

FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM

WHAT ELA SKILL NEEDS MORE PRACTICE?



DETERMINE A THEME OF A STORY, DRAMA, OR POEM FROM DETAILS IN THE TEXT

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO DO?

The focus of this standard is to have students read various kinds of text and be able to identify the theme or the message/lesson that the author is communicating to the reader. Some common themes in children's literature are courage, friendship, family, honesty, loneliness, kindness, hard work, and determination. Readers should be able to identify the theme by looking closely at the characters' thoughts, words, or actions,

WHAT ARE THEMES?

The theme in a text is THE MESSAGE, or 'big idea' from the story. In other words, what lesson about life does the author want the reader to walk away with after reading the writing? Sometimes it is helpful to think of the moral of the story. There may be many themes in a story, but usually one or two are focused on by the writer.

Example 1:

Story

Irma turned 15 years old Saturday. To celebrate, her family had a big party called a *quinceañera*. The following Monday, Irma described the party to her classmates. Some of them had never heard of *quinceañera*, and they wondered what it was. Irma explained that many Latin cultures- from Mexico and Brazil- honor a girl's 15th birthday in this special way. The girl wears a long gown, dances, and celebrates becoming a young woman.

This story is communicating the THEME of TRADITION through the topic of a *quinceañera*.

Example 2:

Drama

Two Students, *PAUL* and *ERICA*, are in class, sitting at their desks.

PAUL: Hey, Erica- Shane got the answers to next week's math test. If we use them, we'll get an A for sure.

ERICA: We can't do that! Cheating is the same as telling a lie.

PAUL: I know- but we'll both get an A!

ERICA: No way! When I take that test, I want to show what I've actually learned and earn the grade I get. Don't you?

PAUL: (thinking) You're right. Let's talk Shane out of cheating, too.

This drama is communicating the THEME of HONESTY through the topic of an upcoming test.

Example 3:

Poem

We do the things that we should do-
Like clean our ears and bedrooms, too.
We do our reading and our math.
(And when we stink, we take a bath!)
We do our chores so our parents know
That as we age and as we grow,
We'll do the work that must be done
Before we go to have our fun!

This poem is communicating the THEME of RESPONSIBILITY through the topic of tasks kids need to do.

HOW DO DETAILS SUPPORT A THEME?

The supporting details in a text are the bits of information that are used to verify the theme and can be used as proof or an example of the main subject the story communicates.

Example 1 details to support the theme: To celebrate her family had a big party called a *quinceañera*, Many Latin cultures- from Mexico and Brazil- honor a girl's 15th birthday in this way.

Example 2 details to support the theme: cheating is telling a lie, I want to show what I actually learned and earn the grade I get, Let's talk Shane out of cheating, too.

Example 3 details to support the theme: We do the things that we should do, we clean, do chores, do homework, we'll do the work that must be done before we go and have our fun.