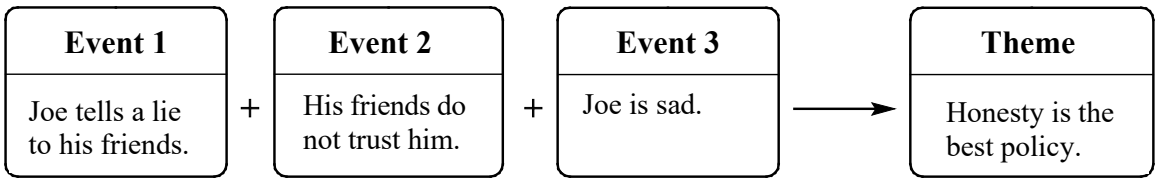
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# Literary Analysis: Theme

## Practice

A **theme** is the message or insight that a writer presents in a work. Sometimes, the writer states the theme of the work directly. For instance, a writer might begin an essay with this sentence: "Honesty is the best policy."

In a short story, the writer may imply a message without directly stating it. Readers must figure out the theme by noticing what happens in the story.




**A** **For each paragraph, circle the words that directly state the theme.**

**1.** You can find Nature's beauty in the strangest places. Deep in the ocean, miles below the surface, groups of giant tube worms attach themselves to the ocean floor. Their feathery red heads wave in the current.

**2.** As I brought the spaceship in for a landing, I started to whistle. With just one spaceship and a simple electronic device, we had destroyed the Fangon fleet. I turned to Bob and said, "Courage and quick thinking can help you can get any job done—even the impossible!"

**B** **Read the following story. Then, answer the questions.**

When my cousin Keesha said she did not like my new necklace, I decided I would never talk to her again. As it turned out, I did not talk to her for three days. On the fourth day, I was in the store on the corner buying an orange. Suddenly, I heard a voice. "Young lady, if you eat too much fruit, you will swell up like a balloon!" I started to laugh. I turned around. It was Keesha.

"You do not have to talk to me," said Keesha. "I know how mad you are."

"Well," I said. "I have decided that just because you do not know anything about necklaces, it does not mean we cannot be friends."

**1.** The narrator has an easy time making up with Keesha. What does this fact show about their quarrel?

_____

**2.** What theme about friendship does the story express?

_____

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# Literary Analysis: Theme

## Assess

**A** **For each paragraph, circle the words that directly state the theme.**

**1.** The main reason to explore outer space is to keep our curiosity and our courage alive. We cannot say what good things will come from sending a mission to Mars. There may be many, or there may be few. What is most important is that once again, we leap into the unknown.

**2.** Once, my sister and I ran into a visitor in the woods behind our house—a black bear! We had to think fast, and I almost made a big mistake. I learned a lesson, though. Always treat wild animals with caution.

**B** **Each of the following paragraphs tells a story with an implied theme. For each paragraph, circle the letter of the answer that correctly states the theme.**

**1.** Some criminals told Karen that she would make a lot of money if she invested in their crooked plan. Karen was greedy, so she gave them her money. In the end, Karen lost the money and was almost arrested. She realized that money is not as important to her as her freedom.

**A.** The most important thing in life is making money.

**B.** Honesty is the best policy.

**C.** Greed can lead people to forget what is important and to do foolish things.

**D.** Never invest money.

**2.** An old fisherman and a young fisherman went fishing. Near the end of the day, the old fisherman hooked a huge fish. The two struggled for an hour to get the fish in their boat. The fish was too strong, though, and it got away. The young fisherman was upset that they did not catch the fish after so much work. The old fisherman laughed and said, "Now you have a reason to go fishing tomorrow—to catch that big fish!"

**A.** It is better to catch many small fish than one big fish.

**B.** If you do not succeed at first, give up.

**C.** Never go fishing alone.

**D.** If you do not succeed at first, keep trying.

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