

# Instructional Overview

**The One and Only Ivan**  
By: Katherine Applegate  
Grade Level: 4 / Guided Reading Level: S

**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:**  
Introductory Materials and Exploration of the Glossary

**Meeting #2:**  
(Pages 1 – 67) Summarizing and Main Idea Supported with Details

**Meeting #3:**  
(Pages 67 – 138) How Characters' Words and Actions Help Determine Theme

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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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**Instructional Overview: (Continued)**

**Meeting #4:**  
(Pages 139 – 206) Identify the Central Message in a Text

**Final Meeting:**  
(Pages 207 – 300) Universal Themes

**Materials and Preparation:**

- Determine which students will participate in the *The One and Only Ivan* Book Club (4-6 students)
- Gather copies of *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate (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" Handout
- Prepare "What is Theme?" Handout and Graphic Organizers
- Prepare "What's The Big Idea?" sample notebook handout
- Optional: Prepare a blank copy of "What's The Big Idea?" Handout (1 per student)
- 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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