

DETERMINING THEME AND SUMMARIZING A TEXT



In this learning plan, students will learn that authors often write to teach the reader a lesson about life. Summarizing the important parts of a story and analyzing the characters' actions and changes can help readers determine the theme of a story.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to summarize a story.
- ✓ Students will be able to identify the theme of a story.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are the important parts of a story?

How do the characters' actions and changes help you determine the theme of a story?



MATERIALS

- Create a Summary worksheet
- Chart paper
- Variety of picture books (see daily plans for suggested titles)
- I Can Write a Summary worksheet
- My Summary worksheet
- What's the Theme? worksheet
- Sum it Up worksheet

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ASSESSMENTS

Formative assessments and checks for understanding occur throughout the lesson:

- Students' discussions about summarizing
- Students' discussions about theme
- Students' discussions and work during guided practice
- Students' work completed during independent practice

Summative Assessment:
Sum it Up

DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

- Provide students with a summary of a familiar text and have students underline the different parts of the summary.
- Have students read a short story and write a summary using the graphic organizer.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Invite students to write a summary of a book from the classroom library.
- Have students watch a short video and determine the theme. Have students share their thinking with a partner.
- Encourage students to find themes in familiar texts, like fairy tales, short stories, or poems from the classroom library.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Activity 1

Parts of a Summary

Students will learn all about the parts of a summary.

Activity 2

Guided Practice

Students will practice summarizing a book read aloud.

Activity 3

Independent Practice

Students will write a summary.

Activity 4

What's the Theme

Students will determine the theme of a text by answering and analyzing the questions.

Activity 5

Sum it Up

Students will write a summary and determine the theme of a story.

ACTIVITY 1: PARTS OF A SUMMARY

- Tell the students they will be learning how to summarize a story.
- Explain that summarizing means to tell the most important parts of a text in your own words but in a much shorter way.
- Begin by reading aloud a picture book, such as Clark the Shark by Bruce Hale
- After reading the story, ask students to help you answer the following questions:
 - Who was the main character in the story?
 - What did the character want?
 - What was the problem?
 - How did the character try to solve the problem?
 - What was the resolution or outcome?
 - How did the story end?
- Use student answers to write a simple summary on chart paper.
- Explain to students that you just wrote a summary.
- Provide each student with a copy of the Create a Summary worksheet and invite them to complete it using the read-aloud.
- Have students share their completed worksheets with a partner.

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ACTIVITY 2: GUIDED PRACTICE

- Review with students the different parts of a summary. Refer back to the summary written during activity one.
- Display the I Can Write a Summary worksheet and explain that you will read aloud a text, and students should pay careful attention to note the parts listed on the worksheet.
- Read aloud a text, such as *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett. As you read, stop periodically to model how to complete the sections of the worksheet labeled Somebody and Wanted.
- After you finish reading, instruct students to complete the sections of the worksheet sections labeled But, So, and Then with a partner.
- Call on a few pairs to share the problem the character faced and the actions the character took to solve the problem.

ACTIVITY 3: INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

- Review the different parts of a summary with students.
- Explain that today students will use what they have learned about summaries to write their own!
- Provide each student with a My Summary worksheet and explain the directions.
- Students will read a text, fill out the boxes in their worksheets, and then take that information to write a summary in paragraph form at the bottom of the page.
- Have students read a book of their choice and then complete the worksheet.
- Circulate and provide support as needed.
- Have the students share their summary paragraphs with a partner.

ACTIVITY 4: WHAT'S THE THEME?

- Tell the students that they will learn how to identify themes in a story.
- Provide students with the following definition:
 - The theme is the lesson or message the author wants you to learn from the story that can be applied to life.

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CONTINUED-- ACTIVITY 4: WHAT'S THE THEME?

- Tell the students that they will learn how to identify themes in a story.
- Provide students with the following definition:
 - The theme is the lesson or message the author wants you to learn from the story that can be applied to life.
- Create an anchor chart of common themes:
 - Never judge a book by its cover.
 - Believe in yourself.
 - Family is everything.
 - Trust yourself and others.
 - Love yourself just the way you are.
 - Treat others the way you want to be treated.
 - Love one another.
 - Follow the rules.
 - Hard work pays off.
 - Face your fears.
 - Nothing is impossible.
 - Take responsibility for your actions.
 - Good things come to people who wait.
 - Learn from your mistakes.
 - Kindness matters.
- Have students discuss common themes found in books they have read.
- Add any additional themes shared by the students to the anchor chart.
- Explain that readers can determine the theme of a story by analyzing how characters respond and change in various situations.
- Display the What's the Theme? worksheet.
- Read aloud a picture book of your choice, such as [A Bad Case of the Stripes](#) by David Shannon. As you read, stop periodically and think aloud about the characters' problems, actions, and changes. Record your thinking on the What's the Theme worksheet.
- Model how to determine the story's theme by analyzing all the clues and discuss with the students. Do they agree or disagree? Why?
- Pass out the What's the Theme worksheet. Then, have students choose a short picture book from the library or a text they recently read.
- Tell the students they will gather clues about a character to determine the story's theme.
- After students complete the worksheet, have a class discussion about the different themes found. Add any new themes to the Common Themes chart.

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ACTIVITY 5: SUMMARIZING AND IDENTIFYING THEME

- Invite students to share what they have learned about summarizing and themes. Refer back to anchor charts and worksheets from prior sessions as needed.
- Explain to students that they will write a summary and determine the theme of a short picture book or book they have already read.
- Pass out the Sum It Up worksheet. Then, have students choose a short picture book from the library or a text they recently read.
- After completing the worksheet, invite students to display their worksheets on their desks.
- Instruct students to complete a gallery walk to read the summaries and themes displayed.
- After students finish, discuss the themes and summaries.
- Remind students that authors write stories to teach us lessons that we can relate to our lives. Identifying the important parts of a story and the characters' actions and changes can help us summarize and determine the theme of the stories we read.



NAME _____

DATE _____

CREATE A SUMMARY

Summarize: Retell the most important parts of a story in your own words.

Use these 5 steps to retell a story in your own words.

Somebody



Who is the main character?

Wanted



What did the character want?

But



What was the problem?

So



What actions did the character take to solve the problem?

Then

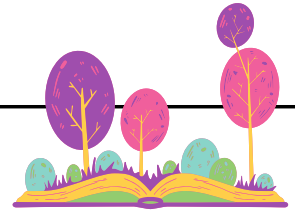


What was the resolution of the story? How did it end?

NAME _____

DATE _____

I CAN WRITE A SUMMARY



Summarize: Retell the most important parts of a story in your own words.

<p>Somebody Who is the main character?</p>	
<p>Wanted What did the character want?</p>	
<p>But What was the problem?</p>	
<p>So What actions did the character take to solve the problem?</p>	
<p>Then What was the resolution of the story? How did the story end?</p>	

NAME _____

DATE _____

MY SUMMARY

Read a text. Fill in the sections to plan your summary.
Use the lines to write your summary.



Somebody Who is the main character?	
Wanted What did the character want?	
But What was the problem?	
So What actions did the character take to solve the problem?	
Then What was the resolution of the story? How did the story end?	



Summary:

NAME _____

DATE _____

WHAT'S THE THEME?

Read a text and answer the questions.



Book Title

What problem did the character face?

What important actions did the character take to try and solve the problem?

How did the character grow and change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?_

What did the character learn?_

What lesson did the author want you to learn?_

What's the theme?



