



Thinking of Themes

Introduction

Objective:

Using *The Jungle Book* and *Aesop's Fables*, students become familiar with recognizing themes in a story.

Academic Content Standards:

- ✦ National Learning Standards
 - Read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres.

- ✦ Ohio Standard- Literary Text Standard
 - Students enhance their understanding of the human story by reading literary texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures and eras. They learn to apply the reading process to the various genres of literature, including fables, folk tales, short stories, novels, poetry and drama. They demonstrate their comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature (e.g., setting, character and plot), analyzing the author's use of language (e.g., word choice and figurative language), comparing and contrasting texts, inferring theme and meaning and responding to text in critical and creative ways. Strategic readers learn to explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

Benchmark

- A. Identify the theme of a literary text.

Indicator

1. Provide own interpretation of story, using information from the text.

Getting Started

Materials:

- Copies of *Aesop's Fables*.

Vocabulary:

- Theme

Lesson

Orientation Activity:

Discuss the meaning of theme? A theme is an underlying message meaningfully created and connected to the story's plot, characters, and setting. Ask students to take five minutes to think about the theme of the story in *The Jungle Book*. Think about what message the author was trying to send to the reader.

Students can then share their opinions about the theme(s) of *The Jungle Book*. Themes will vary from students to student. Point out that sometimes a book is read for the first time and the reader forms an idea of the initial theme. Later, the same book is read again and a different theme emerges depending on the maturity of the reader.

Learning Activity:

Choose one of *Aesop's Fables* to read to the class. As the story is being read, ask students to formulate what, in their opinion, is the theme of the fable.

Next, divide students in groups of three or four and ask them to choose one of *Aesop's Fables* to read. Group members should discuss what theme or themes emerge from each fable. Ask students to choose a particular theme and draw a picture of the scene in which the theme is best articulated to the reader.

Next, students should write a summary explaining the theme, how it is exemplified in the story, and what is drawn on the picture. Ask students to share their summaries and illustrations with the class.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Assessment Tools and Methods:

Use the summary rubric for evaluating their summaries.

Use the Ohio Writing Proficiency rubric for evaluating writing.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Math: Make several word problems all within one theme. For example, students create and solve word problems that focus on the theme of animals.

Social Studies: Read the stories or biographies of historical figures and search for themes within the stories that give messages about history.