

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION # 6 (For Eighth Grade)

THEME

A story can impress us in a number of ways – because of the strength of the plot, with the beauty of its language, or in the sincerity of its characters.

But what really makes us remember a story long after we've read it is the idea on which it was built. What exactly is this elusive thing called theme?

Definition

The theme of a fable is its moral. The theme of a parable is its teaching. The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people behave.

In fiction, the theme is not always intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is almost never presented directly at all. You extract it from the characters, action, and setting that make up the story. In other words, you must **infer** (figure out) the theme yourself.

In literature, a theme is a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society or human nature.

It must always be something that can be expressed in at least one sentence.

A theme is not the same as the subject (or topic) of a work. A topic can be stated in one or two words: freedom, violence, childhood, materialism, death. The theme, on the other hand, expresses something about the topic.

Examples

A topic discussed in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* might be 'racism and slavery', but a possible theme of the book might be that 'racism distorts the oppressors as much as it does those who are oppressed.'

Clearly, the topic of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* is love, but one of the themes could be that young passion can be more powerful than family loyalty.
How can you find the theme in a narrative?

Figure out the topic. Think in the work you just read. If you could sum up in one word the most important concept portrayed in the work, what would it be?

Figure out what the author is saying about the topic. After all is said and done by the character, what is the author saying?

Recap

THEME- refers to the central idea in a literary work. The theme is what the author desires to express about the topic. It should always be expressed as a complete sentence.

Practice Exercises

I. TITANIC (1996 film)

1. Find the topic
2. What is the author saying about the topic?

II. A RETRIEVED REFORMATION by O. Henry

1. Do as above.