

### Finding & Writing a Theme Sentence

"All Summer in a Day," by Ray Bradbury (pp. 91 – 101)

A theme is a message about life or human nature that is developed in a story.  
In most stories, the theme is not stated directly, but must be *inferred* by readers.

→ In order to infer & understand the themes in a story, focus on the main characters:  
What do they learn about themselves, or about life, or about how humans behave? That's the theme!

#### QUESTIONS

1. Which characters change in this story? Describe how they change.

*Response → The characters who change are all the kids who get to go outside. In the beginning of the story, they enjoy picking on Margot and locking her in the closet. But at the end, they all feel ashamed and guilty that Margot didn't get to see the sun. That's why they won't look at each other and why their faces are solemn. They learn that the consequences of their actions were much worse than they had expected. Margot seems like the main character, but she doesn't change in this story: She's the victim of bullying in the beginning, and she's the victim at the end.*

5. *Listening and Speaking* on page 101

b) Write 2 sentences that state 2 different themes developed in this story.

→ Themes apply to all humans, in all times, in all places. So theme statements do not contain the names of any characters or settings or events from a particular story.

#### SAMPLE THEME WORD LIST for "All Summer in a Day"

**Step 1. This story is about:**

a-closet	sun	Margot → victim, person who is different
kids	thunder	William → bully, instigator
clouds	playground	pranks
rain	students	jealousy
teachers	living on Venus	living underground
school	bullying	regret
guilt	groups	

**Step 2.** Cross out words that are not about human experiences.

**Step 3.** *Generalize* words that are specific to this story so that they fit all human experiences.

**Step 4.** Notice the list words that show how the characters change or what they learn – use them to write theme sentences.

#### SAMPLE THEME SENTENCES for "All Summer in a Day"

- Bullying** is wrong and dangerous because we can't know the consequences for the **victim**.
- Something that starts out as a little **prank** can end up in a tragedy.
- Jealousy** can cause people to **bully** those who have something they want.
- Groups** of people can do unethical acts that most of the individuals wouldn't do if they were acting alone.

**Step 5.** Make sure you can apply the theme sentences to real life incidents:

a. Bullying is wrong and dangerous because we can't know the consequences for the victim.

- In October 2012, a Canadian teenager committed suicide after she was teased repeatedly by other students.

b. Something that starts out as a little prank can end up in a tragedy.

- In 2010, a New Jersey college student committed suicide after his roommate used a webcam to spy on him.

c. Jealousy can cause people to bully those who have something they want.

- In my own family, I used to call my brother stupid when I felt jealous of his athletic ability.

d. Groups of people can do unethical acts that most of the individuals wouldn't do if they were acting alone.

- Today in 7<sup>th</sup> grade lunch, many students acted disrespectfully toward some adults, even though most 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are respectful to adults most of the time at home and in school.