Lesson 8
Determining the Central Message

Learning Target
Knowing which events are most important in a story will help you figure out the story’s lesson or central message.

Read
The central message of a story is the big idea or lesson the story teaches. Important events in a story help you figure out the central message.

Look at the cartoon. Think about a lesson that it teaches.

Come play with us.

Read
The central message of a story is the big idea or lesson the story teaches. Important events in a story help you figure out the central message.

Look at the cartoon. Think about a lesson that it teaches.
**Think** The events in the cartoon tell a story. In the chart below, answer the questions to tell about the most important event in each picture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Are the Most Important Events?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First picture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does the boy look sad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second picture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the girl say to the boy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third picture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the boy doing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Talk** What lesson do you think the events in the cartoon teach? Use the chart above and the cartoon to talk about the lesson the cartoon teaches.

**Academic Talk**

Use this phrase and word to talk about the text.

- central message
- lesson
The Blue Coyote

from a Native American fable

1. Long ago, there lived a hungry coyote. One day, he found a juicy bone! He grabbed it and ran away.

2. When he jumped over a fence, he landed in a big tub filled with blue ink. Now his fur was bright blue!

3. The coyote went to the forest. The animals had never seen such a strange blue creature. They were scared and ran away. The sneaky coyote thought of a plan to make the animals give him all the food he wanted.

4. He told the animals he was their new king. They believed him! They also brought him all the food he wanted.

5. One night, he heard coyotes howling at the moon. He could not stop himself. He started howling, too!

6. When the other animals heard him, they knew he was really just another coyote. They were angry at being tricked! They chased the blue coyote right out of the woods.

Close Reader Habits

Underline words or sentences that tell why the animals become angry at the blue coyote.
**Think**

1. Answer the questions in the chart to tell about the most important events in the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Are the Most Important Events?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the blue coyote become blue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do the animals bring the blue coyote food?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does the blue coyote start howling?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Talk**

2. What happens after the animals hear the blue coyote howling? Talk about the answer with your partner.

**Write**

3. **Short Response** What lesson do you think the blue coyote learns? Write about an event from the story to explain your answer. Write your answer in the space on page 126.
Long ago, a boy sat watching a farmer’s sheep. He was bored, so he decided to play a trick. “Wolf! Wolf!” he shouted. “A wolf is chasing the sheep!”

The villagers came running, but instead of a wolf, they found the boy laughing. “There really isn’t any wolf! I just wanted to fool you,” he said.

The angry villagers returned to the village.

However, the boy quickly grew bored again. “Wolf!” he shouted. “A wolf is chasing the sheep!”

Again, the villagers came running, and they were furious to find that the boy had tricked them a second time.

At the end of the day, the boy saw a real wolf. “Wolf!” he shouted. “There’s a wolf after the sheep!” But no one came, and the boy ran to the village crying.

“There was a wolf, and no one came!” he said.

“We didn’t believe you,” the villagers said. “No one believes a liar, even when he tells the truth.”
Think

1. Why does the boy shout “Wolf!” the first time?
   - A. He thinks he sees a wolf chasing the sheep.
   - B. He hopes he can get a real wolf to come.
   - C. He wants to play a joke on the villagers.
   - D. He feels afraid watching the sheep by himself.

2. What do the villagers do when the boy shouts “Wolf!” the second time?
   - A. They get angry at the boy for tricking them again.
   - B. They laugh at being fooled twice by the boy’s trick.
   - C. They look all over for a wolf but cannot find it.
   - D. They don’t come because they don’t believe him.

Talk

3. Reread the story. Why don’t the villagers believe the boy at the end? Talk about the answer with your partner and look at the important events you underlined in the story.

Write

4. **Short Response** Use details from the story to answer the question below. Write your answer in the space on page 127.

   What is the central message of the story?

   **HINT** Look for the important event that happens at the end of the story.
Write  Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 123.

The Blue Coyote

3 Short Response  What lesson do you think the blue coyote learns? Write about an event from the story to explain your answer.

Don't forget to check your writing.
Guided Practice

Write  Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 125.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

4 Short Response  Use details from the story to answer the question below.

What is the central message of the story?

HINT Look for the important event that happens at the end of the story.

Check Your Writing

☐ Did you read the question carefully?
☐ Can you say the question in your own words?
☐ Did you use proof from the text in your answer?
☐ Are your ideas in a good, clear order?
☐ Did you answer in full sentences?
☐ Did you check your spelling, capital letters, and periods?
The Monkey and the Peas
a folktale from India

Once upon a time, there was a king who loved to travel. But he didn’t like to visit places in his own country. He thought that more beautiful sights could only be seen in other lands.

One day, the king and his army were riding their horses through another strange new land. When they became tired, they set up a camp to rest. The horses were hungry, so the soldiers fed them peas.

A monkey who lived in the forest was watching the king’s men from a high tree. He saw the horses eating peas. So he jumped down from the tree to get some of the peas for his dinner.

Words to Know:
- sights
- gain
4 He quickly filled his mouth and hands with peas. Then he climbed back up the tree. There he sat down to eat the peas.

5 As he ate the peas, one pea fell from his hand to the ground. The monkey dropped all the peas he had in his hands. He ran down to look for the lost pea.

6 The monkey could not find the one lost pea. The other peas the monkey had dropped rolled away. He climbed up the tree again and lay on its trunk, looking sad. The monkey was very disappointed.

7 The king was watching the monkey from the camp. He said to himself, “To get one pea, that monkey threw away the rest. I would not be like this foolish monkey. He lost everything while trying to gain so little. I will go back to my own country. I will enjoy what I already have.”

8 So the king and his army rode back to their country. The king found many beautiful sights in his own land.
Think  Use what you learned from reading “The Monkey and the Peas” to answer the following questions.

1. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A
Why does the king visit another country at the beginning of the story?

A  to find more beautiful sights in other lands  
B  to make sure his soldiers and his horses are safe  
C  to see monkeys in his own country  
D  to be king of more than one country

Part B
Write the sentence from the story that helped you answer the question in Part A.

2. Read the following sentences from paragraph 7 of the story.

I would not be like this foolish monkey. He lost everything while trying to gain so little.

What does the word “foolish” mean in the sentence?

A  helpful  
B  clumsy  
C  silly  
D  careless
3 Read paragraph 6 of the story.

The monkey could not find the one lost pea. The other peas the monkey had dropped rolled away. He climbed up the tree again and lay on its trunk, looking sad. The monkey was very disappointed.

Circle the word in paragraph 6 that best helps you know what “disappointed” means.

4 Which event from the story is most important to understanding the central message?

A The king rides his horse through a new land.
B The soldiers give the horses peas to eat.
C The monkey watches the king’s men from a high tree.
D The monkey drops all the peas to look for the lost one.

5 Which sentence from the story best tells why the king goes back to his own country after watching the monkey?

A “As he ate the peas, one pea fell from his hand to the ground.”
B “The monkey could not find the one lost pea.”
C “The other peas the monkey had dropped rolled away.”
D “He lost everything while trying to gain so little.”
**Write**  What is the central message of the story?

**Plan Your Response** Answer the questions in the chart to tell about the most important events in the story.

### Important Events in “The Monkey and the Peas”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why does the monkey climb down the tree the first time?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does the monkey climb down from the tree the second time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the king think about the monkey?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does the king go back to his own country?</td>
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**Short Response** The king learns an important lesson from watching the monkey. What is this lesson or central message of the story? Use information from the chart above in your answer.

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Learning Target

How do the important events in a story help you figure out its central message or lesson?