

LEARNING LITERATURE FOR TEACHERS

Memory Tags

Then and Now and supporting activities for grades 3 to 5

SAMPLE

Language arts concept connections students can show and revisit

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Model the whole conversation

Prompt	Possible student response
Then	I used to think theme meant one word, like teamwork. My earlier answer was only teamwork.
Now	Theme is a message or insight about life or human experience that a text develops. One supported theme here is Accepting help can make a difficult task more manageable.
Show it	Mara struggles while she refuses help. After she accepts Eli's help, they finish, and she invites him to plan the next day's jobs. Those changes support the theme.
Check it	Teamwork names a topic. The theme statement says something about that topic. A theme must fit the text; another well-supported theme can also be reasonable.
What helped	Comparing Mara's choices before and after the problem helped me move from one word to a message supported by the story.
My next step	I will try a new story. I will explain a theme and point to the details that support it.

The new connection

"Theme used to remind me that I mixed it up with topic. Now it also reminds me to ask what the story shows about life and to check the character's choices."

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If the learner is still uncertain

"I can explain the difference when I compare two choices. Next I want to write my own theme statement without those choices."

After checking the model, use a different brief story for a new attempt. Repeating this exact example is practice with the model; applying the idea to an unfamiliar story provides additional evidence of understanding.

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step.

Connect with the comprehension dimensions

TAUGHT can ask for the meaning; TAP can ask for evidence or an example; THINK can ask why it fits; TOGGLE can ask how the concept relates to another idea or transfers to a new text. These prompts are a proposed fit with the existing framework.

A manageable week

Monday: capture a brief starting response for 4-6 taught or newly introduced terms. Midweek: model and practice two terms. Friday: run Then and Now with an independent example. Following week: retrieve the terms again and apply one to a new text. Add an older term to later rotations.

Check whether the routine is helping

Evaluate accurate learning and its use over time. A cheerful reflection or an immediate correct answer is useful information, but neither alone shows lasting understanding.

A practical classroom pilot

- Select 6-8 target concepts. Before instruction, ask for a brief meaning and an example. Save the response and note whether help was used.
- Teach the concepts through normal lessons. Use selected Memory Tags activities for two weeks. Keep the practice manageable and record major support.
- At the end of the practice period, ask students to explain the meanings and give examples without seeing the card backs.
- About one week later, check recall again. Add an unfamiliar sentence or text so the student must apply the idea beyond the practiced example.
- Compare understanding, application, help used, and confidence. Use the result to choose reteaching, another retrieval opportunity, or more demanding application.

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Keep the evidence distinct

Record	Simple classroom codes
Meaning	0 = inaccurate or absent; 1 = partly accurate; 2 = accurate in the learner's own words.
Example and reasoning	0 = does not fit; 1 = example fits but explanation is incomplete; 2 = fits and is explained.
New application	0 = not yet; 1 = partial; 2 = accurate application to the unfamiliar task.
Concept help	Model, example, cue, or none. Record separately from access accommodations and confidence.
Confidence	Unsure, somewhat sure, or sure. Ask before checking the answer; feelings may be recorded separately or skipped.

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Literary elements | LE01-LE06 | Answer backs

LE03 Motivation

Meaning: What a character wants, needs, believes, or feels that helps explain an action.

Example: Eli practices his lines because he wants to feel prepared for the play.

Check: Are an action and a motivation the same thing?

Answer: No. Practicing is the action; wanting to feel prepared is the motivation.

LE02 Character trait

Meaning: A quality that describes a character's usual way of thinking or acting.

Example: Nora returns a lost wallet even when nobody is watching. Her action supports the trait honest.

Check: Is worried always a character trait?

Answer: Worried may describe a temporary feeling. Use the character's actions and patterns to support a trait.

LE01 Character

Meaning: A person, animal, or other figure who takes part in a story.

Example: In a story about a talking rabbit who loses a map, the rabbit is a character.

Check: Does a character have to be a human?

Answer: No. Animals, imaginary creatures, and even objects can act as characters.

LE06 Conflic

Meaning: A struggle or prob that moves a stor forw d.

Example: Nora wants to join the play, but she is afraid to speak in front of others.

Check: Does conflict always mean two characters fight?

Answer: No. A character can struggle with a decision, fear, weather, a rule, or another challenge.

LE05 ot

M an ng Th connecte events of a ory in uding hov situations and problems develop.

Example: A child loses a map, follows clues, and finds the meeting place. These connected events help form the plot.

Check: Is a list of character names a plot?

Answer: No. A plot describes connected events and what happens because of them.

LE04 Setting

Meaning: Where and when a story takes place, including conditions that matter to its events.

Example: A story takes place on a ranch during a very dry summer. The dry weather may affect the problem.

Check: Is setting only the name of a place?

Answer: No. Time, weather, and other conditions can also be important parts of the setting.

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Cut on dashed lines

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Informational and argument concepts | IA07-IA12 | Answer backs

IA09 Claim

Meaning: A statement an author or speaker asks others to accept and can support with reasons and evidence.

Example: Our class should have a longer library visit.

Check: Is a claim automatically proven because someone states it confidently?

Answer: No. Examine the reasons and evidence supporting it.

IA08 Problem and solution

Meaning: A structure that presents a challenge and one or more ways to address it.

Example: A passage describes litter near a creek and explains a proposed cleanup plan.

Check: Must every proposed solution completely fix the problem?

Answer: No. A text may describe attempts, partial solutions, or choices that still need evaluation.

IA07 Chronological order

Meaning: An arrangement of events according to when they happened.

Example: A biography describes a person's childhood, early career, and later work.

Check: Does chronological order mean most important event first?

Answer: No. It means order in time. Importance can be a different organizing pattern.

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IA12 Explanation

Meaning: Reasoning that connects evidence to an idea and shows how or why the evidence matters.

Example: Because several students ran out of choosing time, a longer visit may help more students find suitable books.

Check: Is copying the evidence again enough explanation?

Answer: No. Explain the connection between that evidence and the idea. Do not only repeat the detail.

IA11 Evidence

Meaning: Specific information from a text, observation, or reliable source that supports an answer or claim.

Example: A sample class log says, 'Eight students were still choosing books when time ended.' That observation can support a request for more library time.

Check: Does any quotation count as useful evidence?

Answer: No. The information must be accurate, relevant, and connected to the idea being supported.

IA10 Reason

Meaning: An explanation of why a claim or choice should be accepted.

Example: Students need enough time to choose suitable books. This is a reason for a longer library visit.

Check: Is a reason the same thing as a recorded observation?

Answer: No. A reason explains why; evidence supplies specific support for the reason or claim.

Cut on dashed lines

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