

Reading Toolkit: Grade 5 Objective 3.A.6.a

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 6. Determine important ideas and messages in literary texts

Objective a. Identify and explain main ideas and universal themes

Assessment Limits:

In the text or a portion of the text

Literal versus interpretive meanings of a text or a portion of text

Experiences, emotions, issues, and ideas in a text that give rise to universal themes

Message, moral, or lesson learned from the text

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Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 5 Objective 3.A.6.a

Activities

The teacher will place students in small groups and provide them with a literary text. After reading the text, students will be given envelopes which contain sentence strips. The sentence strips will list the main idea of the literary text, supporting details for that main idea, and details that do not support the main idea. The group of students must isolate the main idea and its supporting details from the available materials. Students will share their answers with other class members.

After students have read a required literary text, they will discuss the passage. During class discussion, the teacher will record the important ideas in the passage and ask students to give him/her supporting details for those important ideas. When the discussion is concluded, the teacher will place the students in small groups. Each group will be asked to create an alternate title for the passage and then present it to the rest of the class. During the presentation students will show how their title reflects an important idea in the passage.

Prior to reading, students will be asked to share times when someone did something kind for them or they were kind to another. The teacher will state that kindness is often a topic for themes in literary works. Students will then read Shel Silverstein's "The Giving Tree" or a like-themed literary passage. While students read these passages they should record the ways in which kindness is shown in these texts. After reading, students should share with the entire class the evidences of kindness they found. Next, with teacher assistance, students should form a theme statement for the text. Following this, the teacher should place students into small groups giving each group a text which they must read and analyze to complete the following chart.

Title	Theme Topic	Supporting Details for Theme	Theme Statement	Application to Real Life Situations

As texts are passed from one group to another, each text should be entered on the chart. Once all groups have seen all the texts, students will share their responses with the other members of the class.

As students read a novel or any longer literary work, they will track the development of theme. When appropriate at certain stages in the novel, teacher and students will isolate theme topics and will develop theme statements. In small groups or as an entire class with teacher direction, students will trace the beginning of the theme to its conclusion. Students will identify the origin of the theme. Did it begin with character, setting, or conflict or a combination of elements? Teacher Note: A suggested way for students to see the interrelatedness of narrative elements is to map the novel's plot and then alongside plot the origin and development of the theme/s. Once students have completed tracking the theme, in a class or small group discussion they should apply the theme to real-life situations.

Clarification

Reading Grade 5 Indicator 3.A.6

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in a literary text which are the **important ideas and messages**. Sometimes these points are stated directly in the text. For other more complex texts, a reader must determine an implied, important idea or message by synthesizing ideas across the text.

To **identify, explain, and analyze main ideas and universal themes**, a reader must first identify the main idea of a text or a portion of a text. In order to do this, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text. To determine what an author of a literary text has to say about the topic, a reader must attend to details that relate to or clarify the topic. This combination of topic and details forms the main idea. The main idea may be directly stated or implied and may appear in any portion of a text.

While a main idea is text-centered, a theme is author-centered. A story's theme is an author's message about a topic. To identify a theme of a literary text, a reader must first find broader important concepts in a text such as family, prejudice, courage, or love. A reader must observe carefully what characters say and do that relates to the theme topic. A theme is a combination of a "big" idea and what is said about that idea. A theme is a recurring idea in a text, but it also moves outside the text and applies to people in general, not just the characters in the story.

In more complex texts, theme can arise not only from character statements and actions but also from emotional and societal issues experienced by characters. These issues can be observed in changes in characters' values or beliefs, symbols, repeated words, or imagery. Readers can bring different interpretations to a text based upon their personal experiences. If evidence from a text can be provided to support a reader's suggestion about theme, then it is valid.

To **identify, explain, and analyze a similar idea or theme in more than one text**, a reader must first identify an idea or theme in each literary text. Once ideas or theme statements for each text are established, comparison between or among the texts can begin.

A reader may focus on similar ideas contained in multiple texts. A reader may focus on morals or lessons learned by characters contained in multiple texts. For younger readers, multicultural renderings of the same fairy tale are common. The conclusions drawn from similar texts are text-specific and based on many supporting details from each text.

A reader may focus on common experiences, emotions, issues, and ideas as sources for theme topic and statements in texts. The best conclusions drawn about theme across multiple texts are text specific, based on many supporting details from all texts. As comparisons among text themes continue, each theme must be analyzed carefully. Not only should the theme statement be considered but also how the author relayed the theme to the reader. For example, in one text, the strongest source for theme may have been character action, while in another text, the strongest source for theme may have been imagery. However, both texts may have similar themes that have been developed in different ways.

To **retell, paraphrase, or summarize a text**, a reader must first read and know the basic narrative elements of a text: the setting, character, and story events. When retelling, a reader must share the story in his/her own words, keeping story events in order.

Paraphrasing allows a reader to take a more complex text and make it understood by placing difficult ideas into simpler language. When a reader can tell a story in words that make sense to him/her, that reader is paraphrasing. As lengths of stories increase, multiple characters appear, and changes in setting occur within a text, paraphrasing increases in complexity.

When a reader can distinguish between necessary and unnecessary ideas and recount only the important ideas in his/her own words, he/she is summarizing. When summarizing, a critical reader paraphrases the important text. As texts grow in complexity, summarizing allows a reader to focus on the essential elements of a literary passage.

To **reflect on, identify, and explain personal connections to the text**, a reader must consider all elements of a literary text: setting, character, story events, mood, tone, and theme. Next, a reader must consider his/her personal experiences and relate them to one or more elements of a text. A reader might consider himself/herself or a friend or family member to be like a character from a text. A reader might discover that his/her attitude toward a particular subject mirrors an author's tone toward the same subject. A reader might hold the same belief revealed in a theme statement or find himself/herself in direct opposition to the idea in a theme. Once this connection is established, a critical reader is able to define how this connection is made and to construct meaning from a text, citing both text and personal details.

To **explain the implications of the text for the reader and/or society**, a reader must first consider ideas from a text that involve the reader in a personal way. A source for such ideas could be the events that befall certain characters, unfamiliar settings, the author's tone toward certain subjects, or thematic development of the text. A critical reader should define the literary element and then explain the level of involvement with that element and the effect it has had upon the reader's thinking. For example, a reader who has always been ambivalent about preserving the forests might alter his/her opinion after reading a text where forest preservation is promoted through theme. Through the explanation, the reader clarifies his/her own thought processing and makes his/her position clear to others.

Sample Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

Question

Read the article 'Strongest of All'. Then answer the following.

Explain whether the title "Strongest of All" supports an important idea in the story. In your response, use details and examples from the story that support your explanation. Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

The title "Strongest of All" supports it because they are talking about who is the strongest and all of them are the strongest at something. That is why I think the title "Strongest of All" supports the story.

Annotation: The reader answers that "The title 'Strongest of All' supports it..." and then offers marginal text support "because they are talking about who is the strongest and all of them are the strongest at something." To strengthen this response the reader should identify what important idea in the story is being supported. The text support should be more exact identifying who "they" are, what "they" say about being strong, and detailing how each of "them" is strong "at something."

Strongest of All support the a lot
 because the Eluphent and the
 Whale are very strong. For exmpl
 the rabbit made them to pull
 the rope agente chuther.

Annotation: The reader answers that "Strongest of All support the a lot." Next the reader refers to the text stating "the Eluphent and the Whale are very strong" and offers an example that "the rabbit made them to pull the rope agente chuther." To improve this response the reader should state an important idea which involves physical strength and show how both the elephant and whale are strong. To continue the reader should point out the significance of the elephant and whale pulling the rope in opposite directions and what both learn from the experience.

The main events are: Elephant and whale
 think that because they are strong and
 they think they are great that whale shall
 rule sea and Elephant shall rule land.
 Rabbit doesn't think that's fair. Rabbit
 puts a trick on them and teaches them
 a lesson that everyone is powerful in their
 their own way. Strongest of All is a
 good title because Rabbit shows
 them a lesson that when it comes to
 cleverness, Rabbit is the strongest of all.
 So, it's that's the lesson, it refers to the title.

Annotation: The reader states that "Strongest of All is a good title because Rabbit shows them a lesson that when it comes to cleverness Rabbit is the strongest of all." Additionally the reader states "Rabbit puts a trick on them and teaches them a lesson that everyone is powerful in their own way." The reader offers text support that both the elephant and the whale believe they are "strong" and "great" and states explicitly "Elephant shall rule land" and "whale shall rule sea." But "Rabbit doesn't think that's fair" and "puts a trick on them." To improve this response, the reader should choose whether an important idea in the text is about cleverness or power. To adequately support an important idea the reader should show how elephant and whale are strong and why rabbit feels it is not fair for them to rule. Further the reader should detail the trick and its end result. Ultimately the ideas of strength and fairness should be related to the selected important idea of cleverness or power.

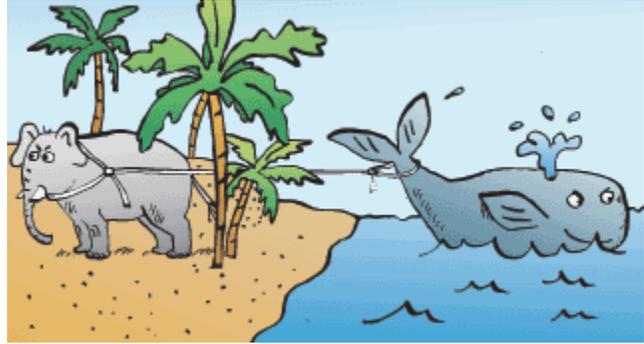
Handouts

Strongest of All

By Pleasant DeSpain

One day long ago, clever Rabbit was walking along the seashore. Hearing voices, he stopped to listen. Elephant and Whale were having a conversation. He wanted to hear every word.

"Sister Whale," said Elephant, "you are the largest, strongest, and most beautiful animal of the sea. Naturally, I'm the largest, strongest, and most beautiful animal on the land. We two should rule over all the animals, birds, and fish on the earth."



"Yes, it's true, Brother Elephant," said Whale. "We are the greatest. You should rule the land. I'll be happy to rule the sea."

⁴Rabbit decided to play a trick on these two behemoths.

"I'm twice as smart as both of them," he said. "All I need is a long, strong rope and my jungle drum."

Later that afternoon Rabbit found Elephant in the woods and said, "Hello, Powerful Ruler of All the Animals that Walk and All the Birds that Fly. I'm in need of a small favor."

Elephant liked Rabbit's compliment and was willing to listen.

"What can I do for you, my little friend?" he trumpeted.

"My milk-cow is stuck in the sand on the beach. I'm not big enough to pull her out. Let me tie one end of this rope around you and the other end around my cow. When you hear me beat my drum, you'll know it's time to pull hard, really hard."

"It's a good plan," said Elephant. "You are wise to come to me as I'm the strongest friend you have."

"Thank you, Elephant. Wait for the drum!"

So saying, Rabbit ran to the beach and found Whale sunning herself near the shore.

"Hello, Friend Whale. My, but you look sleek and powerful today," said Rabbit.

Whale smiled and replied, "Yes, Rabbit, I'm strong today and every day. I rule all the creatures of the sea."

"Of course," responded Rabbit. "That's why I've come to you with my small problem."

"What can I do to help?" asked Whale.

"It's my milk-cow. She's mired deep in the bayou-mud way up in the woods. I can't get her out. I'd like to tie one end of this rope around your tail and the other end around my cow. I'll beat my drum so you'll know when to pull."

"Of course I'll help," said Whale.

She swam closer to shore so that he could tie the long rope to her massive tail.

"Pull hard when you hear my signal," said Rabbit as he ran back into the woods.

He found his drum and pounded hard and loud. Boom! Boom! Boom! The sounds carried to both Elephant in the forest and Whale in the sea.

They both began to pull, each against the other, and were shocked at the resistance. Elephant tugged so hard that Whale hit the sand in the shallow water. Whale pulled back so hard that Elephant was being dragged out of the woods.

"That cow must be stuck in the sand up to her neck," bellowed Elephant.

"That cow must be buried in the mud up to her nose," cried Whale.

Next thing they knew the rope snapped! One end flew back and stung Elephant on the ear.

"Ouch!" he cried.

The other end smacked Whale on the tail.

"Ouch!" she cried.

Rabbit began to laugh. His laughter carried deep into the woods and far out to sea. Elephant and Whale realized that they had been tricked. They also discovered that when it came to cleverness, Rabbit was the strongest of all.

Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant¹ information to clarify or extend understanding

Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant¹ information to show understanding

Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.²

Notes:

¹ Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

² An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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