

# TEACHING THEME

## READ & RESPOND TASK CARDS



# WHAT'S INCLUDED?

This resource includes 20 reading task cards that contain short fiction passages that will help you teach, practice, and reinforce how to identify the theme of a text.

**Task cards can be printed in three different ways.**



Option #1 - Just the text



Option #2 - Text and Graphic Organizer Template



Option #3 - Text and Response Questions

**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# Option #1 - Just the Text

One of the printing options for the task cards is to print JUST the text. Each task card has a short non-fiction reading passages (takes up half a page). The passages lend themselves to identifying and understanding the theme, but you really could use them to teach any fiction skill.



- This set of task cards is ideal if you want to use them in the “traditional” task card way.
- I suggest printing them on cardstock and either putting them all on a book ring or in a photo box.
- There are 3 options of reading response sheets included so students can read the passages and respond on a separate page.

# Option #2 - Passage & Graphic Organizer

One of the printing options includes the passage and a graphic organizer template. These task cards can be printed front and back and work great in a center, as part of your small group instruction, or even for guided practice.

- On the front of each task card is a short reading passage (the same numbers and titles as option #1).
- The bottom of each task card includes a few questions to prompt students thinking about theme.
- On the back, there is a graphic organizer template that will help students think about the theme of the story.



**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# Option #3 - Passage & Response Questions

One of the printing options includes the passage and reading response questions. These task cards can be printed front and back and work great in a center, as part of your small group instruction, or even for guided practice.



- On the front of each task card is a short reading passage (the same numbers and titles as option #1).
- The bottom of each task card includes a few questions to prompt students thinking about theme.
- On the back, there is space for a sticky note so students can jot down their thinking about the text. There are also two text-based comprehension questions.

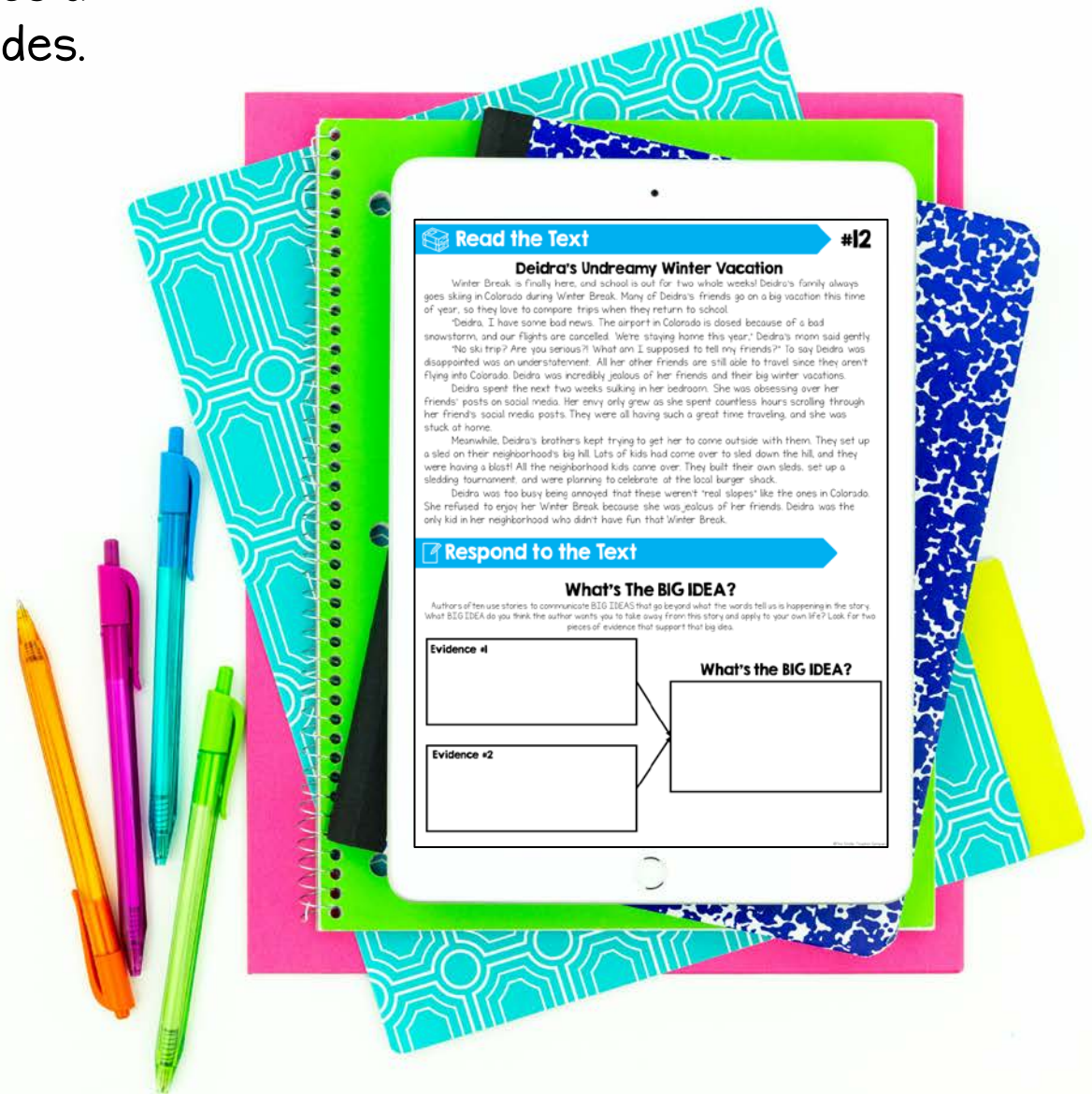
**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# 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.

There are three different digital versions included (to match the three different printing options).

- **Option 1:** The text with a generic space for student response.
- **Option 2:** The text with the graphic organizer at the bottom (this one is pictured to the right)
- **Option 3:** The text with the text-based comprehension questions on the bottom.



# A LOOK INSIDE...(option 1)

**Read & Respond** **1**

### Mindy's First Dive

Mindy's hair blew in the salty ocean air as she sat against the edge of the boat. Her palms were sweaty, and her stomach had so many knots that she thought she might be sick. Priya, on the other hand, was smiling ear to ear. She was so excited she couldn't sit still.

"Priya, I don't think I can do this," Mindy finally admitted to her friend as tears welled up in her eyes.

"Oh, come on, Mindy! You can't back out now. We're literally out in the middle of the ocean. Please, just do it for me!" Priya begged as she gave Mindy a little puppy dog smile.

Reluctantly, Mindy suited up and adjusted her snorkel mask. Her hands were shaking so badly, she could barely get the flippers on her feet. Priya grabbed her hand and the two girls jumped down into the shark diving cage, which was already in the warm, ocean water.

Mindy could already see the sharks off in the distance. *Maybe they just turn around and go the other way, she hoped.* Priya sensed that Mindy was really scared. Priya grabbed Mindy's hand to comfort her and gave her a big thumbs up. The sharks started swimming towards the metal diving cage to eat the bait floating near the side of the boat. They were so close!

Within minutes, there were about five Great White sharks swimming all around Priya and Mindy. They were so close that they were bumping into the diving cage! The two friends stared wide-eyed in amazement as the sharks swam around them. It was truly a beautiful and breath-taking scene. Mindy felt surprisingly excited as she watched the magnificent sharks swim around her.

Finally, the two girls climbed out of the shark diving cage and back into the boat. Mindy let out a long sigh of relief. She couldn't believe she actually did it! But what was more surprising was that shark diving had been one of the best experiences of her life.

Priya hugged Mindy. "Thank you for being so brave! You did it, Mindy!"

**Read & Respond** **2**

### The Unluckiest Luckiest Day

Glen walked home from school every day, but Thursday was different. Glen wound up \$100 richer on Thursday. On the way home, Glen found a one-hundred-dollar bill blowing in the wind by the sidewalk. He ran up to catch it. He couldn't believe it! He was almost home when he found it, but there was no one around.

Glen ran home, grabbed his wallet, and counted the money. He was so excited that he started playing video games. He couldn't believe it. It was his lucky day!

**Read & Respond** **7**

### Science Test Surprise

Joyden was struggling in his science class. Even though he was failing, he didn't have time to study for their upcoming test over cell processes. Who cares about endocytosis and exocytosis anyways? He had better things to do, like play his video games.

"You better pass your science test tomorrow, young man. Otherwise, no phone, no games, and no internet this weekend," threatened Joyden's dad.

Joyden thought long and hard about this. He knew he couldn't survive the entire weekend without the internet or his cell phone! He knew nothing about cell processes. He hadn't paid attention all week.

The tests were distributed, and Joyden felt anxious. Before the teacher passed out the tests, he laid his notebook open under his feet. When his teacher wasn't looking, he snuck glances at his notes.

He got an A! His teacher was so proud because Joyden hadn't passed a science test all year. She immediately called Joyden's dad to tell him the good news. His teacher even took him to his other teachers to brag about his good grade in science. Joyden got so much attention for doing such a good job. It seemed like everyone went out of their way to congratulate him.

"Because you did so well on your test, I want you to help me tutor some of the other students on Monday," his teacher exclaimed. Joyden felt a pit in his stomach. He couldn't help but wonder if his teacher knew he cheated. It's a good thing he would have his phone and the internet over the weekend. It looked like he was actually going to have to study science for once.

**Read & Respond** **8**

### A Big Win for Malachi

Going to casinos was Malachi's favorite thing to do on the weekends. In fact, it's why he decided to move to Las Vegas, Nevada - it's the casino capital of America!

This particular weekend, Malachi and his friends were at their favorite casino in Vegas. Malachi separated from his friends, so he could play one of his favorite card games. He was winning money, like usual. On his way back to find his friends, he stumbled across a poker chip lying on the floor. As he got closer, he realized it was a chip worth \$1,000. In this casino, people play with poker chips instead of cash. They usually cash in their poker chips before they go home.

Malachi picked up the \$1,000 poker chip in awe. He looked around and saw no one nearby. Unsure of what to do, he went straight to his friends to show his good luck! His friends were all jealous. Malachi was already winning lots of money, and now he was \$1,000 richer just by walking around. The excitement of Malachi's friends made him feel a little guilty. This wasn't his money. He didn't win it, and he certainly didn't earn it.

He excused himself from his friends and headed to the casino's secretary. He reported the \$1,000 poker chip as found, and turned it in. The secretary was shocked by Malachi's honesty. She was so impressed with Malachi that she gave him \$50 in return for his honesty.

**Read & Respond** **3**

### New Shoes

Salvador watched Andy try to play with the other boys during recess. Salvador also watched the other boys make fun of Andy, but Andy didn't seem to notice. Andy didn't have very nice clothes or shoes. In fact, Andy's clothes were always really dirty, and his shoes were way too big.

Salvador made friends with Andy. He didn't want Andy to be friends with those other boys because they were so mean to him. Salvador made it a point to get to know Andy and even encouraged his other friends to do the same. Turns out that Andy's mom couldn't afford to buy him new clothes or shoes this school year. Andy has to wear his older brother's hand-me-downs. That's why nothing fit him quite right.

Salvador thought about Andy a lot. On the way to school Salvador asked his dad, "Can we go shopping after school today?"

"Sure son, what do you need?" Salvador's dad asked nonchalantly.

"I want to spend my savings on a new friend I made at school," Salvador filled his dad in on Andy's situation. "I want to buy him a new pair of shoes."

The next day, Andy got his new pair of shoes. Salvador made sure he gave them to Andy in private. He didn't want to embarrass him, and Salvador didn't need anyone else to know that he gave Andy the shoes. Salvador was giving this gift for Andy's happiness, not for attention.

Andy, Salvador, and Salvador's circle of friends became really close that year. They were best friends for a long time.

**Read & Respond** **4**

### The Road to Recovery

The storm had finally passed. It was the first hurricane to hit the town of Wills in a long time - since 1967, to be exact. Most people evacuated a few days ago, but Kristy, her family, and a few other neighbors stayed behind.

The rain had stopped finally, and the sun was slowly beginning to shine outside their houses. The

**Read & Respond** **9**

### The Most Perfect Pair

Aniana and her mother were out shopping on Saturday, like usual. While they were at the store, Aniana bought herself some earrings. She spent \$18 on this new pair of earrings. She wasn't in love with them, but she hated leaving a store without buying anything.

Next, she talked her mother into stopping for frozen yogurt. Aniana convinced her to stop because she said she would pay for her own. After the earrings and the frozen yogurt, Aniana had about \$20 left.

Aniana's mom decided to make a last-minute stop at a local boutique. Aniana found the most perfect pair of shoes at the boutique! They were exactly what she didn't know she needed! They would go perfectly with the dress she bought last weekend. Aniana put them on and pranced around the store. She was in love until she looked at the price tag. The shoes were \$40, and Aniana only had \$20 left.

"Mom, I have to have these shoes! Can we go back and return the earrings, so I have enough money?" Aniana pleaded with her mother.

"No, Aniana. Even if we return those earrings, you still won't have enough to buy the shoes. Remember the frozen yogurt? You should have saved your money from today if you knew you wanted to buy shoes to match your dress," her mother explained. "Maybe you can start saving again and we can come back in a few weeks."

**Read & Respond** **10**

### The Secret to Survival

Jonathan and his family travel all over the world on their sailboat! He and his family have lived on the sailboat since Jonathan was seven years old. He is thirteen now and wants to try surviving on a deserted island for a week! He knows he can do it because he has lots of experience with islands. He knows how to fish for food, build a campfire, build a shelter, and identify signs of bad weather. He knows all the skills to survive on a deserted island!

After logging his parents for months, and coming up with a survival and safety plan, they finally agree and Jonathan begins his adventure with only a few items. He knows he needs to set up shelter, find food for dinner, and make sure he had a good water source. But he is so excited for his adventure he decides to relax and take it all in before he gets to work. He puts up his hammock and gets out his book. He spends time reading in his hammock while listening to the ocean waves. This is the life! After a while, he takes a nap. He spends most of the afternoon relaxing and lounging around.

Darkness begins to set, and Jonathan realizes he didn't fish for food or build a shelter for nighttime. Jonathan is still confident in his ability to get everything done. After all, he does have all the skills and knows exactly what he needs to do.

Jonathan was unable to catch any fish for dinner, and he was unable to build his shelter before it got too dark. *Man, this is harder than I thought he grumbles to himself.* He was almost asleep when it began to rain. Jonathan spent his night hungry, soaked, and annoyed. He was annoyed at himself. All that time he spent reading and relaxing, he should have spent preparing for dinner and for nightfall. He should have paid more attention to the weather, too. Jonathan had all the skills for this adventure, but his confidence and laziness got in the way.

**Read & Respond** **5**

### A Change of Heart

Harper's mom worked as a fashion designer, and she was pretty good at it. Her job allowed Harper and her mom to move all the way from a small town in Texas to New York City - the fashion capital of America! When Harper was little (around ten), she loved that her mom worked all the time. Harper got to stay home with the nanny, who was so much more fun to play with. Plus, every time her mom came home from a work trip, she would bring Harper a present. Over the years, she got clothes from Milan, makeup from downtown New York, signed albums from Atlanta, a beach trip to Miami (without her mom), and an allowance that was practically endless!

Now that Harper is seventeen, she feels a little differently. She really misses her mom. At first, she loved all the space and freedom, and she definitely loved the gifts. Now, though, she would give anything to just spend some time with her mom. She is realizing that she will be leaving for college next year and that she's barely spent any time with her mom since she was ten years old. Harper decides to write her mom a letter. In her letter, she explains how much she appreciates all the hard work her mom does, and how she does a great job taking care of her. She also explains that it makes her really sad spending most of her time alone or with her friends, knowing she'll be leaving for college soon. She explains that she misses her mom and that no amount of gifts can replace their quality time together.

**Read & Respond** **6**

### The Annual School Tech Fair

Tia and Mya decide to partner up for the annual school tech fair this year. They are creating a movie for their project. Their film is about a little girl, Tanya, who lost her dog but found him sitting on the front porch after hours of looking for him. Mya's house is perfect for filming because she has a porch and a dog. Tia is really excited to participate in the tech fair this year because her old school didn't have a tech fair.

**Read & Respond** **11**

### The School Spelling Bee

Mr. Rixon announces that two students will represent his class for the upcoming School Spelling Bee. Both Jordan and Cesar are chosen for the School Spelling Bee, and they have exactly one week to prepare!

Cesar spends his whole week studying the Spelling List Packet! Mr. Rixon gave him. He even has his mom practice with him every day on the way to school and on the way home. Cesar has his big brother quiz him on the spelling words while they play basketball outside. He definitely wants to win the School Spelling Bee!

Jordan, on the other hand, spends his whole week relaxing. He doesn't need to study because he has a secret weapon - his lucky socks! Jordan is confident that his lucky socks will help him win the School Spelling Bee. After all, it was his lucky socks that helped him kick the winning goal in the soccer tournament last year.

On the day of the School Spelling Bee, Cesar and Jordan both stand on the stage with all the other kids. Cesar goes first and easily gets his word correct. Jordan is next and is wiggling his toes in his lucky socks. He gets a word that he's never even heard of! Since he's never heard of it, he certainly can't spell it! Jordan gets out on the first round.

Feeling disappointed, Jordan realizes his lucky socks failed him. Cesar won the School Spelling Bee! Turns out the word that Jordan had never heard of was on the Spelling List Packet Mr. Rixon gave him to study.

**Read & Respond** **12**

### Deidra's Undreamy Winter Vacation

Winter Break is finally here, and school is out for two whole weeks! Deidra's family always goes skiing in Colorado during Winter Break. Many of Deidra's friends go on a big vacation this time of year, so they love to compare trips when they return to school.

"Deidra, I have some bad news. The airport in Colorado is closed because of a bad snowstorm, and our flights are cancelled. We're staying home this year," Deidra's mom said gently.

"No ski trip? Are you serious? What am I supposed to tell my friends?" To say Deidra was disappointed was an understatement. All her other friends are still able to travel since they aren't flying into Colorado. Deidra was incredibly jealous of her friends and their big winter vacations.

Deidra spent the next two weeks sulking in her bedroom. She was obsessing over her friends' posts on social media. Her envy only grew as she spent countless hours scrolling through her friends' social media posts. They were all having such a great time traveling and she was stuck at home.

Meanwhile, Deidra's brothers kept trying to get her to come outside with them. They set up a sled on their neighborhood's big hill. Lots of kids had come over to sled down the hill, and they were having a blast! All the neighborhood kids come over. They built their own sleds, set up a sledding tournament, and were planning to celebrate at the local burger shack.

Deidra was too busy being annoyed that these weren't "real slopes" like the ones in Colorado. She refused to enjoy her Winter Break because she was jealous of her friends. Deidra was the only kid in her neighborhood who didn't have fun that Winter Break.







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