

Mini Lesson: Theme

December 20, 2011



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.”

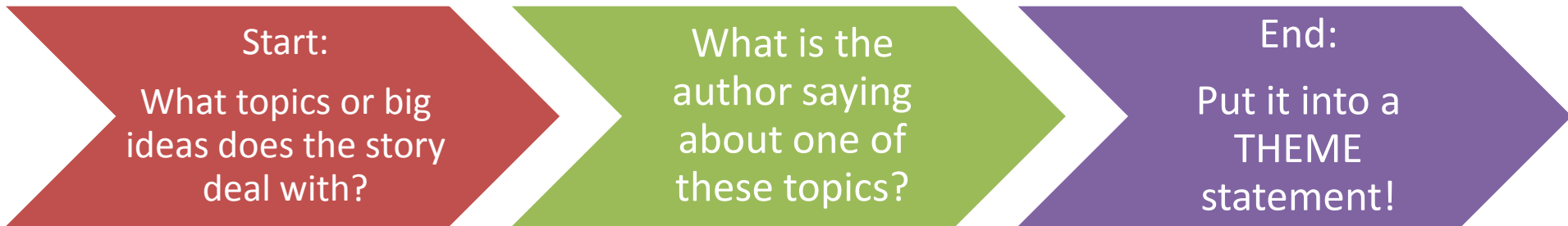


Have you read a book with one of these themes?

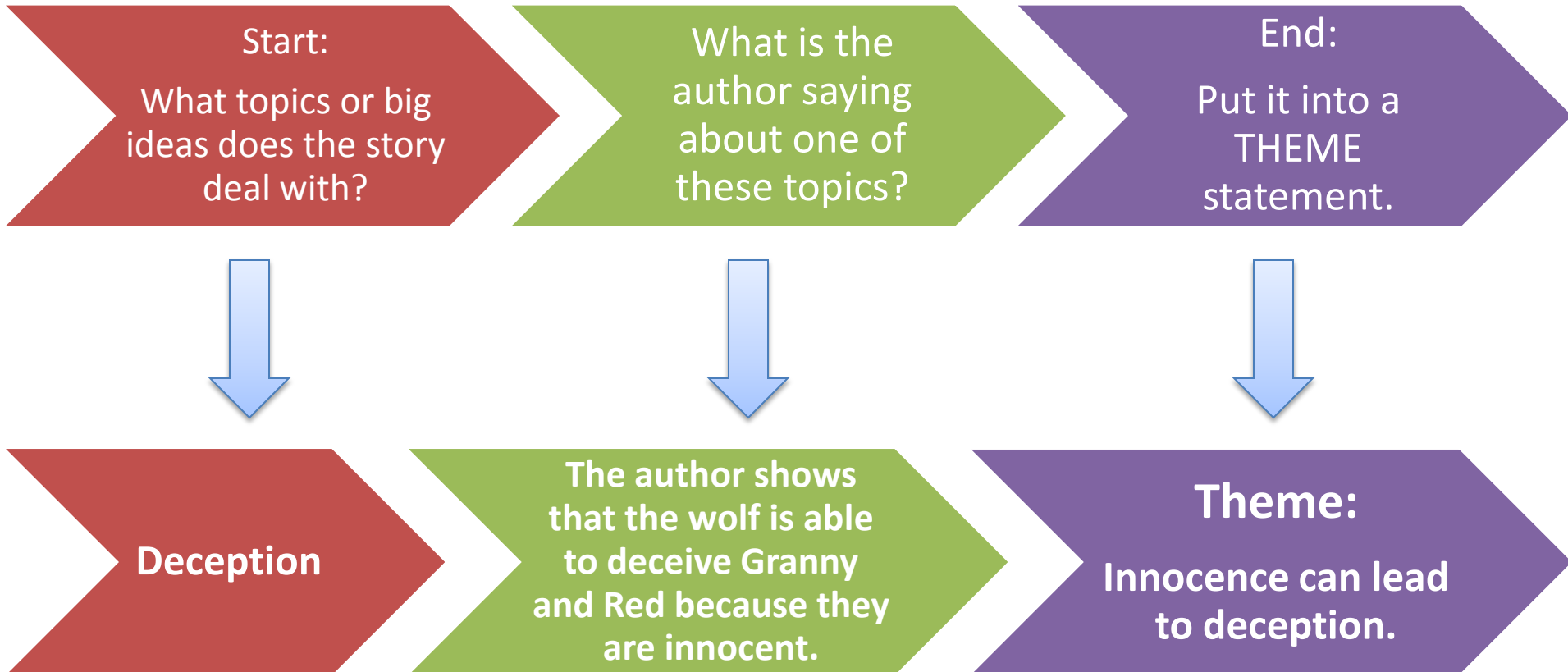
- There is beauty in simplicity
- Death is unavoidable
- Loneliness is a destructive force
- Knowledge is power
- Ignorance is weakness
- Love is transformative
- Relationships are dependent on sacrifice



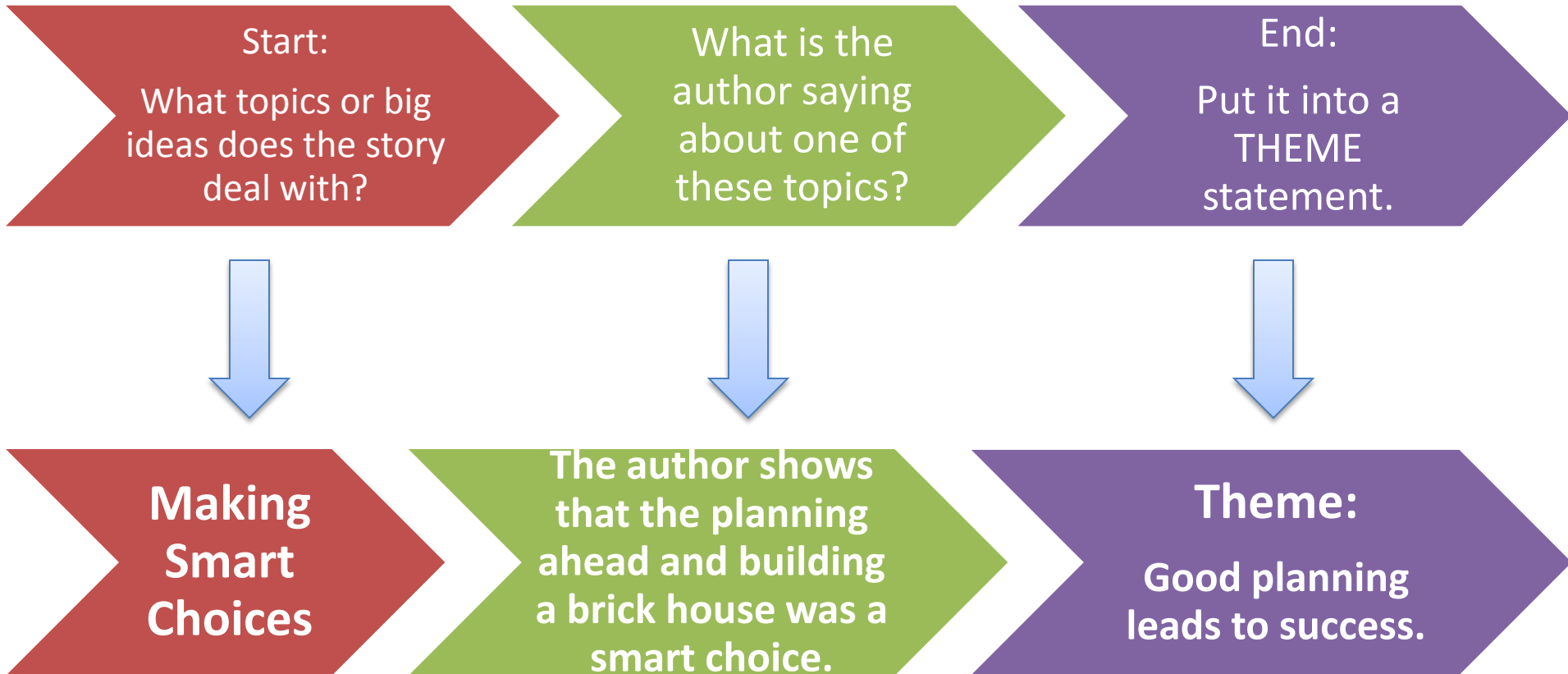
How to figure out the THEME of a fictional story...



Example... Little Red Riding Hood



Example... The Three Little Pigs



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.*

