

# April. Reading @ Home

Hello Bear Creek Families!

We are in the final stretch, and this is when things do not get easier, but we learn how to handle hard well!

This month we will focus on theme in a literary text. The theme is the message, or lesson the author or characters are trying to teach us. According to Teaching Made Practical, "theme is an abstract idea that can be difficult for students to grasp. Themes are meant to apply to real life and are not just a lesson for the character."

I have included some examples of activities and commonly used themes in texts.

As long as your child can use evidence to support the theme then there is no real wrong answer, and a text can have more than one theme.

Theme is not a benchmark for kindergarten but starts in 1st grade as the moral and develops to 5th grade where students have to explain the development of a theme.

As always if you have any questions or need support, please feel free to reach out.  
Happy reading!

-Natalie Geer  
Reading Coach



## COMMONLY USED THEMES & TIPS

- Students must be able to summarize a text and have a solid grasp of story elements in order to figure out the theme.
- Giving examples of themes will help your child be able to use the evidence to determine the theme.
- Themes are usually not stated, which requires your child to "read between the lines."
- Your child does not have to agree with the theme.
- There can be multiple themes for a text.
- See commonly used themes and examples as a way to help jump start your child's thinking.

## 9 COMMON LITERARY THEMES



## EXAMPLES

Love and sacrifice  
The hero's journey  
War and peace  
Coming of age  
Identity and belonging  
Good vs evil  
Injustice (class, gender, race, etc.)  
Survival against the odds  
The American Dream

## IDEAS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES

- First grade focuses on the moral of a story, a good place to start supporting with this are reading and discussing fables.
- Second grade begins identifying the theme.
- For first and second a simple graphic organizer and a discussion on theme can help (see example to the right).
- Third and fourth have to explain a theme.
- Fifth grade needs to explain the development of a theme.
- A graphic organizer (see right) can help students track the characters, problem, solution and lesson learned to identify the theme.

1-2

*Determining Theme*

I think the theme of this story is:

cooperation    compassion    responsibility  
courage    honesty    kindness  
friendship    acceptance    perseverance/overcoming challenges

Because the text says

3-5

*Getting to the Heart of*

Who is the main character?

What is the character's problem?

Does the problem get solved? If so, how or what is the conclusion of the story?

What does the character learn?

What is the theme of the story?