

Unit 1

Theme Transcending Literature

English 9 – Mitchell

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[How To Find a Theme-You Tube](#)

Where We're Headed

Reading

- Read 3 short stories and for each one:
 - determine the theme
 - write an objective summary
 - track the development of the theme using a graphic organizer
 - write a theme paragraph.

Research

- Research how the theme of your short story transcends literature/exists in the “Real World” (in movies, songs, tv, news, etc.)

Writing

- Explain how the theme of your short story transcends literature in a 5 paragraph essay.

Group Presentation

- Demonstrate, in a Movie Trailer for your short story. the theme of your story and how it transcends literature.

#4 Intro to Theme

What is a short story?

- A brief work of **fiction**
- A **main character faces a conflict** that is resolved in the plot.
- It usually **conveys a theme**, or message about life.
- It must **accomplish its purpose in relatively few words**.

Components of a Short Story

- Conflict
- Setting
- Character
- Point of View
- Theme

What is Conflict?

- **Conflict is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move.**
- Types
 - **External** (outside)
 - Man vs. Man
 - Man vs. Circumstances
 - Man vs. Society
 - **Internal** (inside)
 - Man vs. himself/herself (man vs. his fear)

What is Setting?

- The time and location in which a story takes place.
 - Place
 - Time
 - Weather conditions
 - Social conditions
 - Mood or atmosphere

What is Character?

- The person in a work of fiction
- The characteristics of a character (STEAL):
 - What the character **says**
 - What the character **thinks**
 - How the character **effects others**
 - How the character **acts**
 - What the character **looks like**

What is Point of View?

- The angle from which the story is told
 - First person
 - Omniscient
 - Third person

What is Theme?

Life lesson, meaning, **moral**, or message about life or human nature that is communicated by a literary work.

In other words:

Theme is **what the story teaches readers.**

Theme Cont.

- **A theme is not a word or a subject, it is a sentence.**
- Theme is a debatable **opinion**.
- You don't have to agree with the theme to identify it.
- There is no wrong answer if you can support 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.

Example

- Abstract word or idea/subject – Love
- What is the author saying about love? = Theme
 - Love, if taken to extremes, can be negative rather than positive.
 - Love can conquer even the greatest evil.

How do you find a theme?

1. Looking for changes in the main character
2. Watching for clear statements of theme
3. Examining the title
4. Looking at the conflict

What is the theme?

Jenny Puchovier was so excited. She had a pack of Starburst in her lunch and she had been looking forward to eating them all morning. Lunch finally came and Jenny sat down to eat her Starbursts when her *friend* Yudy sat next to her. “Let me get the pink ones,” asked Yudy. Jenny liked the pink ones best, but she thought Yudy was funny and Jenny wanted Yudy to like her, so Jenny gave Yudy all of her pink Starbursts. Before Jenny was done giving Yudy the pink ones, Carrie sat on the other side of Jenny. “Let me get the red and the orange ones, Jenny. Remember when I gave you that Snickers?” Jenny didn’t remember that, though she did remember when Carrie ate a whole Snickers in front of her, but Jenny thought Carrie was cool, so she gave her the red and the orange Starbursts. Now that she only had the yellow ones, Jenny wasn’t so excited about eating starbursts anymore.

Identifying Themes

Themes are not explicit (clearly stated).

Themes are implied. So we must infer.

Themes are bigger than the story.



A diagram illustrating the relationship between the story world and the theme world. It features a red curved background. On the left, a grey oval contains the text 'Small World of the Story'. A yellow arrow curves from this oval towards the right, pointing to the text 'Big World of the Theme. Applies to the "Real" World.'.

Small
World
of the
Story

Big World of the Theme.
Applies to the "Real" World.

Themes are about the big picture.

Not “Yellow Starbursts taste bad”

Not “Yudy and Carrie are bad friends.”

Think BIGGER.

Find “Real” World advice.



Small
World
of the
Story

Big World of the Theme.
Applies to the “Real” World.

Review

1. Theme is what we can learn from a story.
2. Themes must be inferred.
3. Themes are about the BIG world.

CN Summary

Write a 3 sentence summary at the bottom of
your CNs:

Something that is becoming clear to me about
theme...

#5 Find the Theme!

1. We'll read each story.
2. With your partner discuss the possible theme
3. Write a theme statement on your paper
4. Write another sentence explaining what happens in the story that leads you to believe this.

How does the small world of the story connect to the big world theme?

#1

Once there was a mean little boy who lived in a small village. This mean little boy loved to mess with people, so one day he ran up to a sheep herder and shouted, “WOLF! WOLF! A wolf is attacking the town!” The sheep herder grabbed his staff and ran to defend the town, but realized he had been fooled when the boy started pointing and laughing at him. “Ha ha! I made you jump,” said the boy. Then the boy ran up to a farmer and shouted, “WOLF! WOLF! A wolf is attacking the town!” The farmer grabbed his pitchfork and ran to defend the town, but when the boy started pointing and laughing at him, he realized he had been tricked. As the boy went back to his family’s farm laughing about the funny trick he played, he saw a real wolf in his father’s chicken coop. As the wolf ate all of his father’s chickens, the boy screamed over and over again, “WOLF! WOLF! Please help us!” But nobody came to help him.

#5 Find the Theme!

- Write a theme statement on your paper
- Write another sentence explaining what happens in the story that leads you to believe this.

How does the small world of the story connect to the big world theme?

#2

Angie loved to draw. She made colorful designs of people's names with bright hearts & flowers, but she lost her own markers, so she borrowed her teacher's. The school day was ending, but Angie wanted to keep coloring, so she took the teacher's markers home and lost them in her messy room. She came back to school the next day and wanted to color again, so she asked the teacher for more markers. The teacher replied, "Sure, Angie, but this is my last pack." Angie said she would be careful, but by the end of the day the markers were scattered all over the floor and the custodian swept them up and disposed of them. When Angie came in the next day, she asked the teacher for more markers, but she was disappointed to find that there weren't any more. "I don't know where all of my markers went," said the teacher, "but I don't have them." Angie had to draw her pictures with drab pencils.

#5 Find the Theme!

- Write a theme statement on your paper
- Write another sentence explaining what happens in the story that leads you to believe this.

How does the small world of the story connect to the big world theme?

#3

Jenny hated reading class. She didn't understand point of view or figurative language, and not knowing how to do the work frustrated her. She asked the teacher for help, but he spoke so fast and used such big words that she still couldn't understand. The teacher asked if she understood, and she nodded her head, but she didn't. Jenny's friend Katie knew that Jenny was having trouble, and, rather than just giving Jenny all of the answers, Katie explained to Jenny how to solve the problems. Katie spoke clearly and at Jenny's level, and Jenny was happy that she finally learned how to do the work. Later in the week, Katie was having trouble in math class. She didn't understand coordinates and was really frustrated. Seeing that Katie was having problems, Jenny, who understood math very well, taught Katie coordinates. Both girls made honor roll that quarter.

#5 Find the Theme!

- Write a theme statement on your paper
- Write another sentence explaining what happens in the story that leads you to believe this.

How does the small world of the story connect to the big world theme?

#6 - “The Necklace”

Summary and Theme

As you read...

- Think about what the topic or theme might be.
 - What can we learn from the story?
 - What can we infer from the actions of the characters and the plot?
 - How can what we learned from this story apply to the BIG world?
- Where is the theme introduced, developed, and refined?

After you read...

- Write:
 - One paragraph objective SUMMARY
 - A THEME Statement (not a topic!)

#6 “The Necklace” Summary and Theme

- Write:
 - One paragraph objective SUMMARY
 - Make sure you explain the following:
 - Setting
 - Character and Point of View
 - Conflict and Resolution
 - A THEME Statement (not a topic!)

#7 “The Necklace” Graphic Organizer

- With partners or on your own, create a graphic organizer that depicts the development a theme from “The Necklace” (introduced, developed, refined).
- Be creative when designing your graphic organizer and when depicting the development of theme. Feel free to incorporate visuals, graphics, etc.
- Your graphic organizer must answer the following questions and include quotes (concrete details/CD) and analysis of such details (commentary/CM):
 - Where is the theme introduced? 1 Quote/concrete detail + 2 CM
 - Where is the theme developed? 1Quote/ concrete detail + 2CM
 - Where is the theme refined? 1 Quote/concrete detail + 2CM
- Be prepared to share!!

Example:

Story Title _____

Step 1-Abstract Word: _____

Step 2- What is the author trying to say about _____?

Theme Statement

1 CD:

Where is the theme introduced?

■

■

2 CM:

Where is the theme developed?

■

■

Where is the theme refined?

■

■



Example:

Theme Statement

Introduced

1 Concrete Detail
(CD)
Quote with Page #

2 Commentary
(CM)
Explanation of how
the CD introduces
the theme

Developed

1 Concrete Detail
(CD)
Quote with Page #

2 Commentary
(CM)
Explanation of how
the CD develops
the theme

Refined

1 Concrete Detail
(CD)
Quote with Page #

2 Commentary
(CM)
Explanation of how
the CD refines the
theme

#8 “The Necklace” Theme Paragraph

- Instructions: Use your theme statement and analyze its development over the course of the short story using the information from your graphic organizer.

A theme in "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant is

_____. For example, the author introduces the theme by writing, "_____" (de Maupassant #). CM: _____
CM _____.

The author also develops the theme by stating, "_____" (de Maupassant #).
CM _____ CM _____.

The author also refines the theme by writing, "_____" (de Maupassant #).
CM _____ CM _____.
CS _____.

CD = Concrete Detail (Direct quotes from text)

CM = Commentary (How the CD shows the theme)

Sentence starter for CM: This shows... or This is evidence of...

CS = Concluding Sentence