K20 LEARN

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I Theme, You Theme, We All Theme for Ice Cream

Themes in Literature

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	50 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	1-2 class period(s)
Course	American Literature, British Literature, World Literature		

Essential Question

How do themes in literature relate to our lives?

Summary

To assist students in their ability to determine a theme in literature, this lesson will introduce the concept of theme by using a children's book, although any piece of literature can be used with this lesson. Students will listen to a children's book, collaboratively distinguish between topic and theme, create topics and develop them into themes, and show off their final work using the Gallery Walk strategy. Students will consider how themes in literature might relate to their own lives. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 9th-grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 9 through 12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to a reading of the book *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* Students jot down what they notice and wonder about the story.

Explore

Students work with a partner to create a list of topics from the book and develop those topics into themes.

Explain

Students create a poster and show off their themes in a Gallery Walk.

Extend

Students read the feedback provided by their peers and make final drafts of their themes.

Evaluate

Students participate in a Six-Word Memoir to share what they learned during the lesson.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

IDT301: Identify a clear central idea in straightforward paragraphs in somewhat challenging literary narratives

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

Attachments

- Handout—I Theme, You Theme, We All Theme For Ice Cream - Spanish.docx
- Handout—I Theme, You Theme, We All Theme For Ice Cream - Spanish.pdf
- Handout—I Theme, You Theme, We All Theme For Ice Cream.docx
- Handout—I Theme, You Theme, We All Theme For Ice Cream.pdf

Materials

- A copy of the book *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* or another children's book
- Large piece of paper and tape
- Copies of "lTheme" handout
- Writing materials: pens, pencils, markers, paper, etc.
- Sticky notes

Engage

Read aloud the book *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* by Mo Willems. As you read, have students work on an I Notice, I Wonder.

- Before beginning, have students get out paper and make two columns labeled "I Notice" and "I Wonder."
- Have students write down what they notice and wonder as they listen.
- Place students in small groups.
- Allow the groups a few minutes to discuss what each individual noticed and wondered about the story.
- The groups will then share out what they noticed and wondered.

Teacher's Note

Almost any children's book will work for this lesson. *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* is great for its simplicity and the vast number of themes it contains. Other good stories to use are *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein and *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister.

Explore

Students will create a T-Chart on the back of their I Notice, I Wonder page and write "topics" on one side and "themes" on the other side. In small groups, students will brainstorm the differences between topics and themes. After a few minutes, the groups will share out their ideas and create a large T-Chart on the board.

Then, project the information on theme and topic from "Difference Between Theme and Topic" on a whiteboard or provide students with copies. Place students in pairs. Students will work with a partner to create a list of topics discussed in the book, *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* It is a good idea to model generating at least one topic as a class. Examples of possible topics are the concepts of friendship, sharing, and selfishness.

Once student pairs have listed their topics, they will work on turning those topics into themes. The attached **Handout** may be used during this portion of the lesson.

Teacher's Note

Students may create better themes when they begin by writing, "The author believes ...." This seems to keep students focused on the story that they read rather than just on the topic that they are working with. Two themes of "Should I Share My Ice Cream?" are that friendship is more important than selfishness and that sharing will bring joy to a relationship.

Explain

After student pairs feel comfortable with their chosen themes, they will record them on large pieces of paper that will be displayed around the room for a Gallery Walk.

1. Pass out a large piece of paper to each pair of students. Have students write down their themes and then tape their papers to the wall.
2. Partners will then walk around the room and read the themes that the other pairs wrote, leaving comments, suggestions, or questions about the themes for other students to read.
3. Student pairs will then take their large pieces of paper, along with the comments provided by their peers, back to their seats.

Teacher's Note

A Gallery Walk is a good time for you to look over what students have done. Feel free to leave feedback for students.

Extend

Student pairs will take the pieces of paper listing their themes back to their seats and will discuss the feedback provided by their peers. Feedback should be used to decide if any changes need to be made. Students will then rewrite their themes, this time leaving off the starter, "The author believes ..." and will include any changes they feel need to be made. Student pairs will then share out their final drafts with the entire class.

Evaluate

Give each student one sticky note. Using the Six-Word Memoirs strategy, have students write six words on the note that explain how themes in literature relate to their lives. After they have completed their memoir, have them post their sticky notes near the door as they leave class.

Resources

- Borgnine, E. (2012). The Rainbow Fish read by Ernest Borgnine [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9mryuEKkKc
- "Difference between theme and topic." (2015, November 12). Pediaa.com. http://pediaa.com/difference-between-theme-and-topic/
- Johnson, S. (2014, April 19). The only way you will ever need to teach theme. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H6GCe7hmmA
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505a54d
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I Notice, I Wonder. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f507d1a7
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-word memoirs. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75
- Pfister, M. (1992). Rainbow Fish. North-South Books.
- Silverstein, S. (1964). The Giving Tree. Harper Collins.
- Willems, M. (2011). Should I Share My Ice Cream? Hyperion Books for Children.