

Finding the Theme

Grade 6

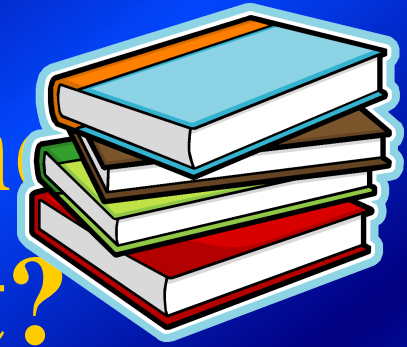


What is the Theme?



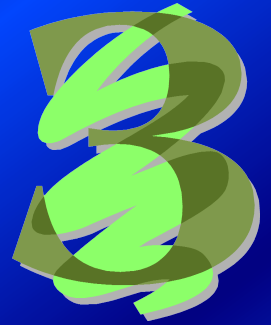
- Theme = what the writer wants the reader to **remember** most.
- The theme is the underlying idea or **message** of the work.
- Themes are always **universal, timeless** and **cross cultures**.

Why is Finding the Theme Important?



- Themes help the reader remember **important** ideas in the reading.
- Themes help the reader understand the message of the story.
- Identifying the theme is the **essence** of comprehension.

Identifying the Theme



Use this three step process to identify the theme:

- Find the “big ideas” or central topics in the reading.
- Find out what the characters do and say that relates to the big ideas.
- State what the author says about life that relates to the central topics.

Step 1



- Find the “big ideas” or general topics in the work.
 - The author’s themes always relate to the topic.
 - Try to learn about the “big ideas” as you preview the reading.
 - Try finding a clue in the title, the first paragraph or in illustrations.
 - Consider common themes for middle school.
 - As you read, remember to think about the underlying idea or **message** of the work.

Big Ideas

Being left out	Faith	Hope	Patience
Caution	Family	Identity	Perseverance
Childhood	Friendship	Independence	Promises
Choices	Freedom	Loss	Teamwork
Competition	Happiness	Love / Hate	Trust
Courage	Heroes	Loyalty	Secrets

Step 2



As you read, watch for details that relate to the general big ideas you've identified. They are the clues to understanding the themes.

- Clues might be found in:
 - Repeated words or ideas
 - Symbols
 - Important events or dialogue
 - Changes in characters

Step 3



- Create a statement of the author's point or message about the big idea. Use the following graphic organizer and this sentence frame to help you:

Big Idea word, verb, description

- Here are some examples:
 - Being left out causes hurt and pain.
 - War is sometimes necessary to overcome evil.
 - Teamwork makes difficult tasks easier

Theme Graphic Organizer

Big Idea

Evidence from the story to support the big idea

What Is Important to Learn /Author's Message

Big Idea word / Verb / Description



The Crow and the Pitcher

A crow perishing with thirst saw a pitcher, and
hoping
to find water, flew to it with delight. When he
reached
it, he discovered to that it contained so little water
that
he could not possibly get at it. He tried everything
he
could think of to reach the water, but all his efforts
were
in vain. At last he collected as many stones as he





The Crow and the Pitcher

- Step 1

- Consider big ideas
- As you read, remember to think about the underlying idea or **message** of the work.



This fable's message is about the life lesson of perseverance, a big idea.



The Crow and the Pitcher

- Step 2
 - Watch for details that relate to the general big ideas you've identified.
 - Consider important events and changes in characters.



In this fable, the crow tried and tried to reach

the water in the pitcher. Finally, he dropped

rocks into the pitcher until the water reached



The Crow and the Pitcher

- Step 3
- Create a statement of the author's point or message about the big idea. Use the following graphic organizer and this sentence frame to help you:

Big Idea word, verb, description



Theme Graphic Organizer

Big Idea

“Perseverance”

Evidence to support the big idea

The thirsty fox saw a pitcher with water in it.

He tried everything he could to reach the water at the bottom.

He finally used his beak to drop stones into the pitcher, which brought the water to the top and he was able to drink.

What Is Important to Learn /Author's Message

Big Idea word / Verb / Description

Perseverance allows you to reach your goal.

Providing Evidence

- You will be asked to provide evidence that you have chosen an appropriate theme.
- Usually, you will need to provide two pieces of evidence from the story that support a theme.



Providing Evidence



- One theme for “The Crow and the Pitcher” is:

“Perseverance will allow you to reach your goal.”
- Where is the evidence to support this theme?

Theme Graphic Organizer

Big Idea

“Perseverance”

Evidence to support the big idea

The thirsty fox saw a pitcher with water in it.

He tried everything he could to reach the water at the bottom.

He finally used his beak to drop stones into the pitcher, which brought the water to the top and he was able to drink.

What Is Important to Learn /Author’s Message

Big Idea word / Verb / Description

Perseverance will allow you to reach your goal.

Look for your evidence in what the characters do and say.

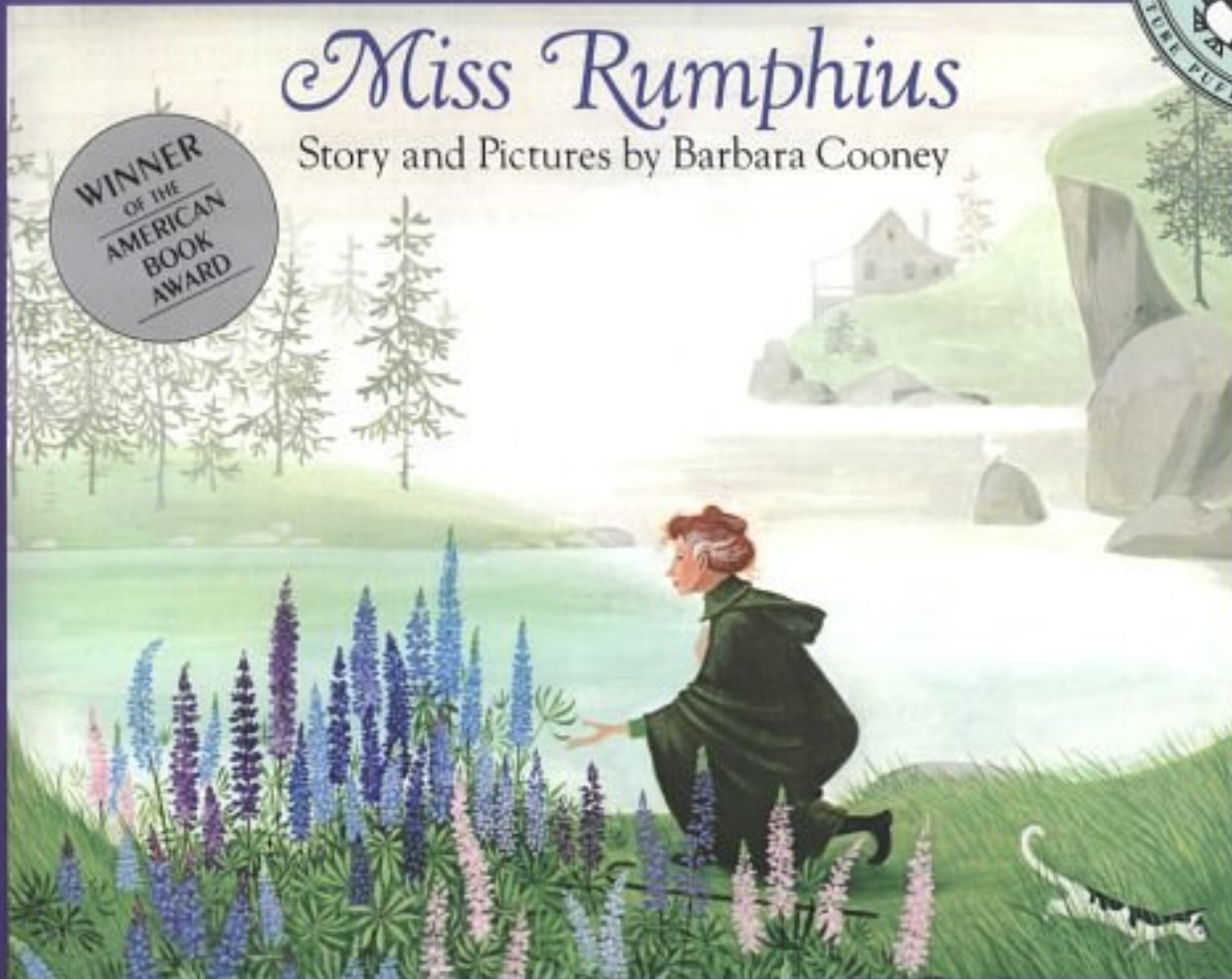
Evidence:

1. The crow tried to reach the water at the bottom of the pitcher.
2. Finally, he dropped stones into the pitcher until he was able to drink.

Miss Rumphius

Story and Pictures by Barbara Cooney

WINNER
OF THE
AMERICAN
BOOK
AWARD





EAGLE

HOTEL

25

W^M RUMPH

MOORE'S
SHOES

FLOUR
GRAIN

SAILMAKER





























Miss Rumphius – Step

1

- Consider big ideas
- As you read, remember to think about the underlying idea or **message** of the work.



*This story's message is about
following*

*your dreams and keeping promises,
big ideas.*

Miss Rumphius – Step 2

- Watch for details that relate to the big idea you've identified.
- Repeated words or ideas
- Symbols
- Important events or dialogue
- Changes in characters



In this story, Alice 's grandfather encouraged her to follow her dreams and asked for a promise that she would make the world a better place.

Miss Rumphius – Step 3

- Create a statement of the author's point or message about the big idea. Use the following graphic organizer and this sentence frame to help you:

Big Idea word, verb, description



Theme Graphic Organizer

Big Idea

“Follow your dreams.”

Remember to look for
your evidence in what
the characters do and
say!

Evidence from the story to support the big idea

Miss Rumphius
wanted to travel the
world. She
eventually traveled
to tropical islands,
mountains, deserts
and jungles.

She wanted to
live by the ocean.
As an adult, she
lived in a house
by the sea.

She wanted to make the
world a better place, as
her grandfather asked
her to do. She found
that planting lupines
fulfilled this promise.

What Is Important to Learn /Author's Message

Big Idea word / Verb / Description

Following your dreams is an important part of
life.

Theme Graphic Organizer

Big Idea

“Keeping promises”

Remember to look for
your evidence in what
the characters do and
say!

Evidence to support the big idea

As a child, Miss Rumphius’ grandfather made her promise to “... make the world a better place.”

As she traveled the world and lived by the sea, she always wondered what she could do to keep her promise.

She found that planting lupine flowers everywhere she went fulfilled this promise.

What Is Important to Learn /Author’s Message

Big Idea word / Verb / Description

Keeping appropriate promises can help make the world a better place.

We Do

- Answer the following question using your completed graphic organizer:
 - What is the theme of the story? Support your answer with **one** example from the story.

Possible Answer

What is the theme of the story? Support your answer with **one** example from the story.

The theme of Miss Rumphius is that following your dreams is an important part of life.

One example is that Miss Rumphius wanted to travel the world. She eventually traveled to

You Do

- Read “The Tale of Olone.”
- Complete the Theme Graphic Organizer.
- Answer the following question using your completed graphic organizer:
 - What is the theme of the story? Support your answer with **one** example from the story.

You Do Possible Answer

- The theme of “The Tale of Olone” is that patience allows people to become skilled and smart. One example is that Olone studied birds in a tree for an entire day.

YOU SHOW

- Read “The Day of the Great Wave.”
- Complete the Theme Graphic Organizer.
- Answer the following question using your completed graphic organizer:

What is the theme of the story?
Support your answer with **one**
example from the story.

Theme Questions

Any of these titles could be another title for the story/selection/poem. Choose the title you think best fits the selection.

- (title)
- (title)
- (title)



Provide **two** details from the story/selection/poem to support your choice.

More Theme Questions



- What is the theme of the story/selection/ poem?
- The story/selection/poem shows (theme).
Provide **two** details from the story/selection/ poem that support this idea.
- What is the theme of the story/ selection/ poem?
Support your answer with **one** example from the story/selection/poem.