

THE COTERIE

no small characters.

THEME/CENTRAL IDEAS LESSON PLAN

Created for use in your classroom after seeing
The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical

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Writing Standards:

Kansas Standard W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Missouri Standard W.1: Apply a writing process to develop a text for audience and purpose.

Prior Knowledge:

- What is theme

Materials Included:

- How to write a scene (Appendix A)

Student Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify different central ideas or themes in a single text and analyze their development.
- Provide evidence from the text to support claims
- Summarize key supporting details and ideas

Assessments:

- Post- share Q&A: Students will defend their choices with evidence from the selected passage.
- Individual reflection: Students will reflect on what they have learned with given reflection questions

Find the Right Level for Your Class:

- **Level 1:** Establishing theme
- **Level 2:** How does a character contribute to the development of theme?
- **Level 3:** What particular details convey the theme?

Lesson:

Introduction

- Free-Writing (5-10 minutes): Review what theme is with examples from well-known literary sources. Then ask students to think about *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical* and to write down every idea that comes to mind about what some themes could be that they saw in the show in context to their grade focus area. Give them five minutes to write, during which they must continue writing different ideas and may not stop.

Building Activities

- Brainstorming (5-10 minutes): After time is called for the free-writing activity, the class comes together for a group brainstorming session, in which students pick their best ideas and share them with the class. The teacher writes these ideas on the board for everyone to see. In this session, there are no bad ideas, every idea is valid.
 - *Teacher Note: Think in terms of the craft of writing. The idea is to stimulate thought. Even if ideas given seem way off track, it is still stimulating thoughts.*
- Small Group Collaboration (30-40 minutes): Students then break off into groups of 4-5. In these small groups, students will choose one of the themes listed on the board, without any other group knowing their theme. They will then collaborate to create a 3-5 minute scene that showcases that theme. Everyone in that group must be incorporated into the scene. Students can be more than one character if needed. (For example scene, see Appendix A)
 - Things to think about when writing the script:
 - Where do your ideas come from?
 - **Level 1:** What events influence the establishment of theme?
 - **Level 2:** How does a character contribute to the development of theme?
 - **Level 3:** What particular details convey the theme?
- Scene Sharing (15-20 minutes): Students come together as a class where each group will act out their scene for the class, without telling their theme. After each scene, students in the audience will then try to guess which theme the group chose and give reasoning for their thoughts within context of their grade focus area. The actors will have to defend their choices using examples of how they showed their given theme within their grade focus area.

Wrap-up

- Individual Reflection(5 minutes): Students will reflect on what they have learned with given reflection questions
 - How is a theme of a play (or text) relevant to your life?
 - Which theme discussed do you most relate and how?
 - In which theme discussed were you the most interested and why?
 - **4th grade specific:** Give a definition of theme in your own words

- **5th grade specific:** How did one specific character contribute to a theme of the play?
- **6th grade specific:** What particular details (at least three) conveyed a specific theme of the play?

APPENDIX A

An introduction to writing scenes

Example scene from *Red Badge Variations* by Melissa Cooper

Stage Directions describe action. They are written but not spoken. They are in parentheses.

The character's name is in ALL CAPS and centered above the line they say.

(Will, JC and Tat are playing poker. JC is dealing.)

JC

Come on, Willy Boy, five card draw's not rocket science. How many cards?

Two.

WILSON

JC
(dealing)

Two for Wilson. Tat, you?

WILL

(throwing his cards down angrily)

Aagh. What did you do to this deck, JC?

TAT

Take it easy, Will.

JC
(to WILSON)

Why don't you wait to see if anyone bets?

WILSON
(impatiently)

Fine.

(He reaches to take his cards up again, but JC swipes them away.)

JC

Too late now, my friend. Out is out.

TAT
(amiably)

Pass. And, Will, I'm not gambling. I told JC. I'm just learning the rules.

JC

Tat, redirect. We're playing cards here.

A majority of the text is what characters are saying. The spoken words should give us almost all the information the audience needs to understand the story. The stage directions only help the actors know about necessary actions not apparent in the dialogue.

Stage directions after a name can also describe intention or emotion behind a line.

Let the lines be conversational and respond to each other.

It's okay, JC.

TAT

JC

No, it's not okay. Because we're at the point now where I say, "I'll see you," and you show me your freaking hand. Which you no longer even have. Forget the cards, Tat. Just tell me: what did you have?

TAT

Nothing, man. I had a big fat zero. What do you have?

JC

If you had nothing, why didn't you trade for new cards?

TAT

Because it wouldn't have changed anything.

The last line should be a "button," or a line that tells the audience the scene is over.