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| **Grade: Six** | **Session Nineteen** |
| **Materials Needed: composition notebook** for each scholar and mentor, two pocket folder for each scholar, copies of the “Ant and Grasshopper” and Determining Theme handout, mentor toolbox | **Focus: Understanding Theme** |

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| **Lesson Title: And the Lesson of the Story is….** |

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| **Before the Lesson:** **Step One**: **Write Into the Lesson**: *To start each session together, we are going to engage in a quickwrite. This means that I will set the timer for 3 minutes and you will write whatever comes to mind about the topic (***which will also be a quote connected to our SHINING star theme***) for the entire three minutes. It is important that you challenge yourself to write for the entire time! I will write along with you! Here’s today’s quote:*  ***“Don’t ever let anyone dull your sparkle.”*****(It might be necessary for you to explain the quote to the scholar. It is important that you make sure that he/she knows what the quote is about. By doing so, it will allow the scholar to write about the quote with ease.) Set the timer for 3 minutes and allow the scholar time to talk. It might be a challenge for the scholar to write for the entire time. Gently encourage him or her to “keep thinking and keep writing”. It is highly recommended that you write along with the scholar. He/she needs to see you engage in this process as well.)***O.k, scholar. Let’s hear what you have to say about today’s quote.* **(Allow scholar time to read his/her response.)****Step Two:**  *Today, we are going to continue our discussion on theme. Last week, we ended our session talking about the difference between a topic and a theme. This week, we will read a few excerpts from stories in order to determine the theme. Let’s get started.* **Step Three: The Texts: (Pass out the texts.)**  *Let’s begin by reading an excerpt from The Dog and His Reflection. This story is a fable. Fables are stories that teach lessons about human nature through the actions of animal characters. These lessons communicate important themes. As you read this fable, highlight the mistake the dog makes.* **(Allow scholar(s) time to read text.)**  *So, can anyone explain to me how the dog loses the steak he stole from the butcher?* **(Allow scholar(s) time to share.)**  *Now, what lesson can readers learn from the dog’s failed plan to get another steak when he already had one? State the theme of this fable in a sentence.* *Let’s look at a poem called The Stray Cat. This poem has a message about the topic of beauty. As you read, highlight all of the physical descriptions of the cat.* **(Allow scholars(s) time to read poem.)**  *Notice the way the cat is described. Would most people consider this cat beautiful? Explain. Re-read lines 10 and 11. Which of the following statements best expresses this poem’s theme:** *Beauty is something that everyone can agree on.*
* *Different people have different ideas about what is beautiful.*

**Step Four:** **Clues to Theme:** *In some folk tales and stories, the theme is directly stated by a character or the narrator. In most works of literature, though, the theme is not usually revealed in the form of a direct statement but is conveyed through particular details. The theme is implicit, or not directly expressed. As a reader, you need to infer, or guess the theme. To make a reasonable guess, you have to consider certain clues.* **(Pass out Clues to Theme handout and discuss with the scholar(s).)****The Clues:*** **Title: The title may hint at a theme by highlighting an important idea, setting, image, or character.**
* **Plot and Conflict: A story’s plot often focuses on a conflict that is important to the theme.**
* **Characters and actions: Characters can reflect a theme through their actions, thoughts, and words.**
* **Setting, images: The setting and images an author uses can suggest a theme.**

**Step Five: Ant and the Grasshopper:** *Let’s continue to practice with determining the theme with a longer piece of text. You will read the fable “Ant and Grasshopper”. After reading, you will complete the Determining Theme handout that will help you figure out possible themes for this text.* As you read, highlight details about the characters, setting, conflict, and important events in the text. (Allow time for scholar to read the text aloud. Assist when needed.) Now that you’ve finished reading, let’s look for clues in the text that will help us determine the theme. **(Pass out Determining Theme handout and guide scholar(s) through this.)** * ***Title:*** *First, let’s look at the title. What ideas does the title emphasize? Jot your ideas down on your paper.*
* ***Plot and Conflict****: What conflicts do the characters face? How are the conflicts resolved? Jot your ideas down on your paper.*
* ***Characters and Action****: What do the main characters do and say? How do the characters deal with the conflicts? What lessons do the characters learn? Jot your ideas down on your paper.*
* ***Setting and Images:*** *What aspects of the setting does the author emphasize? What images stand out as especially memorable? What conflicts does the setting create? Jot your ideas down on your paper.*

*Now, considering all of the clues we’ve discovered, what is a possible theme of the story?**Great work! We will continue to work with theme next week as well!* |
| **Closure**:  *I’ve enjoyed our time together and I’m already looking forward to next week! You did an amazing job today*. **(Please give specific feedback at this point.) Possible feedback starters: I liked the way you\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. or I was impressed when you\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** *What comments or questions do you have for me?* **Answer the questions, if you are able and/or willing to do so. End the session with a handshake and the comment, “*continue to be a SHINING star today*!”****(Scholars should keep all handouts referenced today in their two pocket folder.)** |
| **After Session:** Before you leave please fill out the Teacher/Mentor Communication Log, check the school calendar for potential conflicting and upcoming events, check your personal calendar to make sure you will be able to return when you told the scholar you would, as the scholar will be looking forward to seeing you, and share any questions or concerns with a school employee—teacher, counselor, principal, etc.—before leaving the building. Thank you for sharing your time and talent!  |