

## Teacher Notes



## Activity at a Glance

- ◆ **Subject:** English
- ◆ **Subject Area:** English/Language Arts
- ◆ **Category:** Literary Elements
- ◆ **Topic:** Theme
- ◆ **Grade Level:** 9 - 12
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** None
- ◆ **Total Teaching Time:** 80 - 100 minutes

## Theme

### Activity 3 Assessment of Theme

## Materials

- ◆ TI-83 Plus or TI-83 Plus Silver Edition
- ◆ LearningCheck™ Application
- ◆ LearningCheck™ file: **THEME.edc**

### ***Activity Overview***

Students will develop original themes for potential use in original stories. This work can be done as an isolated exercise or it can be worked as part of an ongoing unit toward creating original short stories.

The Theme3 section of this lesson's LearningCheck™ file (used on the TI-83 Plus) guides the students in creating their themes using the criteria established in Activities 1 and 2. When the themes are written, the students will assess one another's work by exchanging the files using the unit-to-unit cables. During the assessment phase of the activity, students will follow prompts contained in the file that are designed to help them effectively critique the theme.

### ***Tip***

To help students with this exercise, have the class brainstorm ideas that could be used to develop themes. Create and display this reference list so it can be used during the activity. Students who have their own ideas for a theme should be encouraged to use them in preference to selecting an idea from this class list.

### ***Directions***

#### ***Before the Activity Begins***

Review the terms *theme*, *conflict*, *dialogue*, *characterization*, *repetition*, and *symbol*. Review how the theme is developed through details elaborated in the elements of a story. Refer to Activities 1 and 2, as needed. Have the students open the LearningCheck™ file **THEME.edc**, and open the section Theme3.

### ***During the Activity***

Begin by leading the students in brainstorming possible ideas for themes. If they have already developed characters, settings, conflicts, and plots remind them to keep these in consideration as they plan. Direct students to use their TI-83 Plus to develop and record their theme ideas. If the teacher desires, the students can work in teams of two.

Each student or team will be prompted to do the following to develop his/her theme:

- ◆ choose a theme idea or ideas  
*Sample choices:* love, hatred, justice, prejudice, growing up, trust, independence, friendship, living, survival, happiness, depression, and so forth
- ◆ elaborate the theme(s)
- ◆ imagine a conflict and resolution that would reveal the selected theme
- ◆ write statements of dialogue that would subtly reveal the theme
- ◆ identify changes in character that might reveal the theme
- ◆ create repetition in words or ideas that would reveal the theme
- ◆ think of a symbol or symbols that could be used to reveal the theme

After each student or team has created this outline or guide for theme development, students should exchange their work with another student or team using the unit-to-unit cables. The reviewers then assess one another's theme ideas for quality, depth, effective development and demonstrated understanding of the concepts of this lesson.

### ***After the Activity***

When the assessments are completed, the students should review the critique of their work. Allow students to discuss these with their reviewers for clarification.

After this debriefing, reconvene the class. Ask for volunteers to read their own theme outlines.

- ◆ If the class is just starting to investigate narrative elements, the teacher can use some of the examples to begin a discussion about plot or characterization (or whatever element will be next explored.) This will help the students to see that their ideas can be carried forward into future work.
- ◆ If the class is ready to start writing their own original narratives, then discuss how their previous work on other elements can be used with their themes to create their short stories.