

# Inferring Themes

## ***Setting Up***

Define purpose of the lesson.

### **What is theme?**

The underlying message, lesson, moral or big idea. It explores feelings or issues many people face. It can look at character qualities (such as selfishness) or common experiences. It explores relationships, family, important world issues and events. Characters actions, words often reveal themes. Often the emotions aroused by the story concern its theme. Themes sometimes explore important historical events

It is **not** what happens in the story. This is plot.

Encourage students to discuss the difference between theme and plot.

### **Why is theme important?**

To deepen understanding and enjoyment of the book. (Sometimes it is like experiencing a whole new book within a book.)

To bring understanding and a new perspective to our own experiences.

To develop understanding of the feelings and experiences of others.

## ***Model***

My example: 3 Little Pigs/ Tortoise and The Hare demo plot vs. theme

Themes are suggested by the text

**Model** reading and how certain lines reveal themes. Be sure to explain your thinking and how you the words prompted a certain line of reasoning that leads to theme.

In cycle two and three demonstrate how to use a two-column chart.

Text evidence	Theme

Sometimes we search the text with a theme in mind (traditional approach), and sometimes we search the text and discover theme. Over time model both approaches.

## ***Guide***

Discuss a page of text to uncover themes.

Or explore texts looking for what they have to say about a specific predetermined theme. Ex. Look at Robert Munsch books to explore kid's power.

## ***Collaborate***

Kids find themes and evidence in small groups

## ***Sharing***

Students share the results of their group's discussion on themes and evidence.

## ***Practice independently***

Cycle 2.2 and 3. Invite students to write a one-page response

Cycle one - Keep identifying themes as your read together

Cycle 1.2 Ask students to identify themes on their own as they read stories (Bear in mind many stories at this level do not speak about big issues, they are meant to entertain by being silly or interesting, thus there may be no recognizable theme)