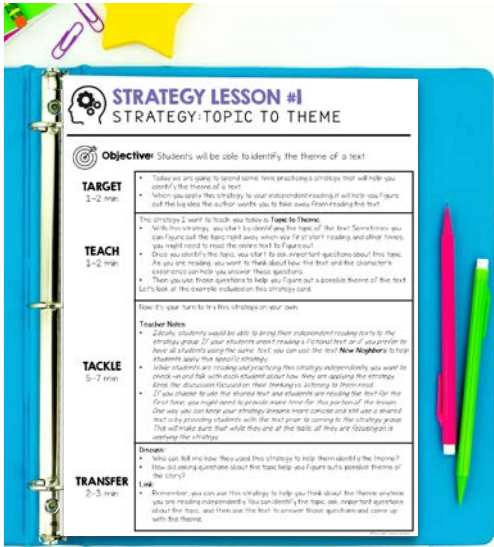




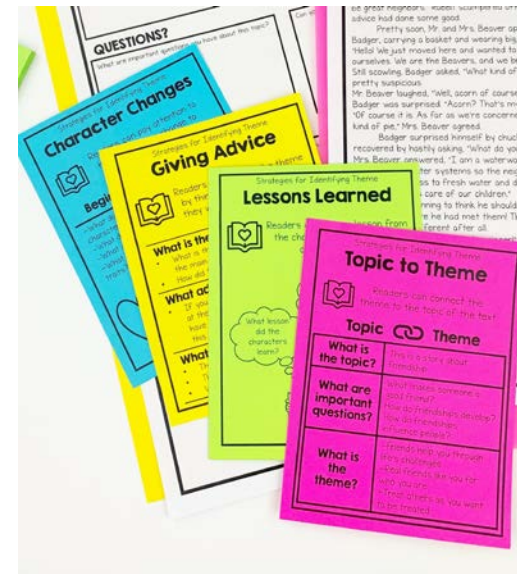
# WHAT'S INCLUDED?

You get the same 4 elements for each of the lessons in this set.



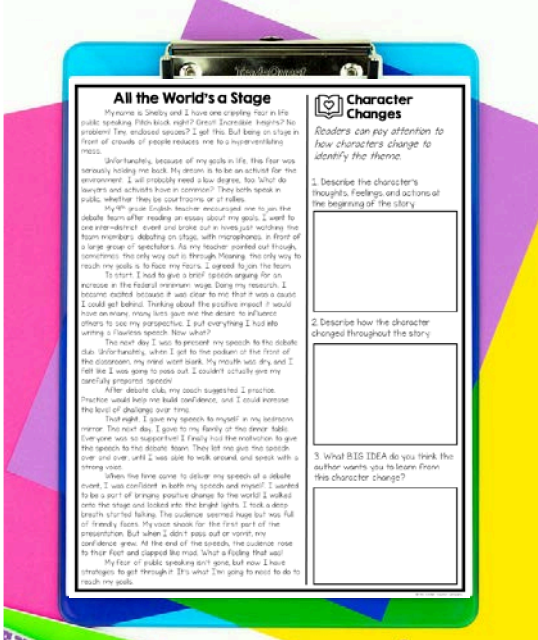
## LESSON PLAN

Each lesson comes with a scripted out teacher lesson plan. You'll know exactly what to say to help your students master the objective.



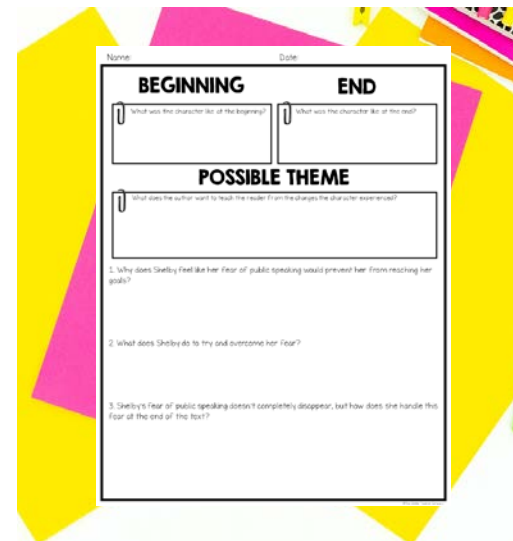
## STRATEGY CARD

Each lesson includes a strategy card you can use to help teach the lesson or give to students after to help remind them of the focus skill.



## STUDENT TEXT

Each lesson includes a student text that is written with the focus skill in mind. Students will easily be able to practice applying the skill you are teaching them.



## RESPONSE PAGE

Students can dig deeper after the lesson and complete the response page which includes comprehension questions related to the text and a space to summarize the story.

# COMPLETE LESSON PLANS

Each lesson comes with a scripted teacher lesson to make planning your small group lesson a total breeze. Each strategy lesson follows the same 4T model.

- **Target**

You'll introduce the focus skill for the lesson and explain how it will help your students be stronger readers.

- **Teach**

Spend just a few minutes teaching your students all about the focus skill. We've included key phrases to help you keep this short and sweet and also a strategy card you can reference during the lesson.

- **Tackle**

This is where the magic happens. Students will use the reading passage to practice the skill you just taught while you check in with each student to make sure they understand the focus skill.

- **Transfer**

You'll end your lesson with a short discussion and remind students to continue practicing the focus skill while they are reading independently.



**STRATEGY LESSON**  
STRATEGY: TOPIC



**TARGET**  
1-2 min

**TEACH**  
1-2 min

**TACKLE**  
5-7 min

**TRANSFER**

**Objective:** Students will be able to

- Today we are going to identify the theme of a text.
- When you apply this strategy, you will figure out the big idea the author wants you to think about.

The strategy I want to teach you today is how to identify the theme of a text. With this strategy, you can figure out the big idea the author wants you to think about. Once you identify the theme, you can use it to help you understand the text. As you are reading, you can use your experience to help you figure out the theme. Then you use the strategy to help you figure out the theme. Let's look at the example.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy.

**Teacher Notes:**

- Ideally, students would be able to identify the theme of a text.
- While students are reading and practicing, you can check-in and talk with each student about the theme they are identifying.
- Keep the strategy card handy for reference.
- If you choose to use the shared text, you might need to provide more time for students to practice.
- One way to practice is by providing students with the text prior to the lesson.
- This will help them apply the strategy.

**Discuss:**

- Who can tell me how they used this strategy?
- How did paying attention to how the author uses the strategy help you understand the text?

**Link:**



**STRATEGY LESSON**  
STRATEGY: CHARACTER



**TARGET**  
1-2 min

**TEACH**  
1-2 min

**TACKLE**  
5-7 min

**TRANSFER**  
2-3 min

**Objective:** Students will be able to

- Today we are going to spend some time identifying the theme of a text.
- When you apply this strategy to a text, you will figure out the big idea the author wants you to think about.

The strategy I want to teach you today is how to identify the theme of a text. With this strategy, you pay close attention to the beginning of the story to the end. In the beginning, you consider: Who is the character, what do they do, and what their traits are. At the end of the story you consider: How did the character change, what is still the same about them, what is still the same about them, what is still the same about them. And then here is the important part: When the character changed, you think about how the character changed, you think about how the character changed, you think about how the character changed. story and what we as readers can learn from it.

You can use the strategy card to help you understand the text.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy.

**Teacher Notes:**

- Ideally, students would be able to identify the theme of a text.
- While students are reading and practicing, you can check-in and talk with each student about the theme they are identifying.
- Keep the strategy card handy for reference.
- If you choose to use the shared text, you might need to provide more time for students to practice.
- One way to practice is by providing students with the text prior to the lesson.
- This will help them apply the strategy.

**Discuss:**

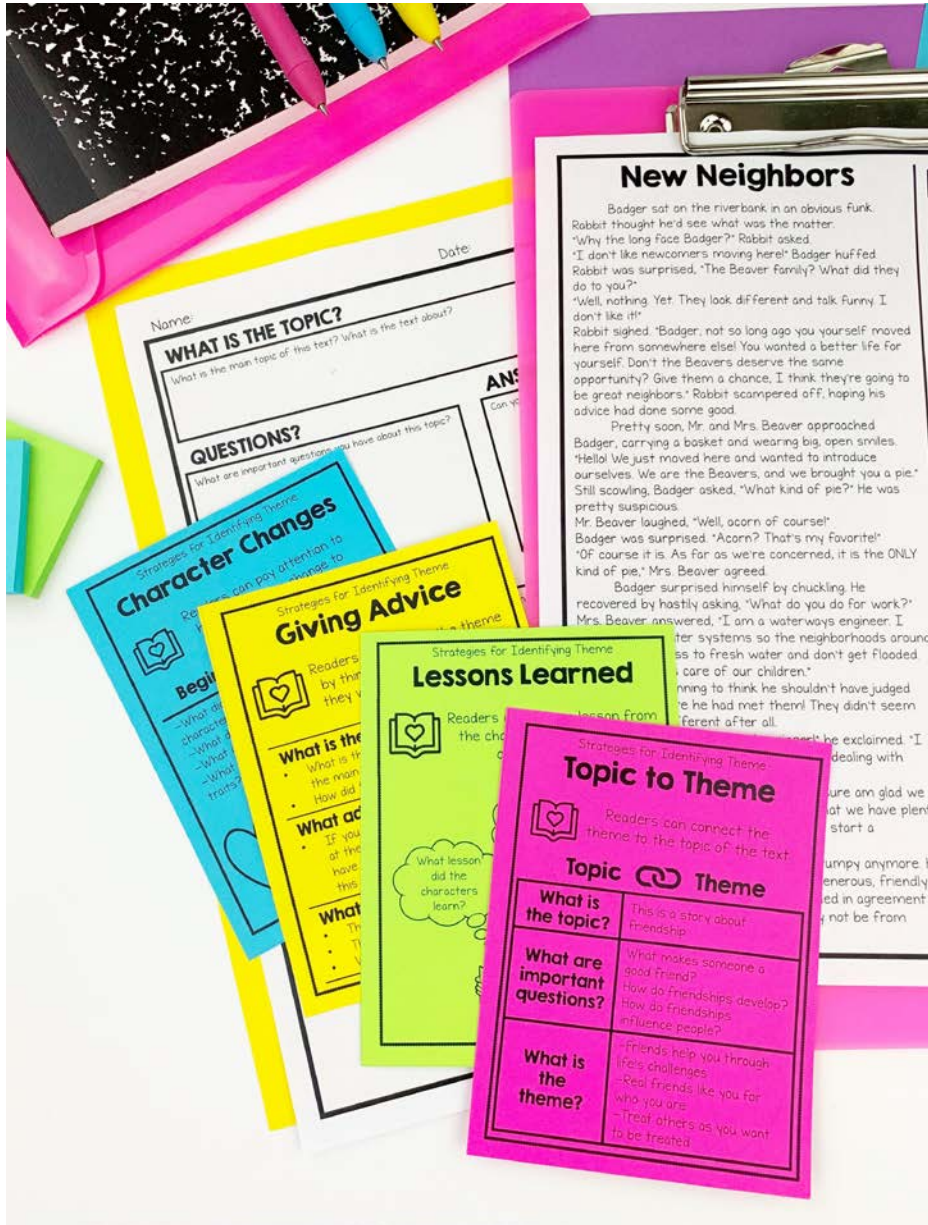
- Who can tell me how they used this strategy?
- How did paying attention to how the author uses the strategy help you understand the text?

**Link:**

- Remember, you can use this strategy to help you understand the text. You can pay attention to the beginning. Think about how the author uses the strategy.

# Includes 4 Focus Lessons

Each lesson will help you teach your students a specific strategy that will help them identify the theme of a fictional story.



## Lessons Include:

- Topic to Theme
- Lessons Learned
- Giving Advice
- Character Changes

# FOCUSED STUDENT PRACTICE

These passages and response pages are a great way for students to get focused practice on the specific skills included.

- Each passage is short, fun, and engaging to read.
- Includes a set of questions next to the text that will help students see how they can apply the focus skill to this specific text.
- Includes comprehension questions and a space for students to write a full summary of the story.

**Great way for students to practice and work towards mastery of key comprehension skills.**

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

## BEGINNING

What was the character like at the beginning?

## POSSIBLE

What does the author want to teach the reader?

### All the World's a Stage

My name is Shelby and I have one crippling Fear in life: public speaking. Pitch black night? Great! Incredible heights? No problem! Try, enclosed spaces? I got this. But being on stage in front of crowds of people reduces me to a hyperventilating mess.

Unfortunately, because of my goals in life, this Fear was seriously holding me back. My dream is to be an activist for the environment. I will probably need a law degree, too. What do lawyers and activists have in common? They both speak in public, whether they be courtrooms or at rallies.

My 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher encouraged me to join the debate team after reading an essay about my goals. I went to one inter-district event and broke out in hives just watching the team members debating on stage, with microphones, in front of a large group of spectators. As my teacher pointed out though, sometimes the only way out is through. Meaning, the only way to reach my goals is to face my fears. I agreed to join the team.

To start, I had to give a brief speech arguing for an increase in the federal minimum wage. Doing my research, I became excited because it was clear to me that it was a cause I could get behind. Thinking about the positive impact it would have on many, many lives gave me the desire to influence others to see my perspective. I put everything I had into writing a flawless speech. Now what?

The next day I was to present my speech to the debate club. Unfortunately, when I got to the podium at the front of the classroom, my mind went blank. My mouth was dry, and I felt like I was going to pass out. I couldn't actually give my carefully prepared speech!

After debate club, my coach suggested I practice. Practice would help me build confidence, and I could increase the level of challenge over time.

That night, I gave my speech to myself in my bedroom mirror. The next day, I gave to my family at the dinner table. Everyone was so supportive! I finally had the motivation to give the speech to the debate team. They let me give the speech over and over, until I was able to walk around, and speak with a strong voice.

When the time came to deliver my speech at a debate event, I was confident in both my speech and myself. I wanted to be a part of bringing positive change to the world! I walked onto the stage and looked into the bright lights. I took a deep breath started talking. The audience seemed huge but was full of friendly faces. My voice shook for the first part of the presentation. But when I didn't pass out or vomit, my confidence grew. At the end of the speech, the audience rose to their feet and clapped like mad. What a feeling that was!

My fear of public speaking isn't gone, but now I have strategies to get through it. It's what I've learned to reach my goals.

### Character Changes

Readers can pay attention to how characters change to identify the theme.

1. Describe the character's thoughts, feelings, and actions at the beginning of the story:
2. Describe how the character changed throughout the story:
3. What BIG IDEA do you think the author wants you to learn from this character change?

# INCLUDES TEACHER GUIDE

Are you new to using strategy groups in your classroom? No worries! We got you!

This resource also includes a 2 page teaching guide PDF that walks you through all the ins and outs of strategy groups. You also get a generic strategy group lesson plan along with sentence starters so you can create your own strategy lesson plans.

**Strategy Group FAQs**  
Strategy groups are an effective tool for providing your students with differentiated instruction. Here are some common questions and answers.

**TEACHING GUIDE: Strategy Groups**

**What is a strategy group?**  
A strategy group is a small group reading lesson that focuses on teaching students a reading strategy that will help them be more independent readers. Strategy groups are short-term, include students from a variety of reading levels, and provide guided support for students who all seem to struggle with a specific reading skill. You can pull a strategy group for ANYTHING that will help your students grow as readers – book selection, comprehension skill, responding to reading etc.

**Why should I prioritize strategy groups?**  
• Strategy groups can save you time. When you identify students who have similar needs you can address all of them in a strategy group.  
• It helps fill in the gaps. Not every student in your guided reading groups will have ALL the same skills, even if they are all on the same level. You can use strategy groups to fill in the gaps for students across multiple levels.  
• Practicing reading strategies in small group can be much more engaging for students than independent practice.  
• Some students need more support than others and strategy groups are another way you can help students become more independent with the strategies you teach.

**Strategy Group Reminders:**

- Small Group Instruction
- 10 minutes
- Focused on ONE strategy
- Students from various levels
- Students can use their own text

**How should I structure my strategy group?**  
Strategy groups are meant to be short and concise. This is a time to reinforce, remind, and practice a strategy that students have been previously taught either during a whole group mini-lesson or in a guided reading lesson. The goal is to give students a quick win that will help them experience some comprehension success. The following can be a really effective framework for strategy group lessons.

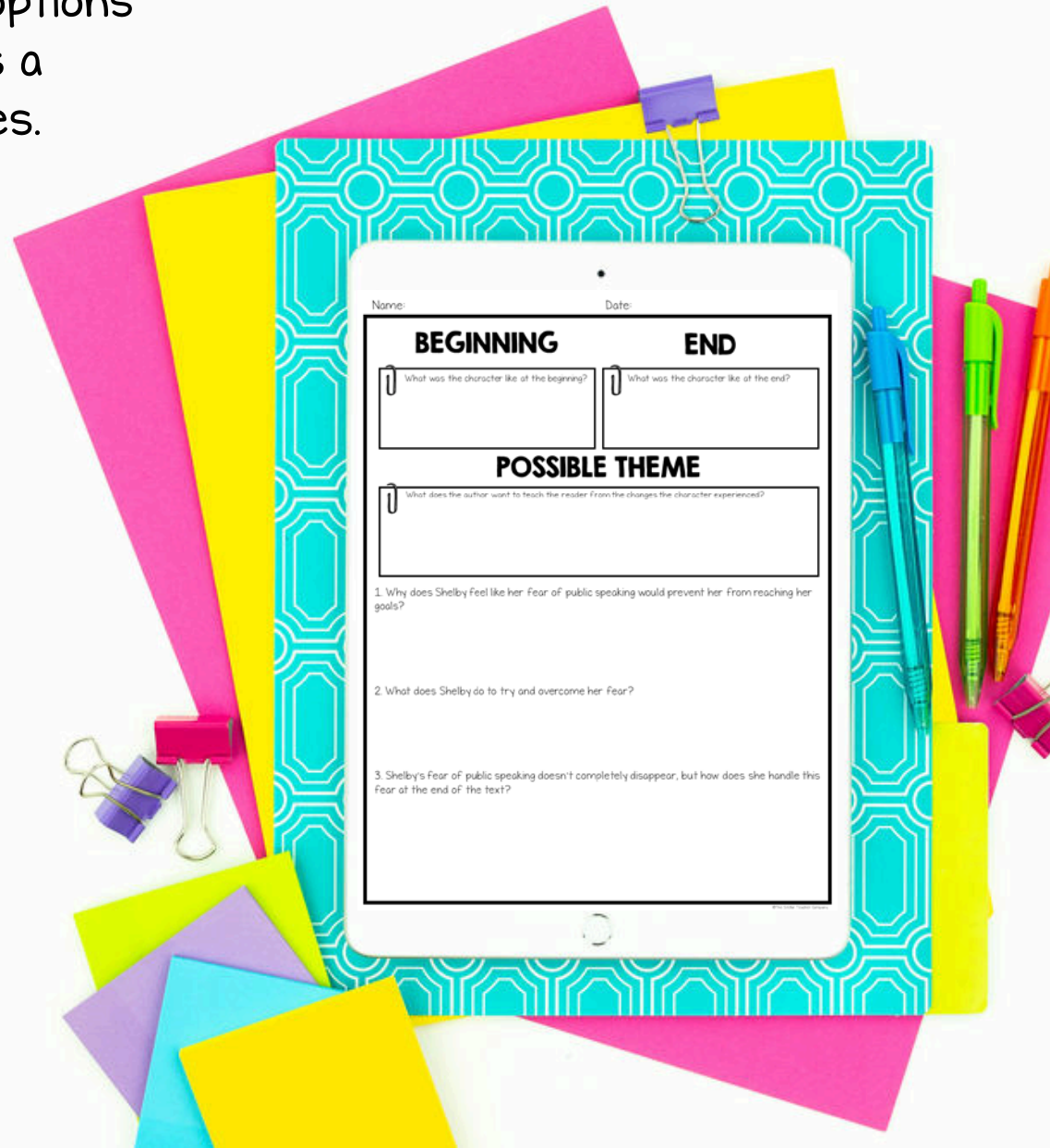
<b>Target</b>	<b>Teach</b>	<b>Tackle</b>	<b>Transfer</b>
Tell students why they have been gathered together and share the target skill/strategy you will be focusing on. Be explicit. Tell them WHAT the skill is, and HOW it will help them as a reader.	Teach students a very specific process or set of steps they should follow. Quickly model what this will look like in a text you are reading. Remind students of the first time you taught this skill/strategy and discuss how it helps them as readers.	Give students time to tackle the target skill on their own. Let them practice with the independent book they brought to the strategy group or a short text you provide. During this time check in with each student, and see if they are able to apply the target skill.	Prepare students to apply this skill/strategy to future independent reading texts. Restate target skill and ask students to explain how it helps them as a reader and the steps they can take to apply that skill to their reading.
1-2 minutes	1-2 minutes	5-7 minutes	2-3 minutes

# Includes Digital Versions

I love to provide both print and digital options in my resources. This resource includes a digital version created using Google Slides.

In addition to the print version, you get a digital version created using Google Slides for all the passages, response pages, and graphic organizers.

Rest assured, you can use this resource in both face-to-face and virtual classrooms.



# A LOOK INSIDE...

\* 4 Total Lessons

## Scripted Lesson Plans

## Student Strategy Cards

## Strategy Specific Texts

## Response Pages

**STRATEGY LESSON #1**  
STRATEGY: TOPIC TO THEME

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the theme of a text

**TARGET** 1-2 min

- Today we are going to spend some time practicing a strategy that will help you identify the theme of a text
- When you apply this strategy to your independent reading, it will help you figure out the big idea the author wants you to take away from reading the text

**TEACH** 1-2 min

The strategy I want to teach you today is **Topic to Theme**.

- With this strategy, you start by identifying the topic of the text. Sometimes you can figure out the topic right away. When you first start reading and other times, you might need to read the entire text to figure out.
- Once you identify the topic, you start to ask important questions about this topic. As you are reading, you want to think about how the text and the character's experiences can help you answer those questions.
- Then you use those questions to help you figure out a possible theme of the text. Let's look at the example included on this strategy card.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy on your own.

**Teacher Notes**

- Initially, students would be able to bring their independent reading texts to the strategy group. If your students aren't reading a fictional text, or if you prefer to have all students using the same text, you can use the text *New Neighbors* to help students apply this specific strategy.
- While students are reading and practicing this strategy independently, you want to check-in and talk with each student about how they are applying the strategy. Keep the discussion focused on their thinking vs. listening to them read.
- If you choose to use the shared text and students are reading the text for the first time, you may need to provide more time for this portion of the lesson. One way you can do this is to provide more time for the independent reading.

Strategies for Identifying Theme

**Topic to Theme**

Readers can connect the theme to the topic of the text.

Topic	Theme
<b>What is the topic?</b> This is a story about Friendship	<b>What makes someone a good friend?</b> How do friendships develop? How do friendships influence people?
<b>What are important questions?</b> -Friends help you through life's challenges -How friends like you for who you are -Treat others as you want to be treated	<b>What is the theme?</b> -Friends help you through life's challenges -How friends like you for who you are -Treat others as you want to be treated

**New Neighbors**

Badger sat on the riverbank in an obvious funk. Rabbit thought he'd see what was the matter. "Why the long face Badger?" Rabbit asked. "I don't like newcomers moving here!" Badger huffed. Rabbit was surprised. "The Beaver family? What did they do to you?" "Well, nothing 'er. They look different and talk funny. I don't like it!" Rabbit sighed. "Badger, not so long ago you yourself moved here from somewhere else. You wanted a better life for yourself! Don't the Beavers deserve the same opportunity? Give them a chance. I think they're going to be great neighbors." Rabbit compared a few. "Nope! His advice had done some good."

Pretty soon, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver approached Badger, carrying a basket and wearing big, open smiles. "Hello! We just moved here and wanted to introduce ourselves. We see the Beavers and we brought you a pie." Still scowling, Badger asked, "What kind of pie?" He was pretty suspicious.

Mr. Beaver laughed. "Well, corn of course!" Badger was surprised. "Corn? That's my favorite!" "Of course it is. As far as we were concerned, it is the ONLY kind of pie," Mrs. Beaver agreed.

Badger surprised himself by chucking. He recovered by hastily asking, "What do you do for work?" Mrs. Beaver answered, "I am a water ways engineer. I manage local water systems so the neighborhoods around them have access to fresh water and don't get flooded."

Mr. Beaver takes care of our children."

Badger was beginning to think he shouldn't have judged this family before he had met them! They didn't seem that weird or different after all.

**Topic to Theme**

Readers can connect the theme to the topic of the text.

**Topic to Theme**

Readers can connect the theme to the topic of the text.

**What is the topic?** This is a story about Friendship

**What are important questions?** -Friends help you through life's challenges  
-How friends like you for who you are  
-Treat others as you want to be treated

**What is the theme?** -Friends help you through life's challenges  
-How friends like you for who you are  
-Treat others as you want to be treated

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

**WHAT IS THE TOPIC?**

What is the main topic of this text? What is the text about?

**QUESTIONS?** What are important questions you have about the text?

**ANSWERS!** Can you answer these questions from reading the text?

**WHAT IS THE THEME?** Use the topic, your questions, and answers to come up with possible themes.

1. Why didn't Badger like the Beaver family when they first moved in?

2. What are some things that Badger and the Beaver family have in common?

**STRATEGY LESSON #2**  
STRATEGY: CHARACTER CHANGES

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the theme of a text

**TARGET** 1-2 min

- Today we are going to spend some time practicing a strategy that will help you identify the theme of a text.
- When you apply this strategy to your independent reading, it will help you figure out the big idea the author wants you to take away from reading the text.

**TEACH** 1-2 min

The strategy I want to teach you today is **Character Changes**.

- With this strategy, you pay close attention to how the character changes from the beginning of the story to the end of the story.
- In the beginning, you consider: who the character thinks, what they say, what they do, and what their traits are.
- At the end of the story you consider: how the character changed, what is different about them, what is still the same, and what lesson they learned.
- And then here is the important part! After you have thought about how the character changed, you think about why the author included this character in the story and what we as readers can learn from them.

You can use the strategy card to help teach the strategy.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy on your own.

**Teacher Notes**

- Initially, students would be able to bring their independent reading texts to the strategy group. If your students aren't reading a fictional text, or if you prefer to have all students using the same text, you can use the text *All the World's a Stage* to help students apply this specific strategy.
- While students are reading and practicing this strategy independently, you want to check-in and talk with each student about how they are applying the strategy. Keep the discussion focused on their thinking vs. listening to them read.
- If you choose to use the shared text and students are reading the text for the first time, you may need to provide more time for this portion of the lesson. One way you can keep your strategy lessons more concise and still use a shared text is by providing students with the text prior to coming to the strategy group. This will make sure that when they are at the table, all of them are focusing on applying the strategy.

**Discuss**

- Who can tell me how they used this strategy to help them identify the theme?
- How did paying attention to how the character changes help you figure out a possible theme of the story?

**Link**

- Remember, you can use this strategy to help you think about the theme anytime you are reading independently. You can pay close attention to the character in the beginning. Think about how they changed at the end. And then consider what the author wants you to learn or take away from the character's transformation.

Strategies for Identifying Theme

**Character Changes**

Readers can pay attention to how characters change to identify the theme.

Beginning	End
-What did the character think? -What did they say? -What did they do? -What were their traits?	-How did the character change? -What is different? -What is the same? -What did they learn?
<b>Consider the Theme:</b> Consider how the author is using the character to communicate their BIG idea. What do they want you to learn from this character?	<b>Consider the Theme:</b> Consider how the author is using the character to communicate their BIG idea. What do they want you to learn from this character?

**All the World's a Stage**

My name is Shelby and I have one crippling fear in life: public speaking. Pshh...bluh...right? Great! Inconceivable heights? No problem! Fire, endless spaces? I get this. But being on stage in front of crowds of people makes me to a hyper-ventilating mess.

Unfortunately, because of my goals in life, this fear was seriously holding me back. My dream is to be an actor for the environment. I will probably need a low degree, too. What do lawyers and actuaries have in common? They both speak in public, whether they be courtrooms or at rallies.

My 8th grade English teacher encouraged me to join the debate team after reading an essay about my goals. I went to one after-school event and broke out in hives just watching the team members debating on stage, with microphones, in front of a large group of spectators. As my teacher pointed out though, sometimes the only way out is through. Moving, the only way to reach my goals is to face my fears. I signed up for the team to start. I had to give a brief speech opening for an increase in the federal minimum wage. Doing my research, I became excited because it was clear to me that it was a cause I could get behind. Thinking about the positive impact it would have on many, many lives gave me the desire to influence others to see my perspective. I put everything I had into writing a flawless speech. Now what?

The next day I was to present my speech to the debate club. Unfortunately, when I got to the podium at the front of the classroom, my mind went blank. My mouth was dry, and I felt like I was going to pass out. I couldn't actually give my carefully prepared speech!

After debate club, my coach suggested I practice. Practice would help me build confidence, and I could increase the level of challenge over time.

That night, I gave my speech to myself in my bedroom mirror. The next day, I gave to my family at the dinner table. Everyone was so supportive! I finally had the motivation to give the speech to the debate team. They let me give the speech over and over until I was able to walk around and speak with a strong voice.

When the time came to deliver my speech at a debate event, I was confident in both my speech and myself. I walked onto the stage and looked into the bright lights. I took a deep breath, started talking. The audience seemed huge but was full of friendly faces. My voice shook for the first part of the presentation, but when I didn't pass out or vomit, my confidence grew. As the character in the speech, the audience rose to their feet and cheered like mad. What a feeling that was!

My fear of public speaking isn't gone, but now I have strategies to get through it. It's what I'm going to need to do to reach my goals.

**Character Changes**

Readers can pay attention to how characters change to identify the theme.

Beginning	End
-What did the character think? -What did they say? -What did they do? -What were their traits?	-How did the character change? -What is different? -What is the same? -What did they learn?
<b>Consider the Theme:</b> Consider how the author is using the character to communicate their BIG idea. What do they want you to learn from this character?	<b>Consider the Theme:</b> Consider how the author is using the character to communicate their BIG idea. What do they want you to learn from this character?

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

**BEGINNING** What was the character like at the beginning?

**END** What was the character like at the end?

**POSSIBLE THEME** What does the author want to teach the reader from the changes the character experienced?

1. Why does Shelby feel like her fear of public speaking would prevent her from reaching her goals?

2. What does Shelby do to try and overcome her fear?

3. What BIG IDEA do you think the author wants you to learn from the character's change?

3. Shelby's fear of public speaking doesn't completely disappear, but how does she handle this fear at the end of the text?



# A LOOK INSIDE...

\* 4 Total Lessons

## Scripted Lesson Plans

## Student Strategy Cards

## Strategy Specific Texts

## Response Pages

**STRATEGY LESSON #3**  
STRATEGY: GIVING ADVICE

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the theme of a text

**TARGET**  
1-2 min

- Today we are going to spend some time practicing a strategy that will help you identify the theme of a text
- When you apply this strategy to your independent reading, it will help you figure out the big idea the author wants you to take away from reading the text.

**TEACH**  
1-2 min

The strategy I want to teach you today is **Giving Advice**.

- With this strategy, you think about the problem the character experiences in the story and consider what advice you would give them to help them overcome their problem or challenge.
- When you think about the important advice you would give, you can connect that to a possible theme for the story.
- Let's look at the strategy card for some questions we could ask while thinking about what advice we would give the character.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy on your own.

**Teacher Notes:**

- Ideally, students would be able to bring their independent reading texts to the strategy group. If your students aren't reading a fictional text, or if you prefer to have all students using the same text, you can use the text *Spring Planting* to help students apply this specific strategy.
- While students are reading and practicing this strategy independently, you want to check-in and talk with each student about how they are applying the strategy. Keep the discussion focused on their thinking vs. listening to them read.
- If you choose to use the shared text and students are reading the text for the first time, you might need to provide more time for this portion of the lesson.

**TACKLE**  
5-7 min

**Strategies for Identifying Theme**  
**Giving Advice**

Readers can identify the theme by thinking about what advice they would give the character.

**What is their problem?**

- What is the main problem or challenge the main character faces in this story?
- How did they try to solve their problem?

**What advice would you give?**

- If you could give advice to the character at the beginning of the story that would have prevented them from experiencing this challenge, what would it be?

**What is a possible theme?**

- Think about their problem.
- Think about the advice you gave them.
- What is a possible theme for this text?

**Spring Planting**

James leaned on his shovel and wiped the sweat out of his eyes. Looking up, his heart sank at the scenery vast amount of land he still had to work in order to plant the spring crops. James sighed and decided to take a break. James and his family had moved from Virginia to start a homestead in the Kentucky Territory. Their dream was a new life of big open spaces and living off the land. The reality was quite a bit harder than that. They had to start from scratch, cutting down trees to build their house, digging a well for water, and growing every single thing they ate. It was exhausting but rewarding. Now if the fields could just get planted...

James had an idea. He told his family where he was going and rode off on his horse. When he got to his nearest neighbor, he found the whole family out in the crop fields. "Neighb' neighbor!" James jumped down off his horse and knelt to meet them in the field with his proposal. Spring planting was hard work, and with just himself, it was going to take too long. His wife was busy looking after their young children, so he had come up with a plan to get some help. Failure wasn't an option because they had nothing to go back to in Virginia. They had sunk everything into this move.

"Looks like you have the whole family working!" James reached out to shake his neighbor's hand. "We need everyone pulling their own weight to get this done in time," his neighbor Thomas replied. "I've afraid me. I like work, and I just wish to help, so Mary has to look after them. I sure could use some help here. My idea I help you here on your farm until it's planted. Then, you come help me put in my crops when we done." Thomas looked thoughtful. "Well, I can't rightly see a downside to that, James. It's a deal."

James spent the next week working hard from dawn

**Giving Advice**

Readers can identify the theme by thinking about what advice they would give the character.

**1. What is the main character's problem?**

**2. How did they try to solve their problem?**

**3. What advice would you give them that might have prevented them from experiencing this problem?**

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

**CHARACTER #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT IS THEIR PROBLEM?**

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE?**

**POSSIBLE THEME:**

**1. What feelings do you think James feels at the beginning of the story? Why?**

**2. Why was James willing to suffer back aches and sunburns just to help his neighbor, Thomas, plant his field?**

**STRATEGY LESSON #4**  
STRATEGY: LESSONS LEARNED

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the theme of a text

**TARGET**  
1-2 min

- Today we are going to spend some time practicing a strategy that will help you identify the theme of a text
- When you apply this strategy to your independent reading, it will help you figure out the big idea the author wants you to take away from reading the text.

**TEACH**  
1-2 min

The strategy I want to teach you today is **Lessons Learned**.

- With this strategy, you spend time thinking about the lesson the characters learned in the story.
- Then you think about how that lesson applies or relates to your own life. What can you personally take away from the story?
- This will help you think about the big idea or lesson the author is trying to teach from the story.
- As you are reading, you can ask yourself the questions included on the strategy card to help you think about the lessons learned.

Now it's your turn to try this strategy on your own.

**Teacher Notes:**

- Ideally, students would be able to bring their independent reading texts to the strategy group. If your students aren't reading a fictional text, or if you prefer to have all students using the same text, you can use the text *Queen Bee* to help students apply this specific strategy.
- While students are reading and practicing this strategy independently, you want to check-in and talk with each student about how they are applying the strategy. Keep the discussion focused on their thinking vs. listening to them read.
- If you choose to use the shared text and students are reading the text for the first time, you might need to provide more time for this portion of the lesson. One way you can help your strategy lessons more concise and still use a shared text is by providing students with the text prior to coming to the strategy group. This will make sure that while they are at the table, they are focusing on applying the strategy.

**DEBATE**

- Who can tell me how they used this strategy to help them identify the theme?
- How did thinking about the lessons learned help you figure out the theme?

**LINK**

- Remember, you can use this strategy to help you think about the theme anytime you are reading independently. You can think about the lesson the character learned, apply that to your own life, and then use that lesson to help you figure out a possible theme of the story.

**Strategies for Identifying Theme**  
**Lessons Learned**

Readers can learn a lesson from the characters. This lesson is often the theme.

**How does that lesson relate to my own life?**

**What lesson did the characters learn?**

**How can we use that lesson to figure out the theme?**

**Queen Bee**

Melody felt pretty great walking down the 5<sup>th</sup> grade hall of her school. She had on a killer outfit, her hair was straightened to perfection, and her mom had let her get a manicure the day before. As president of the student body, Melody was one of those girls who "had it all."

She sat down at the lunch table with her friends, a group of girls who were also very pretty, had great hair, and wore trendy clothes. The girls pulled out their home-packed lunches of hummus and vegetables, and got to work discussing everyone else's fashion. Four peas for the boy. Melody didn't like to talk about other people but "that didn't stop her from laughing when one of her friends made a particularly nasty/funny remark."

That afternoon, she had a student council meeting when taking feedback for upcoming student council activities. Maha, the secretary, unveiled a long paper banner. The words "Kindness Campaign" were spelled out in bubble letters and colored.

Melody blinked in surprise. "Why do we need to have a Kindness Campaign?" she asked.

Maha thought for a minute and responded, "We don't NEED to do it, it would just be really nice. If we are the leaders of the student body, we should lead by being good examples. We could run this program for a week, encouraging students to practice random acts of kindness here at school. Then we can evaluate if we should run it longer."

Melody was dismissive. "I was thinking about something more fun. A spirit day - maybe with crazy hair or silly hats!" Her vice president Mark seemed appalled. "First of all, Melody, the president Kampagn is a great idea. Second of all, the whole school can see you and your friends when you are laughing at people during lunch? If you are the cool, popular girls, but you are not laughing by example, are you?"

Melody blinked back the tears that popped into her eyes. She felt embarrassed and ashamed. She and her friends were just having some harmless fun at lunch, but now she finds out others could hear them? She hadn't MEANT to hurt anyone's feelings, but she hadn't taken a stand to change her friends' behavior either.

Maha added, "Not everyone is pretty, or popular, or has all the privileges you do. That all of us do But school shouldn't be a place that hurts kids and breaks them down. Let's start a program to intentionally lift people up and make school a great place for everyone."

Melody nodded. "I'm sorry, I let you all down. I haven't been leading by example and have let my friends act like mean girls. I didn't think about how it looked to the rest of the school. You are right about the kindness Campaign. Let's do it, and I'll be the one to announce it. I promise. It is a better job being a good student body president for everyone at this school!"

**Lessons Learned**

Readers can learn a lesson from the characters. This lesson is often the theme.

**How does that lesson relate to my own life?**

**What lesson did the characters learn?**

**How can we use that lesson to figure out the theme?**

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

**THE THEME OF THIS STORY IS:**

**WHAT LESSON DID THE CHARACTER(S) LEARN?**

**WHAT MESSAGE CAN YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THE TEXT?**

**1. Why was Melody so confident at the beginning of the story?**

**2. Based off of Melody's behavior at lunch, do you think she is a good school leader? Why or why not?**

**3. Why was Melody embarrassed and ashamed during the school council meeting?**

