



Inspired Instruction

**Inspired Instruction, LLC.
Standards Solution Holding**

www.inspiredinstruction.com

196 Belvidere Avenue
Washington, NJ 07882
Phone: 908-223-7202

Michele.Regan@inspiredinstruction.com
Jaclyn.Siano@inspiredinstruction.com

Reading Literature

Exploring Theme Grades 3-5

Standards:

- RL.3.1. Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RL.3.2. Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message/theme, lesson, or moral and explain how it is revealed through key details in the text
- RL.3.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language
- RL.4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.4.2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- RL.4.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in literature
- RL.5.1. Quote accurately from a text, and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.5.2. Determine the key details in a story, drama or poem to identify the theme and to summarize the text.
- RL.5.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

Focus: Determine the theme of a story, drama, or poem.

Goal: This lesson can be incorporated easily into the instruction regarding whatever literary text the students are currently reading in your class.

Procedures:

1. Read the text. Discuss it as you normally would for meaning.
2. Provide some concrete nouns and abstract nouns that relate to the topic. Have students discuss the differences between the nouns for a moment, and if they don't pick up on it, explain that some are concrete (these are things you can see) and some are abstract (these are ideas, and you can't see them. You can see the effects of them, but you can't exactly see them).
3. Talk first about the concrete nouns – what do these have to do with the text? Discuss where they appear or how they relate.
4. Then discuss each of the abstract nouns. “What does the text say about this word: honesty?” Have students determine the theme based on what the text says. Be sure to have them support their answers with evidence from the text.

5. Repeat for all the abstract nouns you have identified.
6. At the end, keep the abstract nouns on the wall for later, as other texts will likely hit upon similar themes. Add more nouns to the wall as you explore theme in later texts.

Tips:

- Identifying theme is basically an inferential task; typically, the theme will be unstated. If your students are struggling with making inferences in general, work with them on using both background knowledge and evidence from the text to infer the theme.
- At first, you may want to support students by choosing select events from the story that will help them infer the theme. As they master drawing an inference from given evidence from the text and a thematic noun, challenge them to gather more support from the text or choose another thematic abstract noun.

Concrete Noun	Connection to the Text

Abstract Noun	What Does the Text Say About This Word? (Textual Evidence)	How Does It Connect to the Theme?