

## Grade 5 Playlist: Themes in Adventure Stories

*Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9:*

- Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

### Welcome

Stories from the same genre, or type, of literature often have certain things in common. For example, adventure stories are likely to have treasure hunters, spies, explorers, pirates, medieval knights, or modern-day archaeologists as characters. Settings for these stories tend to be places that inspire adventures, such as jungles, castles, or ancient cities (and sometimes more familiar places). These types of stories also tend to share common themes, like the importance of working together to solve problems or the battle between good and evil.

### Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- compare and contrast adventure stories' approaches to similar themes and topics.

### Review

#### Key Terms

- A **genre** of literature is a type of writing that includes works that have similarities, like subject matter and theme. A few of the many genres of literature are adventure stories, mysteries, fairy tales, science fiction, and historical fiction.
- An author's **approach** to a theme or topic is the way the author uses story elements to express the theme or topic. These story elements include:
  - the **characters**, or the people in a book, play, or movie. The story's main character, or **protagonist**, often gives the theme its shape.
  - a story's **setting**, or where it takes place. This includes the physical place (such as a rural area, a city, inside a house, or on an airplane) and the time period (the current day, in the future, or long ago).
  - the **plot**, or all the events that happen in a story, including the conflict or problem in the story and the way that it is solved.
- To **compare** two stories is to look at them side by side and decide how they are the same. To **contrast** the texts is to look at them side by side and decide how they are different.



**Watch!**

To review theme and how to identify it in a story, watch this video:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/how-to-identify-theme/53395>

**Watch!**

This video describes the basics of comparing and contrasting:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRKnOxPow2M>

**Exploring the Standard**

In an adventure story, the protagonist is a hero or heroine. The protagonist of an adventure story has a hard task to complete. He or she may need to travel through dangerous places or fight a powerful villain. While the general idea of the adventure story may seem very simple, it can take many different forms. This playlist discusses how adventure stories use similar story elements in different ways.

**Watch!**

These videos discuss how to compare and contrast themes in stories of the same genres:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpEBzD4uVl0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc4Y7kl4nhM>

**A Closer Look: Setting and Theme in Adventure Stories**

Many adventure stories share common settings. An adventure story's setting could possibly be a fifth-grade classroom, a local library, or the picnic area in a state park. However, there are not many adventure stories set in these places because a hero would not be expected to begin a fascinating quest or commit an act of great courage there. Adventure stories are more likely to be set in faraway locations that the average reader may be less familiar with.

The sea, one setting shared by many adventure stories, is unfamiliar to most readers; many people have visited the beach or even taken a boat ride, but how many people have been aboard a sailing ship in the middle of the ocean during an attack by pirates? Such an event would be very dangerous for those unfortunate enough to be aboard. It could mean an early end *or* the start of an incredible adventure.



## Teaching Notes: Themes in Adventure Stories

This playlist discusses adventure stories and how different stories in this genre approach similar themes and topics. Students should be able to describe the main characteristics of stories in the adventure genre and explain how different stories can approach the same themes differently.

### How Characters and Settings Influence Theme

Below is a game students can play that will help them understand how characters, settings, and other elements influence how a theme is approached in an adventure story. Divide students into groups, and randomly assign each group one element from each column. Have groups briefly describe how these elements could be incorporated into an adventure story. (Some of the elements may seem anachronistic when paired together. Tell students to use their imagination!)

Protagonist	Setting	Theme/Topic
A ten-year-old girl from a small American town who plays volleyball and the clarinet	A train station in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by great fields of wheat and corn	Brain power is more important than physical strength.
A king who has just been removed from power and does not know where to go	A deep forest in the swamps outside New Orleans, where the trees obscure the sun	Working with others is better than working alone.
A medieval knight who would rather be a farmer but does not want to disappoint his family	A huge open field with grass that is several shades of green and a solid gray sky	Good triumphs over evil.
A young man who has just finished college and wants to travel the world	A great stone castle in a town where a major battle has just been fought	You are stronger than you think you are.
A scientist who studies the medicinal properties of mushrooms	A misty clearing in a Brazilian rainforest, near the banks of the Amazon River	You must face your fears to overcome them.
A rookie police officer in a city in the early twentieth century	A room in an old mansion with peeling brown wallpaper	Never give up.

### Additional Resources

Consider using the following resources to teach RL.5.9:

- This resource gives more ideas for characters and settings in adventures stories.  
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/adventure-writing-prompts/>
- In this lesson plan, students create “choose your own adventure” stories.  
<http://thebusyteacherspage.com/choose-your-own-adventure-story-writing/>

