



MISSISSIPPI

EXEMPLAR

Units & Lessons

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 4

Grant funded by:



Lesson 9: Theme Development

Focus Standard(s): RL.4.2

Additional Standard(s): RL.4.1, W.4.2, L.4.1f

Estimated Time: 1-2 Days

Text(s): Class set of *Mississippi Bridge* by Mildred Taylor

Resources and Materials:

- Completed Handout 1.2: Choosing Details to Support a Provided Theme from lesson 1 and lesson 2
- Completed Character Trait Analysis handout from Lesson 8
- A new copy of Handout 1.2

Lesson Target(s):

- Student can identify key details (objects, actions, setting, descriptions or depictions, word choice, changes in the main character) in a text that contribute to a theme.
- Students can explain how the key details contribute to the development of the provided theme.
- Students can use examples to explain the difference between the subject/topic of a literary text (e. g. war) and a theme of a literary text (e.g., War is a plague for humanity).
- Students can use examples to explain how the subject/topic of the literary text (e. g. war) can help them identify a theme of a literary text (e.g., War is a plague for humanity).

Guiding Question(s):

- What are different types of details that authors use to develop a theme?
- How do authors use details to develop a theme?

Vocabulary

Academic Vocabulary:

- Key details
- References
- Setting
- Theme

Instructional Strategies for Academic Vocabulary:

- Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures
- Model how to use the words in writing/discussion

Symbol

Type of Text and Interpretation of Symbol



Instructional support and/or extension suggestions for students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade level and/or for students who and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level.

✓

Assessment (Pre-assessment, Formative, Self, or Summative)

Instructional Plan

Understanding Lesson Purpose and Student Outcomes:

- ✓ Students review the following “I Can Statements” for this lesson, being sure to underline the parts of the statements that seem easy and circle the parts that seem difficult:
 - I can identify key details (objects, actions, setting, descriptions or depictions, word choice, changes in the main character) in a story.
 - I can explain how the key details contribute to the development of the provided theme.
 - I can use examples from a story to explain the difference between the subject/topic of a literary text (e. g. war) and a theme of a literary text (e.g., War is a plague for humanity).

Anticipatory Set/Introduction to the Lesson:

- ✓ Review vocabulary words from previous lessons by playing a Word Wall game. See **Handout 1.4: Word Wall Games** for ideas.

Activity 1: Review of Plot and Story Elements

Review the first two sections of *Mississippi Bridge*.

- ✓ Students share their summaries, character analysis, and answers to the text dependent questions.

Activity 2: Theme Development

Using your own discretion, place students in pairs.

- ✓ Students discuss the types of details that develop the theme. Distribute **Handout 1.2: Choosing Details to Support a Provided Theme**. Encourage students to use the book, summaries, characters analysis, and theme development handout to complete **Handout 1.2**.

Activity 3: Analysis

- ✓ Individually, students should write a multi-paragraph response to this prompt: What is the theme of *Mississippi Bridge*, and how does the author use details to develop the theme? Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

For students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade-level:

- Provide a model of how to write an analysis of theme development with a different text.
- Provide sentence starters.
- Provide an anchor chart.

Extensions and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level:

- Have students complete the book independently and complete Handout 1.2 twice to determine another theme the author develops.

Activity 4: Revisions

- ✓ Students identify any fragmented or run-on sentences within their multi-paragraph response. They chart these sentences and how they would correct them using a T-Chart labeled “Fragment or Run-on Sentence” on the left and “Corrected Sentence” on the right. If no errors are present, students then locate multiple sentences written correctly and explain why they wrote them correctly on a T-Chart labeled “Correctly-Written Sentence” on the left and “How I Know” on the right. Alternatively, if no errors are present, students then locate multiple sentences written correctly and combine them to make more complex or compound-complex sentences on a T-Chart labeled “Correctly-Written Sentence” on the left and “How I Made it Better” on the right.

If time allows, students make the changes to their already-written response.

Reflection and Closing:

- ✓ On an exit ticket, students explain the steps on how to determine the theme of a text.

Homework**Student Directions:**

- ✓ After reading a book, sum up the book in one or two sentences. Decide what the entire story was about. Then give details that support the main idea of the story.

Note: For longer books, tell the main idea and key details in each chapter, rather than the entire book.

See page 6 of the [Family Guide for Student Success](#).

For training or questions regarding this unit,
please contact:

exemplarunit@mdek12.org