

The Value of Themes in Literature and Life



Bud, Not Buddy

The reading of Chapter One of the book *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis is used to engage students in collaborative conversations about various key elements in literature including: theme, character, setting, and plot. The primary goal is to help students identify the theme of the chapter and provide evidence from the text to prove their thoughts and opinions. Throughout this lesson, students are exposed to the fact that often identifying the theme in a novel, story, or poem can be a challenging task because usually many ideas are interwoven together . . . and that some might hidden and stated indirectly. They will learn how writers can often use the theme of a story to make political or moral statements they believe to be important.

WARM UP

Let's have a party! Students are asked to create an invitation to a party, complete with illustrations and words to describe the party's theme. This can include the menu, props, decorations, activities and music. Once completed, students share their party invitation with the class. The students listen for clues and guess what kind of party their classmates are planning. . .and what the theme is! It becomes clear how difficult it can be to discern the theme of an event (or story) unless given enough information!

Review the basics. Students are exposed to the literary terms: theme, character, setting, and plot. In their own words, they write definitions of these four elements on long pre-cut sentence strips. They then compare their guesses with the actual definitions by researching on the computer or by using a dictionary.

LESSON

Introduce the novel by distributing copies of actual book – one per group – and copies of Chapter One on 8 ½ x 11 paper to the students. Students are asked to follow along as they listen to the chapter being read aloud and to highlight vocabulary, key literary elements or phrases they find interesting that relate to either the character, setting, plot or theme of this chapter. Students re-read the chapter on their own to be sure they didn't miss anything. Discuss as a class the student discoveries – as well as some key elements in the text with the class (Great Depression; era of Jazz Music; Flint, Michigan; Foster care).

Hand out the sentence strips and ask students to work with partners in a group (3-4 students) to write the descriptions of main character, setting, plot and theme (Chapter One only!) on the strips. They then pin the strips in the correct place on the provided grid posted on a wall (large piece of paper that has a grid of open space under each of the four literary terms). Engage students in a classroom discussion to support their opinions and ideas with evidence from the text.

Students make formal presentations to the class to demonstrate their in-depth analysis and understanding of Chapter one of the novel. Students work in groups to create either a power point or poster board/ marker presentation sharing their ideas as to what the setting, main character and theme of the story is given what they know from this text. Students are required to use the check list (provided on this page) as their guide and to show either highlighted text on the chapter printout or document references to other sources that informed and support their opinions.

Checklist

The Setting:

1. We know the book's setting is described as 1936 in Flint, Michigan. What do we know about the year 1936? (Depression)
2. What significance does music have to do with this story and Buddy?
3. What is an orphanage? Why were there many orphanages during this time period?

The Main Character:

4. Who is Bud? How old is he?

5. What is the importance of a name? How does Buddy respond when he is called Buddy not Bud?

6. Why is Buddy in the orphanage?

The Theme:

7. From what you read in Chapter One, what seems to be the theme of the novel?
8. Identify what message or moral the author is trying to get across - what might it be?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- a. Understand and appreciate a novel.
- b. Understand and identify the literary terms: theme, character, setting, and plot.
- c. Identify the various themes in *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis.
- d. Learn how writers can use the theme of a story to make political and moral statements they believe to be important.
- e. Understand how to support a point of view with reasons and information.

Resource Links (click to open)

[Achieve the Core](#)
[Scholastic](#)

Materials

- *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- Stapled copies of Chapter One of *Bud Not Buddy*
- Highlighters/pens
- Computer/i-pad
- Markers, poster board
- Pre-cut sentence strips
- Large chart of open grid for placement of sentence strips

Classroom Tips

- Set up room to allow for students to work in teams of 3-4
- Play jazz music in background
- Set up stations for research on a computer, looking at map of U.S., and room to make artwork

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[Click here for Teacher to Teacher Video](#)



Special message to teachers, parents and interested others: *This lesson was designed to shed light as to what the actual standards are and how they are being used by teachers all across the country to help all of our children — no matter the zip code — learn to think most strategically, critically and collaboratively. We hope the lesson demonstrates the simplicity and high level of expectations teachers and state leaders have agreed to as most important to help prepare our youth for the workplace. Let's know the facts, then join hands and help our teachers implement these standards in how we reinforce them in our homes and throughout our community.*

The Common Core State Standards www.corestandards.org

Mission Statement: The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the Standards”) are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

The present work, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards. The Standards also draw on the most important international models as well as research and input from numerous sources, including state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten through college, and parents, students, and other members of the public. In their design and content, refined through successive drafts and numerous rounds of feedback, the Standards represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work to date and an important advance over that previous work.

As specified by CCSSO and NGA, the Standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was included in the document only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for college and career readiness in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society. The Standards are intended to be a living work: as new and better evidence emerges, the Standards will be revised accordingly.

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 4 [Click here](#) for easy reference to the specific standards.

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 4 [Click here](#) for easy reference to the specific standards.

Text Types and Purposes

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening » Grade 4 [Click here](#) for easy reference to the specific standards.

Comprehension and Collaboration

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1b Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1c Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1d Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

The activities included in this Ignite Curriculum Guide are provided to inspire and equip educators to implement the lesson as seen on The Ignite Show. The intent is not to necessarily imply mastery of the standards, but to offer alignment to a sampling of standards.

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