

Instructional Overview

Holes
By: Louis Sachar
Grade Level: 5 / Guided Reading Level: V

Book Club

Instructional Focus:
Determining Theme

Background:
Theme is the underlying meaning of a piece of literature. It can be stated in a complete sentence, and it is usually up to the reader to find it based on an analysis of the characters and plot. Often an author repeats the theme in his or her writing with various examples that all lead to the big idea being presented.

A theme is not:

- The subject of the book
- A moral, as in a fable
- Expressed in one word

A writer may express the theme through the main character's feelings about the subject being presented and the experiences of the main character; it can also be expressed by thoughts and conversations of other characters.

Themes are often universal in nature and give readers insight into how the world works. Many works of literature share the same themes, such as:

- Love and friendship are important elements of a good life.
- War is not a solution to problems.
- We need to walk in another person's shoes before we judge them.

Instructional Overview:

Meeting #1
Introduce Theme

Meeting #2 (Chapters 1 – 13)
Identify Big Ideas

Meeting #3 (Chapters 14 – 28)
Identify How Characters Respond to Challenges

Meeting #4 (Chapters 29 – 40)
Cite Details to Support the Author's Big Idea

Final Meeting (Chapters 41 – 50)
Determine the Theme of the Story

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Instructional Focus



Description of the Instructional Focus



List of Book Club Meetings and the Instructional Focus for Each Meeting



List of Materials and Preparation



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Materials and Preparation:

- Determine which students will participate in the *Holes* Book Club (4-6 students)
- Gather copies of *Holes* by Louis Sachar (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Book Club Calendar (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Expectations for Book Club (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Book Club Reading Response Board (1 per student)
- Prepare Reader's Notebooks (1 per student)
 - These may be spiral notebooks or several sheets of lined paper stapled together, or bound in a folder.
- Prepare "universal themes" chart
- Prepare "determining theme" chart
- Prepare "group work determining theme" chart
- Prepare "what's the big idea" sample notebook handout
- Prepare Vocabulary Resources (1 set per student)
- Prepare Student Self-Evaluation Forms (1 per student per meeting)
- Prepare Assessment Resources (1 set per student)

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