

# CHS Read 180 BLIZZARD BAG #1

## Focus: Theme

The **theme** in a story is its underlying message, or 'big idea.' In other words, what critical belief about life is the author trying to convey in the writing of a novel, play, short story or poem? This belief, or idea, transcends cultural barriers. It is usually universal in nature and is not a single word or phrase.

**Aesop's Fables** have long been used to teach children lessons about moral living. A **fable** is a form of storytelling that usually features animals behaving like humans. The purpose of the **fable** is to teach a lesson about a human weakness or folly.

Directions:

*Read the following fable and write a sentence explaining the theme of the work.*

## Belling the Cat

The Mice once called a meeting to decide on a plan to free themselves of their enemy, the Cat. At least they wished to find some way of knowing when she was coming, so they might have time to run away. Indeed, something had to be done, for they lived in such constant fear of her claws that they hardly dared stir from their dens by night or day.

Many plans were discussed, but none of them was thought good enough. At last a very young Mouse got up and said:

"I have a plan that seems very simple, but I know it will be successful.

All we have to do is to hang a bell about the Cat's neck. When we hear the bell ringing we will know immediately that our enemy is coming."

All the Mice were much surprised that they had not thought of such a plan before. But in the midst of the rejoicing over their good fortune, an old Mouse arose and said:

"I will say that the plan of the young Mouse is very good. But let me ask one question:  
Who will bell the Cat?"

**What is the theme of this fable?**

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**What lines from the fable prove this theme (evidence)?**

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CHS Read 180  
BUZZARD BAG #2

Focus: Theme

The **theme** in a story is its underlying message, or 'big idea.' In other words, what critical belief about life is the author trying to convey in the writing of a novel, play, short story or poem? This belief, or idea, transcends cultural barriers. It is usually universal in nature and is not a single word or phrase.

**Aesop's Fables** have long been used to teach children lessons about moral living. A **fable** is a form of storytelling that usually features animals behaving like humans. The purpose of the **fable** is to teach a lesson about a human weakness or folly.

Directions:

*Read the following fable and write a sentence explaining the theme of the work.*

## The Town Mouse & the Country Mouse

A Town Mouse once visited a relative who lived in the country. For lunch the Country Mouse served wheat stalks, roots, and acorns, with a dash of cold water for drink. The Town Mouse ate very sparingly, nibbling a little of this and a little of that, and by her manner making it very plain that she ate the simple food only to be polite.

After the meal the friends had a long talk, or rather the Town Mouse talked about her life in the city while the Country Mouse listened. They then went to bed in a cozy nest in the hedgerow and slept in quiet and comfort until morning. In her sleep the Country Mouse dreamed she was a Town Mouse with all the luxuries and delights of city life that her friend had described for her. So the next day when the Town Mouse asked the Country Mouse to go home with her to the city, she gladly said yes.

When they reached the mansion in which the Town Mouse lived, they found on the table in the dining room the leavings of a very fine banquet. There were sweetmeats and jellies, pastries, delicious cheeses, indeed, the most tempting foods that a Mouse can imagine. But just as the Country Mouse was about to nibble a dainty bit of pastry, she heard a Cat mew loudly and scratch at the door. In great fear the Mice scurried to a hiding place, where they lay quite still for a long time, hardly daring to breathe. When at last they ventured back to the feast, the door opened suddenly and in came the servants to clear the table, followed by the House Dog.

The Country Mouse stopped in the Town Mouse's den only long enough to pick up her carpet bag and umbrella.

"You may have luxuries and dainties that I have not," she said as she hurried away, "but I prefer my plain food and simple life in the country with the peace and security that go with it."

**What is the theme of this fable?**

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**What lines from the fable prove this theme (evidence!)?**

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# CHS Read 180 BUZZARD BAG #3

## Focus: Theme

The **theme** in a story is its underlying message, or 'big idea.' In other words, what critical belief about life is the author trying to convey in the writing of a novel, play, short story or poem? This belief, or idea, transcends cultural barriers. It is usually universal in nature and is not a single word or phrase.

**Aesop's Fables** have long been used to teach children lessons about moral living. A **fable** is a form of storytelling that usually features animals behaving like humans. The purpose of the **fable** is to teach a lesson about a human weakness or folly.

Directions:

*Read the following fable and write a sentence explaining the theme of the work.*

## The Fox & the Grapes

A Fox one day spied a beautiful bunch of ripe grapes hanging from a vine trained along the branches of a tree. The grapes seemed ready to burst with juice, and the Fox's mouth watered as he gazed longingly at them.

The bunch hung from a high branch, and the Fox had to jump for it. The first time he jumped he missed it by a long way. So he walked off a short distance and took a running leap at it, only to fall short once more. Again and again he tried, but in vain.

Now he sat down and looked at the grapes in disgust.

"What a fool I am," he said. "Here I am wearing myself out to get a bunch of sour grapes that are not worth gaping for."

And off he walked very, very scornfully.

**What is the theme of this fable?**

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**What lines from the fable prove this theme (evidence)?**

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