

Grade 6 Playlists for Reading: Literature

Key Ideas and Details

This resource bundle aligns with the Key Ideas and Details standards of the Common Core State Standards for Grade 6 Reading: Literature. We have included four of our playlists—content-rich tools that use trusted textual, audio, visual, and multimedia resources to supplement high-quality instruction in specific elements of the Common Core—to guide students through each of the relevant standards for the literature reading strands of English Language Arts.

Each playlist is designed for 30–45 minutes of instructional time and is followed by a rigorous self-check for students. Alternatively you could assign individual student playlists as homework or remedial/extension activities.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are not intended to be taught in sequential order, and neither are these playlists. Instead, you should feel free to dip in and out of these resources as your instructional needs dictate.

Standard Coverage Notes:

- Standard RL.6.2 is covered across two playlists: one focuses on summaries and the other focuses on how theme is conveyed through details.

The accompanying Student Editions include additional passages on which students can practice their reading skills, including the ability to identify key ideas and details. Stepped-out examples and hyperlinks to videos, graphic organizers, and other activities further support instruction.

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Grade 6 Playlist: Determine a Theme and How It Is Conveyed Through Details

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2*:

- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details.

Welcome

Most stories have a theme and some stories even have multiple themes. The theme of a story is its message. To understand the theme of a story, a reader will pay close attention to the details of the story. Learning to identify and understand these details helps readers better understand narratives.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the theme of a text.
- think critically about how that theme is conveyed through the details of the text.

Key Terms

- The **theme** of a text is its message or lesson.
- The theme of a story is communicated through **plot, characters, setting, style, dialogue, and narration.**

Exploring the Standard

The theme of a story is often universal. This means that the theme applies to more than just one particular story. It is a message or lesson that is being told through a particular story, but many different stories may share the same theme. An example of a theme is *if people want to be able to trust others, they should first be trustworthy themselves*. Notice that the theme is a complete thought, an idea—a theme is the idea surrounding a subject or topic.

Authors have many different ways of developing the theme of a story. They can use all or particular elements of a story, such as setting and characters, for examples, to develop the theme. A reader then will pay attention to the details of a story to understand its theme.

Watch

Watch this video to understand theme:

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



A Closer Look: Identifying the Theme

Read the selection from XII of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

¹"I am miserable," he said. "Miserable!"

²He looked as if he was. Even his pride could not keep his voice steady or his hands from shaking. For a moment it almost seemed as if his deep, fierce eyes had tears in them. "Perhaps it is because I am miserable that I have come to you," he said, quite glaring down at her. "I used to hate you; I have been jealous of you. This wretched, disgraceful business has changed that. After seeing that repulsive woman who calls herself the wife of my son Bevis, I actually felt it would be a relief to look at you. I have been an obstinate old fool, and I suppose I have treated you badly. You are like the boy, and the boy is the first object in my life. I am miserable, and I came to you merely because you are like the boy, and he cares for you, and I care for him. Treat me as well as you can, for the boy's sake."

While reading, think about the overall meaning of the selection. Burnett is telling a story, but he is also trying to communicate a message about life to his reader. What is that message?

When identifying the theme of a text, it is important to first understand what is happening in the text. In the selection above, a man confesses to a woman that he is miserable. He tells her that his feelings toward her have changed; although once he hated her, he now seeks out her company. He admits that he has treated her badly and reflects that they have someone in common that they both care about. He then asks the woman to be kind to him for the sake of the boy who is important to both of them. After figuring out what is happening in a passage, the reader is now able to pay attention to the details of the selection to identify the theme.

Discussion Starter

Reread the above selection and pay attention to the main character in the passage. What is the man like? What information does the reader have about his personality? What about his motives? What changes does this character undergo?

Hint!

When a main character undergoes a change, it is often connected to a theme in the story. Paying attention to these changes can help a reader identify the theme of a story. Think about why and how the character changes. Does it seem to be a good change?

Use the information gathered from the Discussion Starter to think about a lesson Burnett may want the reader to learn from this story. It seems that the man has been an unpleasant character until this point. Also, people can generally agree that no one wants to be known as unpleasant or mean. Considering this information, the theme of this passage likely has something to do with **why** the man changes his attitude toward the lady. It seems that his affection for the boy has allowed him to also care for someone the boy loves. However, this cannot be the theme because it is too specific to the story. A theme needs to be more general. It should be something that can be applied to life outside the world of the story. An example of a theme of this story could be that *caring for one person can make it easier to care for other people as well*. Another theme could be that *admitting to personal faults can lead to people being more compassionate*. While these are lessons that Burnett could be trying to illustrate, these ideas can also be found in other stories also.



Grade 6 Playlist: Plot

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3:

- Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Welcome

Each event in a comic strip is shown in a separate frame. Like a comic strip, the plot in a story or drama unfolds episode by episode. Understanding the structure of a plot helps the reader appreciate what happens and also helps the reader explain why characters respond or change in the way that they do.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- explain the series of events that make up the plot of a story or drama, including the exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- explain how characters in a story or drama react to events or how they change as the plot moves forward.

Review

Key Terms

- The **plot** is the series of events that takes place in a story or drama.
- A **character** is a person in a story.
- A **setting** is a place in a story.
- An **event** is something that happens in a story.
- The **conflict** is the problem that the characters face.

Exploring the Standard

The plot of a story consists of these five different stages:

- The **exposition** at the beginning introduces the setting, characters, and often the main problem.
- The **rising action** is the events that take place at the beginning of the story or drama. As the conflict deepens, suspense builds.



- The **climax** is the turning point in the story. Events reach the highest point of tension, and the conflict is solved.
- The **falling action** is the events that take place after the climax.
- The **resolution** tells what happens to the characters after the conflict is solved.

Watch!

View this video to learn about five elements of a story.

- <http://blog.flocabulary.com/five-elements-of-a-story-lesson/>

A Closer Look: Conflict

A key part of plot is conflict. The conflict in a story or drama drives the plot forward. The conflict is what makes the events unfold.

The conflict that characters face can be *internal* or *external*. For example, an internal conflict is an important decision that a character has to make, like whether to tell the truth when a friend does something wrong. An external conflict is one character's struggle against another character, against society, or against nature.

Example 1

Read the following excerpt from Aesop's fable "The North Wind and the Sun."

¹The North Wind and the Sun had a quarrel about which of them was the stronger. While they were disputing with much heat and bluster, a Traveler passed along the road wrapped in a cloak.

²"Let us agree," said the Sun, "that he is the stronger who can strip that Traveler of his cloak."

³"Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

⁴With the first gust of wind the ends of the cloak whipped about the Traveler's body. But he immediately wrapped it closely around him, and the harder the Wind blew, the tighter he held it to him. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain.

⁵Then the Sun began to shine. At first his beams were gentle, and in the pleasant warmth after the bitter cold of the North Wind, the Traveler unfastened his cloak and let it hang loosely from his shoulders. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. The man took off his cap and mopped his brow. At last he became so heated that he pulled off his cloak, and, to escape the blazing sunshine, threw himself down in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside.

Gentleness and kind persuasion win where force and bluster fail.



Teaching Notes: Plot

The goal of RL.6.3 is for students to understand **plot structure** in a **story** or **drama** and to be able to explain how **characters** respond or change as the plot events move to a resolution of the conflict. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Select a story or a drama that students have recently read in class. Have pairs of students complete a plot diagram to identify the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Invite students to share their plot diagrams with the class.
2. Have students draw a comic strip based on “The North Wind and the Sun.” Ask students to display their comic strips on a classroom bulletin board.

Writing Prompts

1. Have students write a short story or one-act play. Consider suggesting that they write about one of the characters in “The North Wind and the Sun.” Encourage them to share their stories or plays with the class.
2. Assign students a grade-appropriate story or play from a literature anthology. Ask them to read the work and then answer these questions in an essay: How do the characters respond to the events? In what ways do they change from the beginning of the story or play to the end?
3. Have small groups of students discuss an episode from a popular television show they have all seen. Then ask them to write a summary of the plot, including the problem the characters face and how the problem is solved.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.6.3:

“Plot Structure: A Literary Elements Mini-Lesson”: This resource provides a lesson plan on plot structure that teachers can use in their classrooms.

- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/plot-structure-literary-elements-904.html?tab=4>

“An Online Resource Guide to Freytag’s Pyramid”: This resource provides an in-depth explanation of Freytag’s Pyramid.

- <http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/an-online-resource-guide-to-freytags-pyramid>

