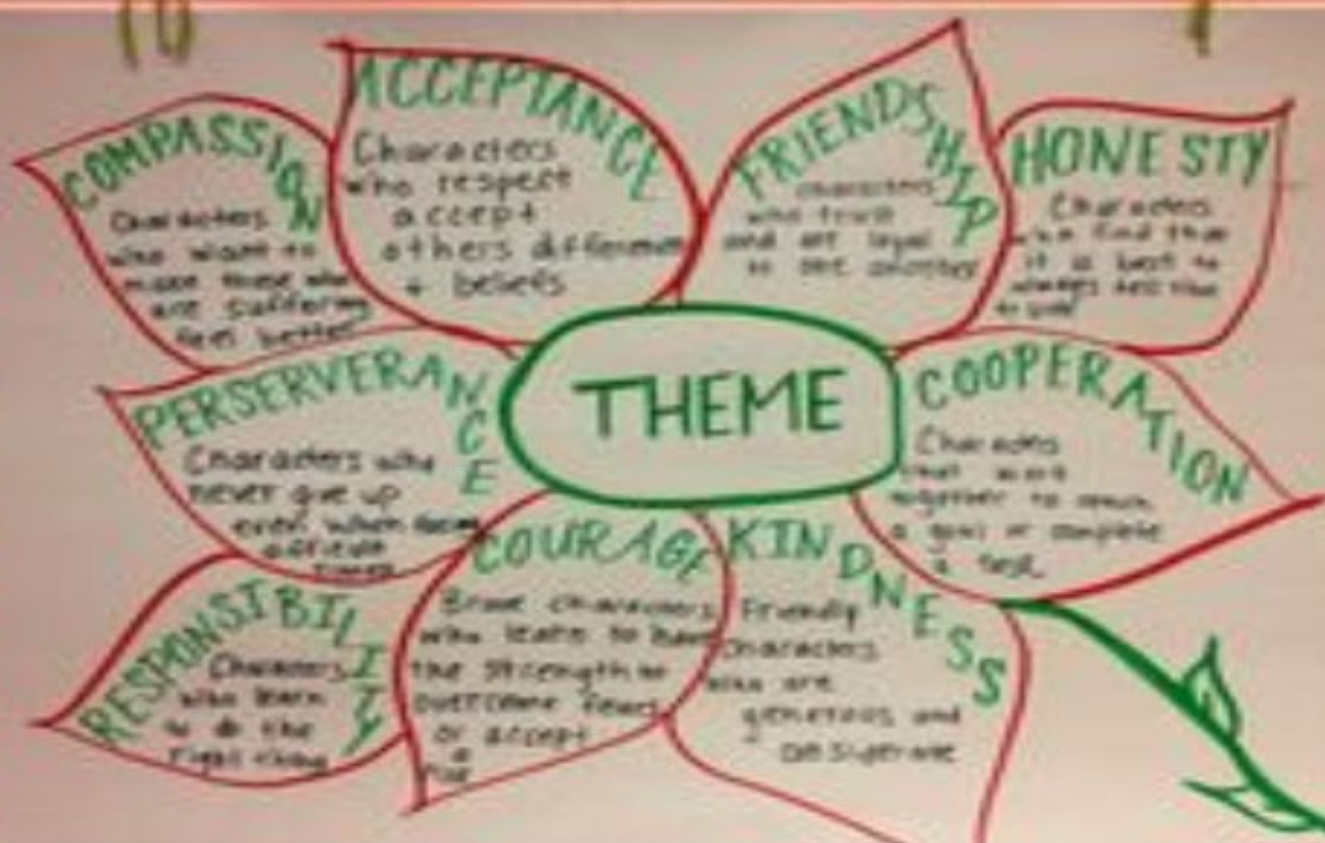
Ask, "What did the characters learn?"

"How did the characters grow or change?"

"Why did the characters act this way?"

"I know the theme is \_\_\_\_\_."

"I know this because \_\_\_\_\_ in the text \_\_\_\_\_"



# Central Message

What is the **BIG** idea or lesson the writer is trying to teach **YOU**?

Title	Central Message
Howard B Wigglebottom Learns to Listen	Be a good listener
Howard B Wigglebottom Learns About Sportsmanship	Be a team player. Show good sportsmanship
Howard B Wigglebottom Listens to His Heart	Find out what you like and do what makes you happy
Howard B Wigglebottom Learns About Bullies	Bullying is wrong. Always tell your teacher.