



Sequoyah BOOK AWARDS

2018 LESSONS + ACTIVITIES

Sequoyah Book Award Week is Here!

Get your students reading and involved in the third-oldest youth-choice literary award program in the nation. Your students can help determine the winners of the 2018 Sequoyah Book Awards during voting next spring.

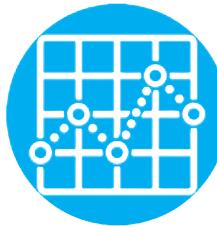


Visit bit.ly/1kC6na7 on the web for background on this Oklahoma book award. You'll also find masterlists, activities, and promotional materials to get your students involved in selecting the next winning authors.

Day Two: Let's Go Into the Book

Plots! Characters! Themes!

All stories, from the simplest of picture books to epic novels, include these main elements: plot, character, and theme.



The Plot is the actual story, told from beginning to end. Typically, plots end in a resolution involving some type of change:

- the change in a situation (the person terrorizing the town is caught)
- the change in a character (a distrustful teenager learns to trust)
- the change in a relationship (two characters at odds become friends)

There are a diversity of plots, and writers have tried to define them. The late William Foster Harris, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, argued that there were three basic plots:

The Happy Ending Plot, where the central character makes a sacrifice—that seems logically “wrong”—for the sake of another.

The Unhappy Ending, where a character does the logically “right” thing, but fails to make the needed sacrifice for the sake of another.

The Literary Plot, which does not hinge on the decision of a character. Instead, fate intervenes and drives the action of the characters

Visit this Internet Public Library page [www.ipl.org/div/farq/plotFAQ.html] to see how many plots others have defined.

Characters are the actors within the plot. Whether reacting to inner conflict, or responding to events, they move the story forward. Beyond the main actors, there are a host of characters who help advance the plot. This page from Literary Terms [literaryterms.net/character] provides a list and descriptions of various character types in stories.

The Themes of a story are the main ideas or underlying meanings. In *The Hunger Games* novels, the broad themes include survival and sacrifice. Themes can also state important truths, or advance an author's viewpoint. In *The Hunger Games*, such a theme could be expressed as "the importance of retaining your humanity and dignity under duress."

Some Common Themes

- *Man against Nature*: man at battle with nature, whether the drives are love, material, or against the aging process
- *Man against Society*: Is there a better way to live?
- *Man struggles to understand Divinity*: character tries to understand and make peace with God
- *Crime does not pay*: honesty is honored and criminals will eventually be caught
- *Overcoming adversity*: turning a tough situation into a triumph
- *Friendship is dependent upon sacrifice*: you can't have friends unless you act like a friend
- *Importance of family*: sacrifices for family are honored and explored; family bonds survive adversity
- *Yin and Yang*: when things are good, something bad happens to balance it out
- *Love is the worthiest pursuit*: love conquers all
- *The cycle of life and death*: how life and death are connected; we cannot have one without the other
- *Sacrifice brings rewards*: sacrifice and hard work pay off despite challenges along the way
- *All human beings have the same needs*: we all require the same things to live and thrive despite our differences

A Critical Reading Sheet

Select questions from below to create a critical reading sheet for young readers to complete about a Sequoyah book they've read. The questions touch upon the elements of plot, characters, and themes.

- Characters: describe main and relevant side characters
- Conflict: what problem does the main character refuse to solve until forced?
- Obstacle: what problem does the main character actively want to solve?
- How sympathetic were you towards the main character?
- List examples when the main character was proactive
- List examples when the main character was competent
- Describe the setting(s)
- What are the themes in the book?
- What is the main plot of the book?
- What did you like about the story?
- What did you not like about the story?
- Describe the author's writing style
- Did you have any favorite quotes from the story?

A Book Map

Book Editor Cheryl B. Klein has created this worksheet that helps young readers track characters and plot developments in a book. Download it at:
<https://libraries.ok.gov/PDFs/sequoyah-book-map.pdf>