Mini Lesson:
Good readers can identify the THEME of a fictional story.
REVIEW...

• The five literary elements found in all fictional literature...
  – Characters: who
  – Setting: where/when
  – Plot: how
  – Conflict: what

– THEME: WHY!
Theme

• A theme is...
  – the author’s central message or idea in a story.
  – expressed in a general statement.
  – is about human beings or about life.
A theme is...

- A message or idea
- Stated in a sentence
- An author’s observation about human nature.
- Found in all literary elements of a story: characters, setting, plot, and conflict.
- Arguable.
- Implied; not directly stated.
- Applicable to multiple texts.
- Example: Hard work results in success.

A theme is NOT...

- A moral
- A lesson
- Advice
- A “you” statement
- Fortune cookie message
- One word
- A summary
- Non-example: “Slow and steady wins the race.”
Have you read a book with one of these themes?

• There is beauty in simplicity
• Death is unavoidable
• Loneliness is a destructive force
• Knowledge is power
• Ignorance is weakness
• Love is transformative
• Relationships are dependent on sacrifice
How to figure out the THEME of a fictional story...

Start:
What topics or big ideas does the story deal with?

What is the author saying about one of these topics?

End:
Put it into a THEME statement!
Example... Little Red Riding Hood

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Deception
The author shows that the wolf is able to deceive Granny and Red because they are innocent.

Theme:
Innocence can lead to deception.
Example... The Three Little Pigs

Start: What topics or big ideas does the story deal with?

What is the author saying about one of these topics?

End: Put it into a THEME statement.

Making Smart Choices

The author shows that the planning ahead and building a brick house was a smart choice.

Theme: Good planning leads to success.
What about *A Christmas Carol*?

**Start:**
What topics or big ideas does the story deal with?

**What is the author saying about one of these topics?**

**End:**
Put it into a THEME statement!
BIG IDEAS:

- Ambition
- Jealousy
- Beauty
- Loneliness
- Betrayal
- Love
- Courage
- Loyalty
- Duty

- Perseverance
- Fear
- Prejudice
- Freedom
- Suffering
- Happiness
- Truth
- Redemption

WHAT ELSE?
Still having trouble? Think about...

• Symbols that reoccur
• Patterns in the story
• Details that stand out from the rest
• The title
Possible Theme Statements for *A Christmas Carol*

- The welfare of others is everyone’s concern.
- It is better to give than to receive.
- There is joy in doing good for others.
- We should have the Christmas spirit all year long.
- People can change for the better.
- It is never too late for redemption.