

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Theme \_\_\_\_\_

# IDENTIFYING THEME

Theme is the central message that stretches through an entire story, drama or poem. You can think of the theme of a story as being like the lesson, or the real world application of the story. Themes often explore timeless and universal ideas. Themes can be stated outright, or they can be just implied. Some common themes are:

- Be prepared**
- Betraying a friend also hurts you.**
- Revenge hurts the avenger.**

Looking at fables—short stories that contain a lesson—is a good way to start thinking about theme. Read the following fables and see if you can identify which of the themes above belong to each story.

## 1. The Donkey, the Fox and the Lion

A donkey and a fox decided to team up to find food together. They were travelling in the forest when they crossed paths with a lion. They were both scared. But the fox hoped to save himself. He approached the lion and offered to help him get the donkey, if the lion would let him escape unharmed.

The lion agreed. So the fox and the donkey walked on, with the lion trailing behind them. The fox led the donkey to a hidden pit, left by some long-ago hunter as a trap for wild animals, and the donkey fell in. As soon as the donkey was in the pit, the lion came out of hiding and ate the fox. Then he ate the donkey.



The theme of this story is: \_\_\_\_\_

# DO NOW (continued)

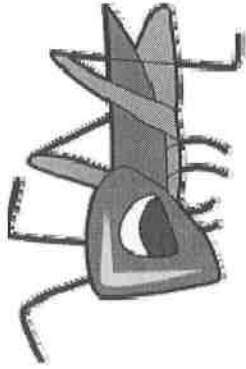
Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Theme**

## 2. The Ant and the Grasshopper

It was a beautiful spring day. The grasshopper was flitting about, enjoying himself, when he crossed paths with an ant. The ant was working very hard, carrying bits of food deep down into his anthill. "Why are you working so hard?" The grasshopper said. "I want to have plenty to eat," the ant replied. The grasshopper laughed. "Plenty to eat!" he cried. "Why there is food everywhere that you look!" "That's true," the ant said. "There is enough food for today. But there will come a day when it won't be true." The grasshopper hopped away, not wanting to bother with the morose little ant.

Soon spring gave way to summer, summer to fall, and fall to winter. When the fields were covered with snow, the ant sat far down in his anthill, safe and warm, his stomach full, confident that he had enough to eat to see him through the winter. The grasshopper, who had not made any preparations for winter, shivered, and went from one friend to another begging for food and feeling very foolish indeed.

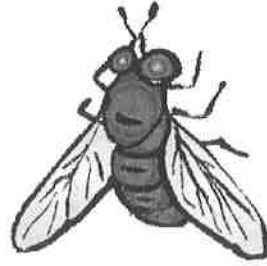
The theme of this story is: \_\_\_\_\_



## 3. The Bald Man and the Fly

A fly bit a bald man on the head. The man tried to shoo the fly away. But the fly landed on the man's head and bit him again. This made the man furious. He slapped his head to squash the fly, but the fly flew away just before the man delivered a stinging slap to his own head. The fly landed on the man's head a third time and laughed at him. "You would hurt yourself just to get back at me?" he taunted. The man was so enraged that he tried to hit the fly with a rock. Instead he knocked himself, senseless, to the ground.

The theme of this story is: \_\_\_\_\_



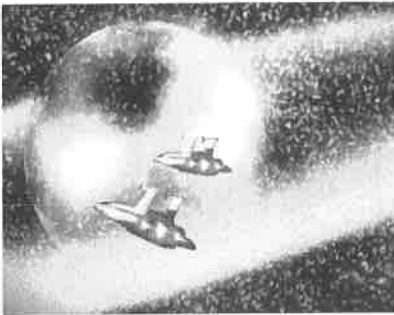
# Five Elements of a Story

"Five Things"  
**NOTES**

The five elements of a story are: character, conflict, & theme.

setting, plot,

1.



The story's setting could be in space in 1975.

**Setting** is all about "when" and "where." Location, time of day and weather are all part of a story's setting. The best setting descriptions often include details that use at least some of the five senses: how a place looks,

how it smells, how it sounds, how it feels (that's called the **mood**) and maybe--if it's a setting in a castle with candy walls--how it tastes.

What is the setting of Remember the Titans?

2.



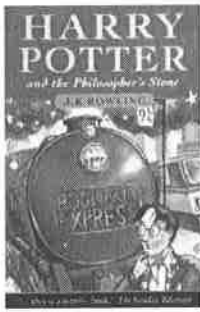
Part of the plot of Romeo and Juliet is when they fall in love.

**Plot** is the term for the events that take place in a story and how they relate to each other. When we summarize a story we're usually describing its plot. A good summary of a story's plot includes three main

elements: the **conflict**, which is the disagreement or different drives of the characters or forces in the story, the **climax**, which is the most exciting point of the story and the **resolution**, which is how the conflict ends.

Can you describe the plot of Remember the Titans in 2 sentences?

3.



Harry Potter is a main character in the story.

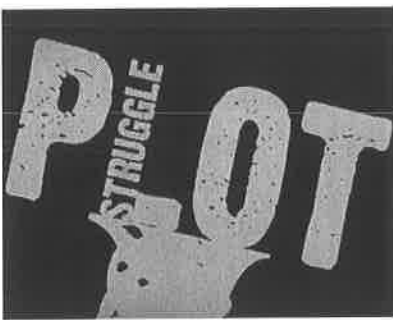
A **character** is simply somebody in a story. Characters can be humans, animals or creatures. Everyone who appears in the story is a character!

The **main character** is the most important character in a story. There

are also secondary characters. The action doesn't revolve around them, but they can often be the most memorable.

Who is the main character in Remember the Titans?

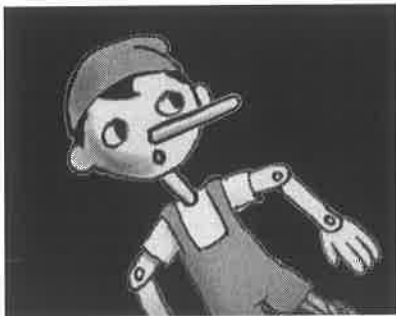
4.



A struggle in the plot is a conflict.

A **conflict** is a problem in a story. There are the things that the main character wants or needs to do, and then there are the things that get in the way of what he or she wants to do. That's usually the conflict.

What is the conflict in Remember the Titans?



Many characters have both internal and external conflicts.

There are **external conflicts** and **internal conflicts**. An external conflict is a problem that comes from the world around the character. An internal conflict is a struggle inside a character's mind.

Is the conflict internal or external? How do you know?

5.



What might be the theme here: Three children are orphaned and go to live with their evil cousin.

The **theme** of a story is an author's message about the world. A theme goes beyond the specific details of one story and is about a universal topic, such as friendship, freedom or

loneliness.

What is one possible theme of Remember the Titans?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Five Elements of a Story

Use this sheet to review the five elements of a short story. Then you can either write down information about a story or plan a story of your own.

### Learn From the Song, Five Things

The Elements	Definition	Examples in the Song	Your Examples
Setting			
Plot			
Characters			
Conflict			
Theme			

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Five Elements of a Story

"Five Things"

Setting, that's like where it's going down,  
Could be the train compartment, a castle or a town,  
Could be the Arctic winter - like "To Build a Fire,"  
The temperature's dropping, excitement is getting higher,  
Setting sets the scene so the scene seems set,  
Could be the Italian restaurant where we met,  
Setting gives us the where and the when,  
Could be modern day, the future, or way back when.

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,  
Setting, yes these are the 5 things  
That you're going to be needing  
When you're reading or writing  
A short story that's mad exciting. (x2)

Plot is the action, the quest for satisfaction,  
What's going down, what's going to happen.  
Four men at sea in an open boat,  
Rowing and hoping that they can stay afloat. The plot:  
They have to make it to the beach,  
But the waves are big, and the shore seems out of reach,  
Plot is a series of events... like Lemony Snicket,  
It could be crazy, wild or straight wicked.

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,  
Setting, yes these are the 5 things

That you're going to be needing  
When you're reading or writing  
A short story that's mad exciting. (x2)

Knock knock, who's there? Oh, it's the characters,  
The people in the story who carry out the action.  
Characters can be pretty, tiny or clean,  
Characters can be silly, whiney or mean,  
Juliet is a character, and so is Romeo,  
Pokemon has characters and so does Yu-gi-oh,  
Characters could be dogs, lions, or hippos,  
JK Rowling chose Harry Potter. "Why?" Who knows!

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,  
Setting, yes these are the 5 things  
That you're going to be needing  
When you're reading or writing  
A short story that's mad exciting. (x2)

Uh-uh! Put your snack back in your backpack, we're not finished!  
Something gone wrong! That's the conflict, kids,  
A struggle in the plot, now who's on top,  
Could be a fight for money, like some robbers and cops,  
Could be an internal conflict — a struggle inside,  
Like I don't want to tell the truth but I don't ever want to lie,  
Flick something in your eye, now you're conflicted,  
What created drama? The conflict did.

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,  
Setting, yes these are the 5 things  
That you're going to be needing  
When you're reading or writing

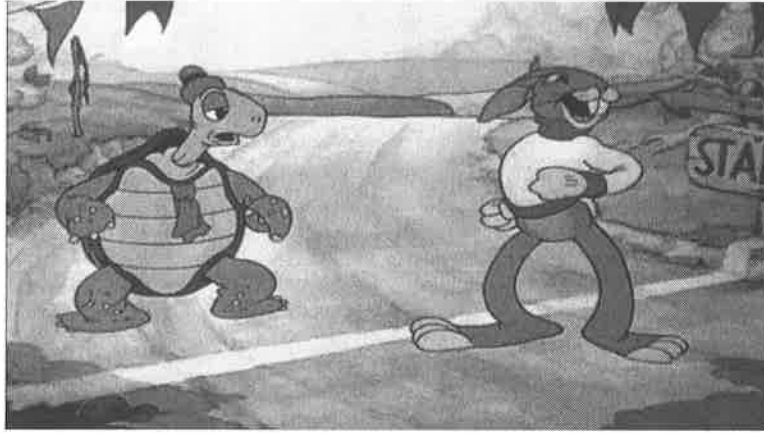
A short story that's mad exciting. (x2)

The theme of the story is the main idea,  
The central belief or the topic that's in there,  
It's usually something abstract like sacrifice,  
Isolation or resurrection: we're back to life,  
Like don't lie, don't practice libel,  
The theme of "To Build a Fire" is survival,  
Survival on your own like Fievel Moskowitz,  
Flocabulary's something that you HAVE TO GET...

Plot, Character, Conflict, Theme,  
Setting, yes these are the 5 things  
That you're going to be needing  
When you're reading or writing  
A short story that's mad exciting. (x2)



# THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Element	Example from the Video	Follow-Up Question
Setting	When and/or where does this story take place?	How does the setting contribute to the conflict, or problem, of the story?
Plot	Try to describe what happened in the story in two sentences.	What do you think is the most important part, or climax, of the story?
Character	Describe both main characters, the Tortoise and the Hare, in one word. Explain the word you chose.	How do the characters' personalities contribute to the conflict of the story?
Conflict	What is the main problem, or conflict, of this story? Is it internal or external? How do you know?	Is the conflict resolved? (In other words, is the problem solved?) If so, how?
Theme	What is the theme, or message, of this story?	How has the theme made this story timeless, or a story that has been around for a long time?