

The Story Gallery

Theme & Summary: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what it says explicitly and when drawing inferences; determine the theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges; summarize the text.

Learning target: I can determine a theme from how characters respond to challenges and write an objective summary.

Success looks like: Students use the vocabulary correctly, complete the gallery walk, and score 80% or higher on the evidence-based exit ticket.

Materials: Student devices, the printed lesson worksheet (one per student), projector for the mini-lesson presenter.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

60 minutes

Time	Part	Teacher does	Students do
0:00-0:08	Warm-up	Project the warm-up. Circulate, then call on 2-3 students. Save question 3 for the debrief.	Answer Part 2 of the lesson worksheet; share with a partner.
0:08-0:20	Mini-lesson	Teach with the 4-step presenter. Run each quick check with the whole class.	Complete worksheet Parts 4-11 as each slide appears; answer checks with fingers.
0:20-0:48	Gallery Walk	Launch The Story Gallery. Assign mission levels; circulate with the answer key.	Play solo or in pairs; record code pieces; complete any written evidence task.
0:48-0:52	Debrief	Ask 2 debrief questions and revisit warm-up question 3.	Finish worksheet Part 13 (prediction check + one thing learned).
0:52-1:00	Exit ticket	Hand out the exit ticket. Collect and sort with the mastery guide.	Answer with evidence independently.

Key vocabulary

Word	Student-friendly definition
Theme	The message or life lesson the author wants readers to understand. It is written as a full sentence.
Topic	What the story is about in one or two words (friendship, courage). A topic is not a theme.
Summary	A short retelling of the most important events in order, without opinions.
Conflict	The problem or challenge the main character faces.

Word	Student-friendly definition
Resolution	How the conflict is solved.

1. WARM-UP

0:00–0:08 · 8 min

Warm-up expectations (post these): Answer in Part 2 of the lesson worksheet (or on this sheet). Number each answer to match the question. Answer in complete sentences. For math, show your work. Work silently for 5 minutes, then share with a partner for 2 minutes. Be ready to share one answer with the class.

#	Question	Look for
1	What is the difference between a topic and a lesson?	A topic is a word or two (friendship). A lesson/theme is a full sentence about life.
2	Think of a story or movie you know. What lesson did the main character learn?	Answers vary; look for a complete sentence that applies to anyone.
3	Retell a story you know in exactly 3 sentences: beginning, middle, end.	Answers vary; look for who, problem, key event, resolution.

2. MINI-LESSON

0:08–0:20 · 12 min

Project the Lesson presenter from the room page. It runs the whole hour: target and agenda, warm-up with timer, hook vote, 4 teaching steps (key idea, interactive tool, turn and talk, check for understanding), I do / we do / you do, a work-time screen with a timer and expectations, debrief, and the exit ticket. Press N for teacher notes, T to pause the timer, and P to pick a student.

Hook (1 min): The tortoise beats the hare. Is "a race" the lesson of the story? Class vote: Yes / No / Not sure

Step 1 (3 min): Topic vs. theme

Teach	A topic is one or two words, like "honesty." A theme is a full sentence about life: "Telling the truth builds trust, even when it is hard."
Interactive tool	Flip cards: Topic: courage, Topic: friendship
Students do	Turn "courage" and "friendship" into full theme sentences.
Turn and talk	Why isn't "friendship" a theme? What would you add to make it one?
Worksheet Part 5A	A TOPIC is one or two words. A THEME is a complete sentence about life.
Check for understanding	Which is a theme, not a topic? Answer: (C) Hard work can overcome difficulties.

Step 2 (3 min): Find the theme

Teach	Ask yourself four questions: What challenge did the character face? How did they respond? What changed? What lesson does that teach anyone?
Interactive tool	Visual: chain
Students do	Answer the four questions (challenge, response, change, lesson) for the tortoise.
Turn and talk	Think of a movie character who changed. What did they learn?
Worksheet Part 6A	To find a theme, track the character's CHALLENGE, RESPONSE, and CHANGE.
Check for understanding	The tortoise keeps moving steadily and wins. The theme is: Answer: (C) Slow and steady effort can beat talent without effort.

Step 3 (3 min): Themes are for everyone

Teach	A theme applies to everyone, so leave character names out. Not "Maria learned to share," but "Sharing can build friendships."
Interactive tool	Board and notes
Students do	Fix this theme by removing the name: "Leo learned to share."
Turn and talk	Why should a theme statement work for anyone, not just the character?
Worksheet Part 7A	A theme statement should not include CHARACTER NAMES.
Check for understanding	Which theme statement is written best? Answer: (B) Kindness can change someone's day.

Step 4 (3 min): Write a summary

Teach	A summary tells who, the problem, the key events in order, and the resolution. Leave out small details and your opinion.
Interactive tool	Board and notes
Students do	Write a 3-sentence summary of "The Tortoise and the Hare."
Turn and talk	What is the difference between a summary and a retelling of every detail?
Worksheet Part 8A	A summary includes who, the PROBLEM, key EVENTS, and the RESOLUTION. It leaves out OPINIONS.
Check for understanding	Which belongs in a summary? Answer: (D) The main problem

I do: worked example (shown one step at a time)

1. Formula: Character + challenge + response + change -> lesson.
2. Character: the tortoise. Challenge: racing a much faster hare.
3. Response: keeps moving steadily. Change: wins while the hare naps.
4. Lesson: "The tortoise learned slow and steady wins."
5. Make it universal (remove the name): "Slow and steady effort can beat talent without effort."

What to say on every slide is in the presenter script PDF.

We do: guided practice

Story: Ben forgets his lines in the play, freezes, then keeps going and finishes. The audience cheers.
Write the theme.

1. Challenge: Ben forgets his lines.
2. Response: he freezes, then keeps going.
3. Change: he finishes and gets cheers.
4. Theme: Pushing through a mistake can still lead to success.

Answer: Pushing through mistakes can still lead to success.

You do: independent check (2 min)

Which is the BEST summary sentence for "The Tortoise and the Hare"? (A) I liked the tortoise best. (B) The race was on a sunny day. (C) A slow tortoise beats a fast hare in a race because the hare stops to nap and the tortoise keeps going. (D) The hare is very fast and brags a lot.

Answer: (C) A slow tortoise beats a fast hare in a race because the hare stops to nap and the tortoise keeps going.. Students who miss it: 3-minute reteach at the teacher table, then start the room at the Explorer level.

Misconception: "The theme is one word, like friendship." That is a topic.

Misconception: "A summary includes everything that happened." It includes only the most important events.

Misconception: "There is only one correct theme." Stories can have several themes if the text supports them.

3. GALLERY WALK: THE STORY GALLERY

0:20–0:48 · 28 min

Launch: project the start screen, read the story aloud, and assign mission levels (Explorer = extra support, Agent = on level, Legend = challenge). Students can open Supports any time for read-aloud, bigger text, a word bank, and a scratch pad.

- Exhibits can be visited in any order, which spreads students out naturally. Encourage them to start at a different exhibit than their neighbor.
- Treat it like a real gallery walk: students record one "I see / I think / I wonder" per exhibit on the viewing guide, and the code piece in Part 12 of the lesson worksheet.
- Pause the class once midway and have two students share their favorite exhibit so far.

Students turn in: the completion code plus their copied "turn in your work" block (Canvas Text Entry).

4. DEBRIEF

0:48–0:52 · 4 min

1. What is the difference between a topic and a theme?
2. Which story in the activity had the clearest theme? What details showed it?
3. Name a book or movie you love. What is one theme?

Close the loop: return to warm-up question 3. Answer: Answers vary; look for who, problem, key event, resolution.

5. EXIT TICKET

0:52–1:00 · 8 min

Print the exit ticket PDF (page 2 is the key and mastery guide). Every item requires evidence: Part A asks students to justify each choice, Part B asks for an explanation, and Part C applies the standard to a new situation using RACE. Sort results into Mastered, Approaching, and Beginning to plan tomorrow's groups.

LESSON RESOURCES

Resource	How it fits the lesson
Warm-up worksheet (PDF)	Optional standalone warm-up (also Part 2 of the lesson worksheet), with a key.
Mini-lesson presenter	Projectable, step-by-step interactive lesson with tools and quick checks (room page).
Lesson worksheet (PDF + key)	One printable packet students complete during the whole lesson: short fill-ins and quick checks in 13 small parts that match the presenter slides.
The Story Gallery (.html)	The gallery walk for Canvas, with differentiated levels, supports, and a turn-in.
Exit ticket (PDF + key)	Evidence-based check with a rubric and a mastery sorting guide.
CommonLit (extra)	Free leveled short stories and poems with theme questions. https://www.commonlit.org/
ReadWorks (extra)	Free fiction passages with question sets. https://www.readworks.org/
ReadWriteThink (extra)	Lesson plans and graphic organizers for theme and summary. https://www.readwritethink.org/
Khan Academy: Reading & Vocabulary (extra)	Grade 5 reading practice with theme questions. https://www.khanacademy.org/ela

ANSWER KEY: THE STORY GALLERY

Exhibit A: The Ant and the Cricket (code piece: L)

1. What is the TOPIC of this story? -> Preparing for the future
2. Which is the best THEME statement? -> Planning ahead helps you get through hard times
3. How does Cricket change by the end of the story? -> He decides to work first and play later

Exhibit B: The Broken Vase (code piece: E)

1. What challenge does Priya face? -> Deciding whether to tell the truth or let Dev be blamed
2. Tap the sentence that BEST supports the theme "Honesty builds trust." -> "Grandma knelt and picked up a blue piece. "The vase I can glue," she said. "Trust is harder to fix. Thank you for keeping mine.""
3. Sort each statement. -> Theme: Telling the truth is worth the risk, Owning your mistakes earns respect | Topic: Honesty, Family

Exhibit C: The Smallest Seed (code piece: A)

1. Which theme is BEST supported by the story? -> Patience and effort can pay off even when progress is slow
2. Tap the sentence that shows Marcus's persistence (not giving up). -> "Every day he watered it, moved it to the sunniest spot, and checked it before anyone else arrived."

Exhibit D: The Two Kites (code piece: R)

1. What is a theme of "The Two Kites"? -> Don't judge something by its appearance
2. How does Sam respond to Lena's challenge? -> With kindness, by sharing his kite
3. Tap the sentence that shows Lena learned a lesson. -> "As they ran across the field, Lena said, "I shouldn't have judged your kite by how it looked.""

Exhibit E: Write a Summary (code piece: N)

1. Which is the BEST summary of "The Smallest Seed"? -> Marcus's seed does not sprout for weeks, but he keeps caring for it. Finally it grows into the tallest sunflower in the room.
2. Should each detail be in a summary of "The Smallest Seed"? -> Include: Marcus's seed does not sprout, He keeps caring for it, It becomes the tallest sunflower | Leave out: The cups are made of paper, I think Jonah is rude

Final code: LEARN