

The Most Common Themes in Children's Literature

The Message of the Story

Stories have many themes that can be supported by character's thoughts, words, actions, feelings, struggles and motivations. There are many themes found in a story, however there are usually only one or two dominant ones focused on by the writer.

- Struggles against **nature** - characters dealing with survival
- Struggles against pressures of **society** - characters dealing with fitting in, being themselves or being accepted
- **Family** - characters dealing with family problems or being brought together by family
- **Overcoming Adversity/Sacrifices** bring rewards/Determination - characters overcoming struggles and obstacles or hard work paying off despite difficult challenges
- **Friendship/Love/Caring/Loyalty** - characters showing care and love
- **Character Change** - when events in a story lead to a major change in a character
- **Loss/Loneliness** - characters dealing with loss, death or the fear of losing a loved one
- **Cooperation/Teamwork/Working Together** - characters working together to achieve a goal
- **Fairness/Unfairness** - characters overcoming unfair situations
- **Courage/Bravery** - characters showing extreme bravery in difficult situations
- **Racism/Prejudice** - when characters are judged by the color of their skin, religion, race or their appearance rather than their actions
- **Traditions** - characters keeping traditions or culture alive

- **Imagination** - characters using their imagination to solve problems
- **Taking a Stand** - characters standing up for what they believe