

Lesson 8

Determining the Central Message

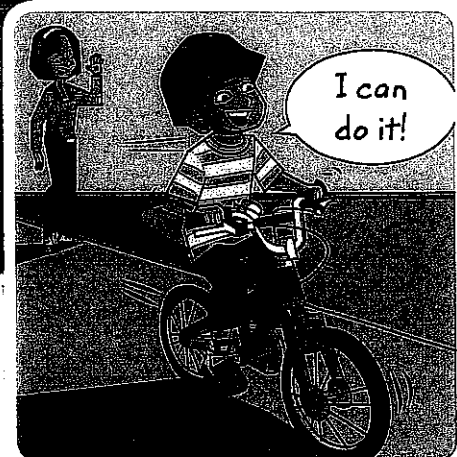
Learning Target

Use the key details and events of a story to figure out the central message, or lesson, that the author wants to share with readers.

- **Read** Many stories have a **central message**, or lesson, the author wants to share. The story teaches the lesson through the characters, the events that happen, and what the characters learn.

As you read, looking for the **key details** will help you to find the central message and understand what you read.


Look at the cartoon. Think about a lesson the boy learns by the end.



- **Think** The events in the cartoon tell about a problem the boy has and what he does. Complete the chart by adding the key details. Use those details to figure out the central message of the cartoon.

Key Detail	Key Detail	Key Detail
↓	↓	↓
<p>What Is the Central Message?</p>		

- **Talk** Using the key details in the chart, talk about the central message of the cartoon.

 **Academic Talk**
 Use these phrases to talk about the text.

- **central message**
- **key details**

The Girl and the Apples

by Tala Rutchel

- 1 One fall afternoon, a girl went to a farm to pick apples. She was in a hurry, so she picked carelessly both ripe apples and unripe ones. When she finished, her wagon was filled with a small mountain of apples.
- 2 The girl asked the farmer, "Quick, tell me how long you think it will take me to get back home."
- 3 The farmer thought carefully. Then he said, "Be patient. If you go slowly, you will be back soon. If you go fast, you will not get back until night. It's your choice."
- 4 The girl thought, "How can that be? How can it take so long if I go fast?"
- 5 The girl wanted to get back home as soon as possible, so she rushed her horse and wagon onto the road. She made her horse walk very fast.
- 6 And suddenly . . . bump! Off fell some apples.
- 7 Every time she hit a bump, more apples rolled off her wagon. Then she had to stop and put them back on the wagon. Because of all the delays, it was night before she got home.



Close Reader Habits

Underline key details that help you figure out the central message.

Explore

How can key details help you figure out what lesson the girl in the story learns?



To find the central message, think about what each key character says and does.

Think

1 Complete the chart by writing some key details about what the characters say and do. Then write the central message, or lesson.

Key Details (the Girl)

Key Details (the Farmer)



What Is the Central Message?

Talk

2 Think about the message of the story. Talk about what the girl learned.

Write

3 Short Response What is another lesson the girl might learn from what happened? Use the space provided on page 126 to write your answer.

HINT What might the girl think about the farmer's advice by the end of the story?



Write Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 123.

The Girl and the Apples

3 Short Response What is another lesson the girl might learn from what happened?

HINT What might the girl think about the farmer's advice by the end of the story?



Don't forget to check your writing.

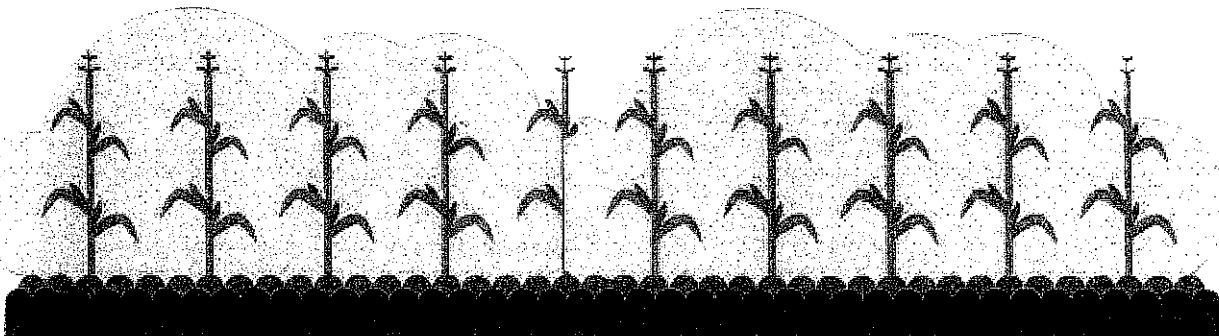
Sharing the Crops

a folktale from England

- 1 Once a farmer rented some land. "How much does it cost to use this land?" the farmer asked the landowner.
- 2 The owner wanted to get the better part of the deal. So he said, "I'll take the top half of the crop, and you can take the bottom half."
- 3 But the farmer was clever. He planted potatoes because they grow in the ground. At harvest time, he gave the owner the potato tops, which are not good for anything.
- 4 The owner knew he had been outsmarted. He said, "Next year, I want the bottom half of your crops."
- 5 So the next year the farmer planted oats, which grow at the top of long grasses. The bottom half is useless grassy straw. That's what the farmer gave to the owner.
- 6 This time the owner said, "Next year, I'll take the top and the bottom. You can have the middle."
- 7 So this time, the farmer planted corn. At the top of each corn stalk are tassels. At the bottom are woody stalks. In the middle is where the tasty sweet corn grows.
- 8 For a third time, the owner had been outsmarted. Now it was the farmer's turn to suggest a deal. "From now on," he said, "why don't you take half of whatever I grow? Whatever I get, you will get the same."
- 9 This was a fair deal at last. From that day on, the owner and the farmer shared the crops equally.

Close Reader Habits

Why does the landowner keep changing the deal he made with the farmer? **Underline** the key details about the first deal between the landowner and the farmer.



► **Think**

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

Part A

What is the central message of “Sharing the Crops”?

- A** It is wrong to try to cheat others.
- B** Never make a deal with a clever farmer.
- C** The best part of a crop is usually at the top.
- D** If a plan doesn’t succeed, keep trying.

Part B

Which sentence from the story **best** supports the answer you chose for Part A above?

- A** “Once a farmer rented some land.”
- B** “The owner wanted to get the better part of the deal.”
- C** “This was a fair deal at last.”
- D** “So this time, the farmer planted corn.”

► **Talk**

2 Using key details from the text, talk to your partner about how the farmer outsmarts the landowner.

►  **Write**

3 **Short Response** Explain which character in “Sharing the Crops” learns a lesson. Use one detail from the folktale to support your response. Use the space provided on page 127 to write your answer.



To find the central message of a story, think about which character learns a lesson.

HINT Reread to look for the character who learns a lesson.

