



COMUNIDADES LATINAS  
UNIDAS EN SERVICIO

## Week 3



# REVIEW: Reading Strategies

- “Contrasts and Contradictions”: what do these words mean?
- Example scenario:
  - Mary is ALWAYS on time for class and never misses a day. In fact, she usually arrives at least 30 minutes early each day with a huge smile on her face. On Tuesday, Mary didn't show up to class. She was 15 minutes late on Wednesday and looked very depressed.
  - Would you be concerned about Mary? Why or why not?

# #1. Contrasts and Contradictions

- **Definition:** The character acts in a way that is contradictory or unexpected given how he or she usually acts.
- **Text Clue:** Author shows feelings or actions the reader hasn't seen before or doesn't expect.
- **Question:** Why would the character act this way?

## #2. Aha Moment

- What does it mean to have a “aha moment”?
- Have you ever had a “aha moment”?
- **Definition:** The character realizes or starts to realize something that changes his or her actions or thinking.
- **Text Clue:** Characters say “I realized” or “I suddenly knew” or “Now I know why...”
- **Question:** What might the character do now?



## #3. Tough Questions

- What is a tough question? Is there a difference between a clarification question and tough question?
- **Tough Questions:**
  - What is my role in my family?
  - What is my responsibility to my children?
  - Should the United States go to war with \_\_\_\_\_ ?
  - Will this penny shatter if I drop it from a height of 1000 feet?

## #3. Tough Questions

- **Clarification Questions:**

- What is the title of the book?
- How do I get to the bank from here?
- Does red or blue look better with my hair?

- **Definition:** Character asks a tough question that reveals his or her concerns (inner conflict).

- **Text Clue:** Character asks self or another a difficult question.

- **Question:** What does this question make me wonder about?  
What does it tell me about the character?

## #4. Words of the Wiser

- What constitutes a wise person? Is it important to listen to wise people?
- **Definition:** An older character (mentor, advisor, parent, etc.) gives advice or an insight to the main character.
- **Text Clue:** A wiser, often older, character offers a life lesson, usually in a quiet moment.
- **Question:** What is important about that message?

## #5. Again and Again

- What do you think this refers to?
- **Examples:**
  - An author may use similar words like large, big, huge, etc. when describing the same thing at different points in the story.
  - An author may repeat the same word or idea A LOT.
  - You may see examples of “Again and Again” in history: patterns of war, reasons for war, crimes that occur frequently, etc.

## #5. Again and Again

- **Definition:** The author keeps bringing up the same image, phrase, or inference.
- **Text Clue:** A repeated image, phrase, or reference.
- **Question:** Why do you think the author brings this idea up again and again?

## #5. Memory Moment

- What is a flashback?
- Have you ever been doing one thing, and then suddenly reminded of something that already happened?
- **Definition:** The author interrupts the flow of the story by letting the character remember something.
- **Text Clue:** “I suddenly remember...”; “I remember...”; or “Thinking back...”  
**Question:** Why might this memory be important?

# REVIEW: Tips for reading short stories

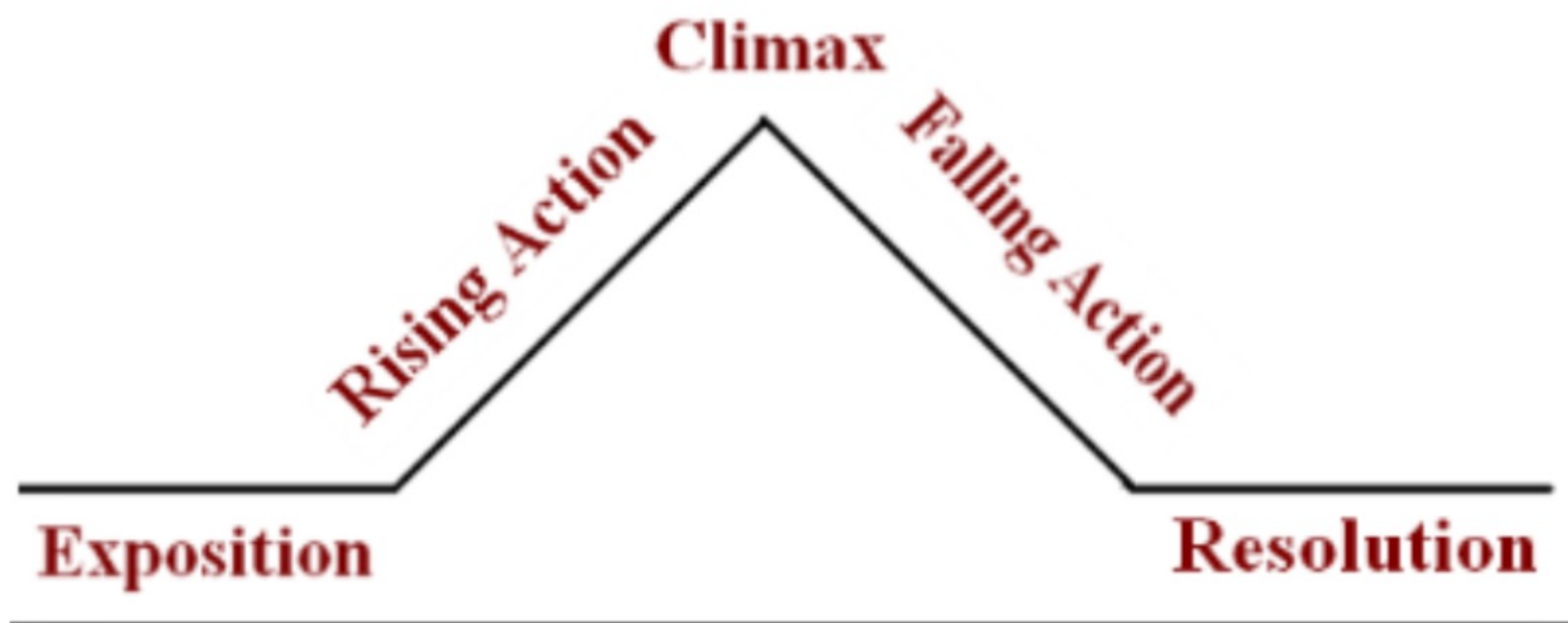
## Before

- ☐ **Look at the story's title.** What might this story be about?
- ☐ **Use and develop your background knowledge about this subject.** If the title is "The Lesson," (by Toni Cade Bambara) ask yourself what kind of lessons there are, what lessons you have learned, and so on.
- ☐ **Establish a purpose for reading this story.** "Because my teacher told me to" is one obvious purpose, but not a very useful one. Try to come up with your own question, one based perhaps on the title or an idea you recently discussed in class. How about, "Why do we always have to learn the hard way?" if the story is titled "The Lesson"? Of course, you should also be sure you know what you are expected to do and learn from this story; this will help you determine what is important while you read the story.

## During

- ☐ **Identify the main characters.** By “main” I mean those characters that make the story happen or to whom important things happen. Get to know what they are like by asking such questions as “What does this character want more than anything else—and *why?*”
- ☐ **Identify the plot or the situation.** The plot is what happens. Some writers prefer to put their characters in a situation.
- ☐ **Pay attention to the setting.** Setting refers not only to where the story takes place, but also to when it happens. It also includes details like tone and mood. What does the story sound like: a sad violin playing all by itself or a whole band charging down the road? Does the story have a lonely feeling — or a scary feeling, as if any minute something will happen?
- ☐ **Consider the story’s point of view.** Think about why the author chose to tell the story through this person’s point of view instead of a different character; why in the past instead of the present; in the first instead of the third person.





## Reading & Writing Through Short Stories

- ☐ **Pay attention to the author's use of time.** Some short story writers will make ten years pass by simply beginning the next paragraph, "Ten years later..." Look for any words that signal time passed. Sometimes writers will also use extra space between paragraphs to signal the passing of time.
- ☐ **Find the crucial moment.** Every short story has some conflict, some tension or element of suspense in it. Eventually something has to give. This is the moment when the character or the story suddenly changes direction. A character, for example, feels or acts differently than before.
- ☐ **Remember why you are reading this story.** Go back to the question you asked when you began reading. Double-check the assignment, too. These will help you read more closely and better evaluate which details are important when you read. You might also find your original purpose is no longer a good one; what is the question you are now trying to answer as you read the story?

## After

- ☐ **Read first to understand...then to analyze.** When you finish the story, check to be sure you understand what happened. Ask: WHO did WHAT to WHOM? If you can answer these questions correctly, move on to the next level: WHY? Why, for example, did the character in the story lie?
- ☐ **Return to the title.** Go back to the title and think about how it relates to the story now that you have read it. What does the title refer to? Does the title have more than one possible meaning?

# Aesop's Fables



Throughout history fables have been a popular method of giving instruction. Fables contain a short narrative that seeks to illustrate a hidden message. Generally, fables use animals or objects as part of the narrative yet the message is designed to apply to humans. By doing this, the fabulist is not perceived as the teacher and this reduces any bias the listeners might have against the person. The most famous fabulist would be Aesop who most date around 620 B.C. Many fables are attributed to Aesop, but it's unclear how many he actually wrote; indeed, his historical existence as a person is under question.

# The Sparrow and the Peacock

A Sparrow was walking around a yard where Peacocks used to live. While he was walking there, he found a number of feathers that had fallen from the Peacocks when they were molting. The Sparrow tied the feathers all to his tail and strutted down towards a group of Peacocks. When the Sparrow came near them, the Peacocks soon discovered his lie. The Peacocks strode up to him and pecked and plucked away his borrowed plumes. So, the Sparrow could do nothing except go back to the other Sparrows, who had watched his behavior from a distance. However, they were also annoyed with him, and said:

"It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."



# Questions

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- What is the theme of “The Sparrow and the Peacock?” What parts of the story help to show us that the moral is true?
- Try to rewrite the theme in your own words and in a way that is easy to understand.
- Do you believe that the moral of the story is true for your own life? Why or why not? Try to use personal examples to support what you say.





What is  
theme?

# The Reader's Job



- Part of your job as a reader is to understand what the author is trying to say.
- Writers seldom come out and tell you, “Hey, Reader! THIS is what I want you to GET from my writing.”
- You, as the reader, must make inferences and draw conclusions about what the author is trying to express.



# HEY! What's the BIG IDEA?!!



- Of a literary work, that is!
- Themes are usually about BIG IDEAS. For example:
  - Freedom
  - Trust
  - Friendship
  - Good vs. Evil
  - And much, much more.



# So, what is theme?



- Theme is the message from the author.
- Themes can be found **everywhere**:
  - Literature
  - Art
  - Movies
- The theme of a **fable** is its **moral**.
- The theme of a **parable** is its **teaching**.
- The theme of a piece of literature is its **view about life and how people behave**.

# THIS is THEME...



- ☐ Theme is the underlying meaning of the story.
- ☐ It is a universal **Truth**.
- ☐ It is a significant **statement** the story is making about **society, human nature** or **the human condition**.

# You and Theme



- An understanding of theme is dependent upon one's previous experience of life and literature.
- At the same time, theme in literature can enlarge one's understanding of life.

# Be aware:



- The theme never completely explains the story.
- It is only one of the elements that are needed to gain full understanding of the story.
- Literary texts can have more than one theme.



# Finding the Theme



- What is the topic or “BIG IDEA” of the work?
- The topic is...
- The BIG IDEA is...
- What do the characters say or do that relates to the topic?
- The characters say...
- The characters do...
- What do these things tell you that are important to learn about life?
- The text tells me...
- It is important to...

# Identify Theme

## UNEXPECTED GIFTS

**a** Della and Jim each sell a prized possession—her hair and his watch—to buy a gift for the other. These sacrifices are important in identifying the story's theme.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. ...

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say, "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. ...

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? ... Give me your watch. I want to see how it [watch chain] looks on it." ...

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. ..."

**b** Remember that the magi were the wise men who brought gifts to the baby Jesus in the manger. The story's title, "The Gift of the Magi," provides an important clue about the theme.

From THE GIFT OF THE MAGI by O. Henry, © 1905

1. Which sentence **best** states the theme of this passage?

- A. It is wrong to worship material objects.
- B. Gift giving places hardships on poor families.
- C. Years of poverty and sacrifice can destroy love.
- D. Willingness to sacrifice characterizes true love.



# The Miser and His Gold



A Miser buried his gold in a secret place in his garden. Every day he went to the spot, dug up the treasure and counted it piece by piece to make sure it was all there. He made so many trips that a Thief, who had been observing him, guessed what it was the Miser had hidden. One night the thief quietly dug up the treasure and made off with it. When the Miser discovered his loss, he was overcome with grief and despair. He groaned and cried and tore his hair.

A passerby heard his cries and asked what had happened. "My gold! O my gold!" cried the Miser, wildly, "someone has robbed me!" "Your gold! There in that hole? Why did you put it there? Why did you not keep it in the house where you could easily get it when you had to buy things?" "Buy!" screamed the Miser angrily. "Why, I never touched the gold. I couldn't think of spending any of it." The stranger picked up a large stone and threw it into the hole. "If that is the case," he said, "cover up that stone. It is worth just as much to you as the treasure you lost!"

# Questions

1. What is the theme of “The Miser and His Gold”? What parts of the story help to show us that the moral is true?
2. Try to rewrite the theme in your own words and in a way that is easy to understand.
3. Do you believe that the moral of the story is true for your own life? Why or why not? Try to use personal examples to support what you say.
4. The author is sharing wisdom (“Words of the Wiser”) in this fable. What are we supposed to learn from his message?
5. In a few sentences, provide a one-paragraph response with evidence from the text to answer the question from #4: What is the importance of the message in this fable?

# The Wind and the Sun



The North Wind and the Sun had a quarrel about which of them was the stronger. While they were disputing with much heat and bluster, a Traveler passed along the road wrapped in a cloak.

"Let us agree," said the Sun, "that he is the stronger who can strip that Traveler of his cloak."

"Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

With the first gust of wind the ends of the cloak whipped about the Traveler's body. But he immediately wrapped it closely around him, and the harder the Wind blew, the tighter he held it to him. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain.

Then the Sun began to shine. At first his beams were gentle, and in the pleasant warmth after the bitter cold of the North Wind, the Traveler unfastened his cloak and let it hang loosely from his shoulders. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. The man took off his cap and mopped his brow. At last, he became so heated that he pulled off his cloak, and, to escape the blazing sunshine, threw himself down in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside.



# Questions

1. What is the theme of “The Wind and the Sun”? What parts of the story help to show us that the moral is true?
2. Try to rewrite the theme in your own words and in a way that is easy to understand.
3. Do you believe that the moral of the story is true for your own life? Why or why not? Try to use personal examples to support what you say.
4. The author is sharing wisdom (“Words of the Wiser”) in this fable. What are we supposed to learn from his message?
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For more practice reading fables, click here:

<https://fablesdfaesop.com/>

# Make Inferences in Fiction

A 3D illustration of a person standing in a maze, with the title 'Make Inferences in Fiction' overlaid. The person is a dark blue silhouette standing in a narrow path of a maze made of dark grey walls. The scene is lit from the side, creating long shadows. The title is in a large, white, sans-serif font, centered within a white rectangular border.

## FIFTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO

**a** The first sentence suggests that the man is detached from his surroundings.

**b** From the explanation that this is the man's first winter in the area, you can infer that the man may lack experience in cold, rugged climates.

But all this—the mysterious, far-reaching hairline trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all—made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a new-comer in the land, a *chechaquo*, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.



1. Why might the man's lack of imagination be a problem?

- A. Because the man considers only facts related to the cold weather, he does not contemplate the extent of the danger it poses.
- B. Because the man is not impressed by the hairline trail and the absence of sun, he risks getting lost in the frozen wilderness.
- C. Because the man does not think about being uncomfortable, he may not have packed the proper gear for his journey.
- D. Because the man does not consider the significances of life, he is not intrigued by the strangeness of the frozen wilderness.

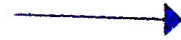
# Draw Conclusions in Fiction





## LAIRD'S ILLNESS

- a** Laird is in a wheelchair, and he is covered with blankets. Consider what these details indicate.



Her son wanted to talk again, suddenly. During the days, he still brooded, scowling at the swimming pool from the vantage point of his wheelchair, where he sat covered with blankets despite the summer heat. ... After he was asleep, Janet would run through the conversations in her mind, and realize what it was she wished she had said. ...

- b** The fact that "people who hadn't seen him for a while" are shocked by Laird's appearance indicates that his illness is having a dramatic effect on him.



A month earlier, after a particularly long and grueling visit with a friend who'd come up on the train from New York, Laird had declared a new policy: no visitors, no telephone calls. She didn't blame him. People who hadn't seen him for a while were often shocked to tears by his appearance, and, rather than have them cheer him up, he felt obliged to comfort them. She'd overheard bits of those conversations. One was no worse than the others, but he was fed up. He had said more than once that he wasn't cut out to be the brave one, the one who would inspire everybody to walk away from a visit with him feeling uplifted, shaking their heads in wonder. He had liked being the most handsome and missed it very much; he was not a good victim.



1. Which statement is the **most** likely conclusion to draw on the basis of the information in the passage?
  - A. Laird is being treated for a serious disease.
  - B. Laird is indifferent about his medical treatment.
  - C. Janet has little background in current medicine.
  - D. Janet misses her friends' visits.

# Homework: PLATO

## Active Assignments



Week 3

To begin, select an activity from All Activities

[Select New Activity](#) 



**All Activities**

Completion: 0/5 (0%)



No Due Date

# Thank you for coming to class!

Remember:

- GED: Mondays (Writing Lab) and Tuesdays – 10am-12pm
- English – Wednesday, Thursday - 10am and/or 6pm
- Computer class: Friday - 10am