



Finding the Main Message in Any Story

KS2 ENGLISH

KS3 ENGLISH

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What's a Theme or Main Message?

Every story has a **theme** — a big idea or lesson that the author wants to share with you. It's not always obvious, like a hidden treasure you have to dig for. The theme is different from the **plot** (what actually happens). The plot might be about a boy finding a lost dog, but the theme could be about **friendship**, **responsibility**, or **never giving up**.

Think of it like a pizza: the plot is all the toppings and cheese on top, but the theme is the base that holds everything together.

Look at What Happens Again and Again

One of the best ways to spot a theme is to notice what keeps happening in the story. Does a character keep making the same mistake? Do certain words or ideas pop up multiple times? If a character is always kind and it helps them win friends, **kindness** is probably the theme. If someone keeps lying and gets into trouble because of it, the story might be about the importance of **honesty**.

Pay Attention to How Characters Change

Watch what the main character learns by the end. Did they start out selfish and become generous? Did they learn to be brave? The change they go through usually points you straight to the theme. Authors show us characters learning lessons because they want us to learn them too.

Think of it like a video game: the main character starts at level 1 and by the end they've levelled up and learned new skills — that skill they learned is like the theme.

Listen to What Characters Say

Sometimes characters say important words or wise sentences that stick in your mind. These **key quotes** often hint at what the story is really about. If a character says 'I learned that money doesn't buy happiness', that's probably the theme right there.

Think About the Title and Ending

Authors often choose titles that connect to their main message. The ending is also super important — is it happy or sad? Does the good person win or the bad person? These clues help you understand what the author really wanted to say.

Remember: finding the theme takes practice, and sometimes there's more than one! Different readers might spot different messages, and that's okay. What matters is thinking carefully about what the story is trying to teach.