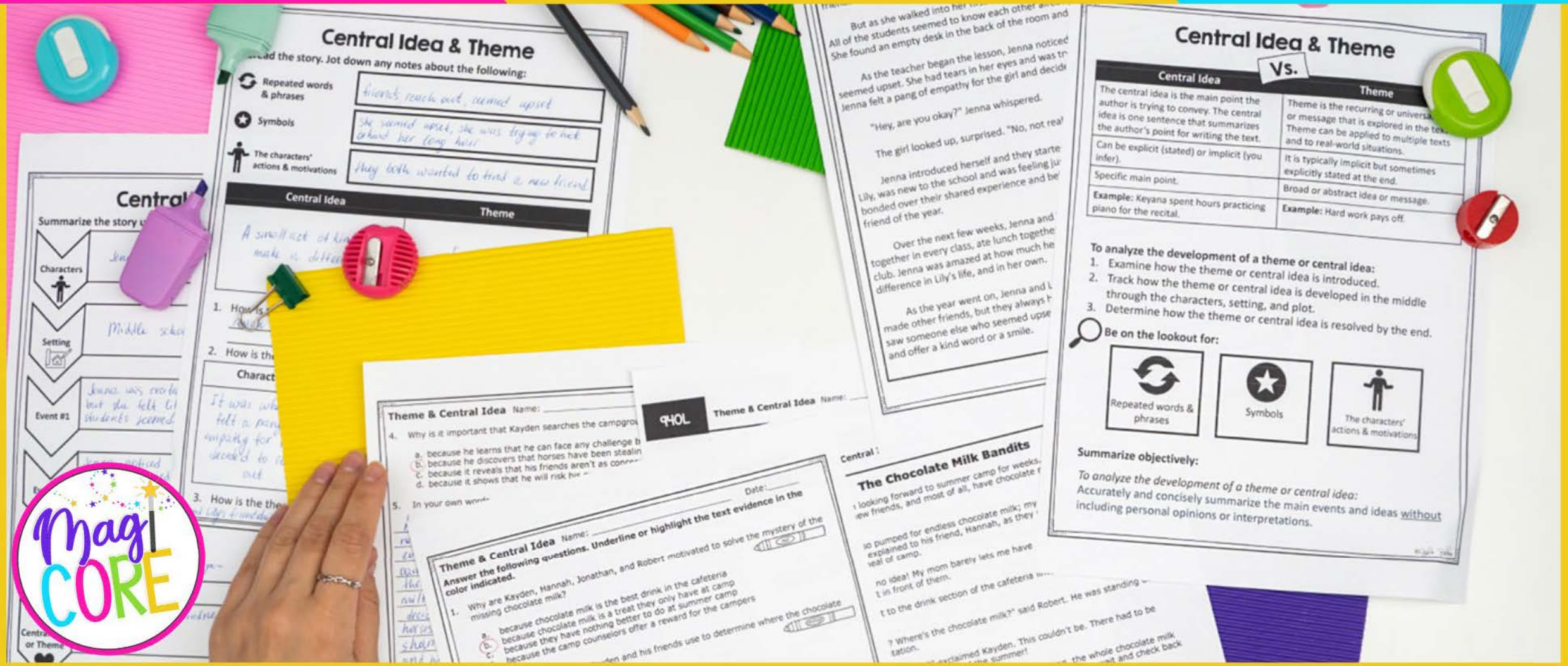
FICTION

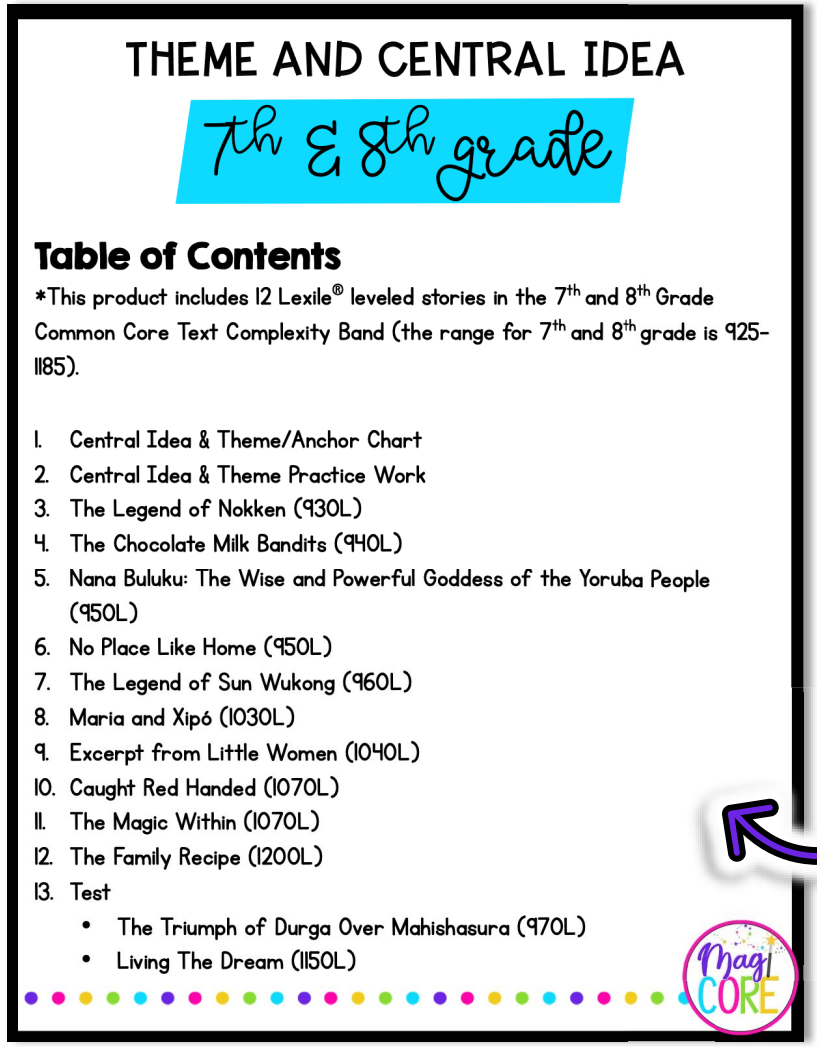
7TH & 8TH GRADE

RL. 7.2/8.2



THEME & CENTRAL IDEA

WHAT'S INSIDE?



THEME AND CENTRAL IDEA

7th & 8th grade

Table of Contents

*This product includes 12 Lexile® leveled stories in the 7th and 8th Grade Common Core Text Complexity Band (the range for 7th and 8th grade is 925-1185).

1. Central Idea & Theme/Anchor Chart
2. Central Idea & Theme Practice Work
3. The Legend of Nokken (930L)
4. The Chocolate Milk Bandits (940L)
5. Nana Buluku: The Wise and Powerful Goddess of the Yoruba People (950L)
6. No Place Like Home (950L)
7. The Legend of Sun Wukong (960L)
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9. Excerpt from Little Women (1040L)
10. Caught Red Handed (1070L)
11. The Magic Within (1070L)
12. The Family Recipe (1200L)
13. Test
    - The Triumph of Durga Over Mahishasura (970L)
    - Living The Dream (1150L)

PRINTABLE PDFs covering the 7th and 8th grade text complexity band with Certified Lexile Levels.

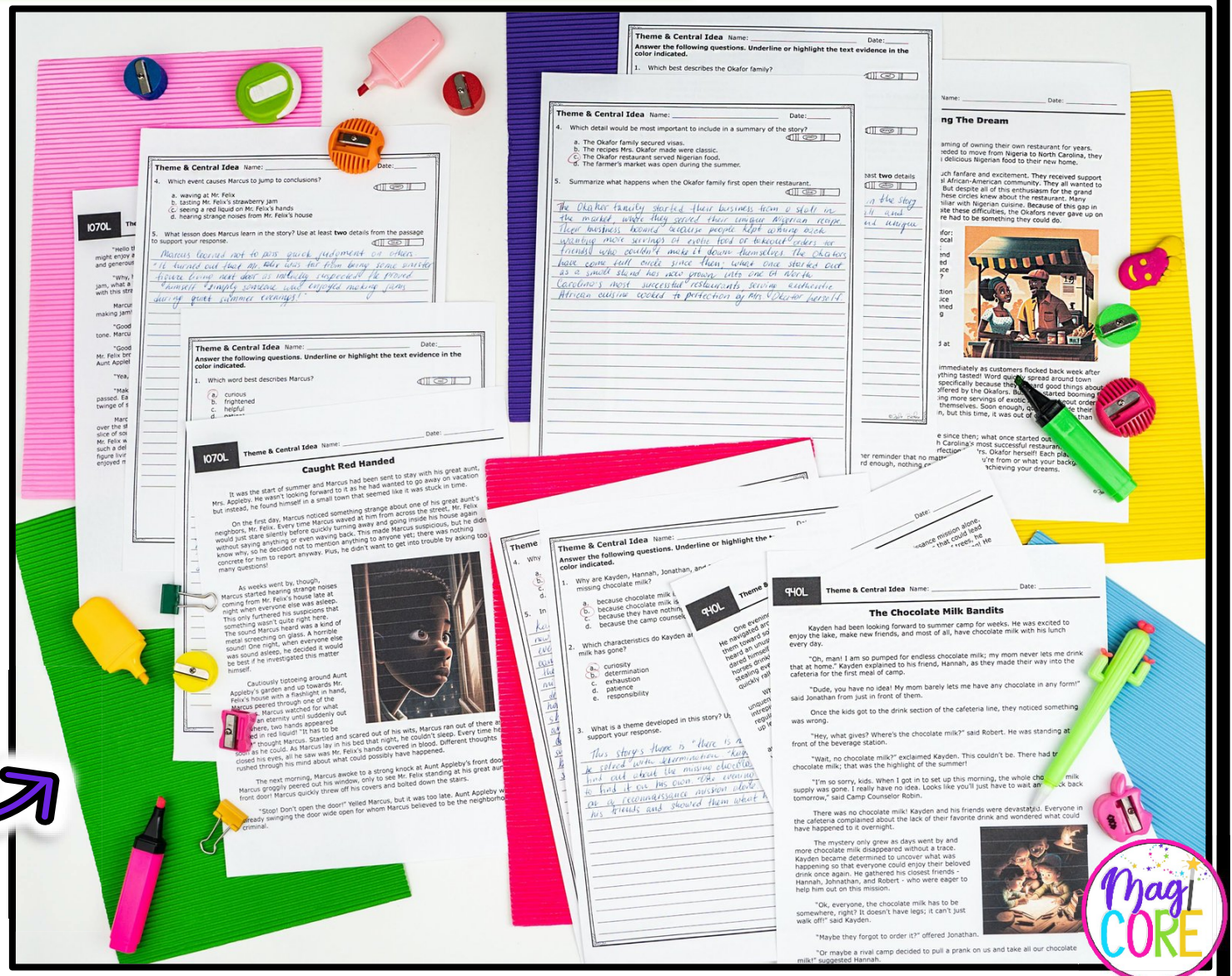
- Anchor chart and question sets
- Color coding to encourage students to use text evidence
- AND two assessments on fiction reading passages

Printable Slides Included

LEXILE®

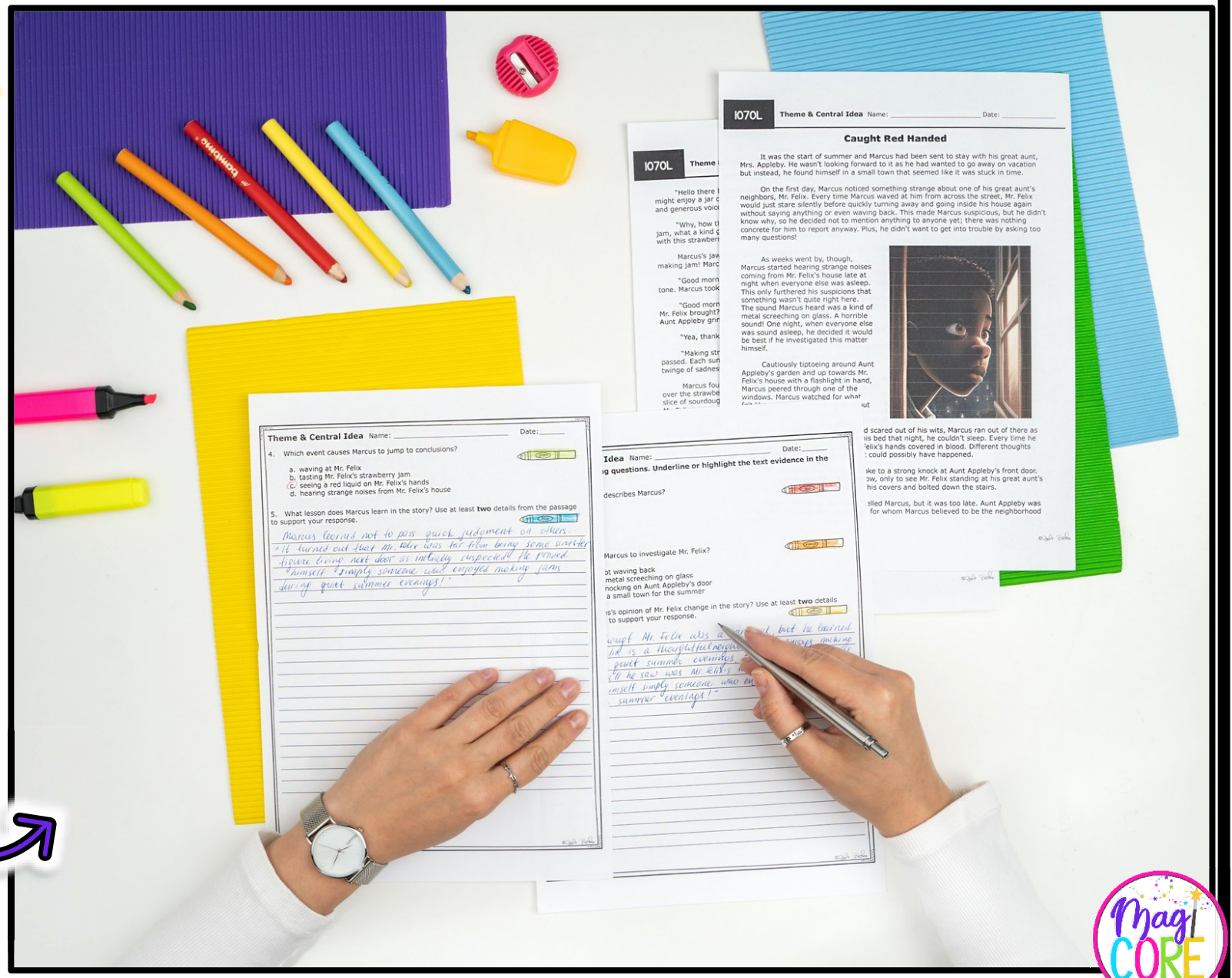
12 FICTION PASSAGES

- Learn in color! Visual cues reinforce text evidence.
- Teachers can quickly check student work.
- Variety of genres to spark comprehension AND curiosity.
- Dive into literary texts including realistic, historical, and legends.



QUESTIONS

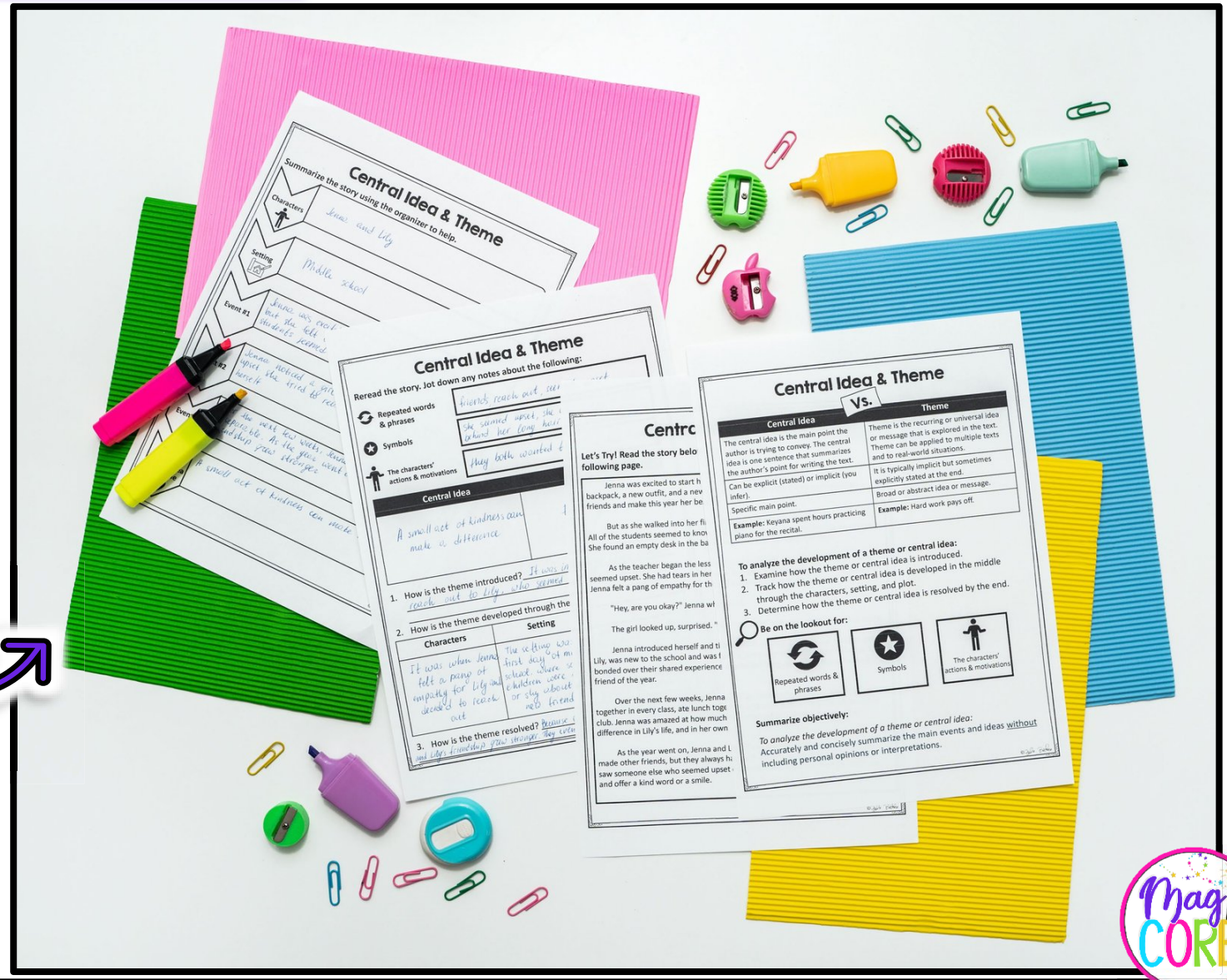
- Skill-focused, scaffolded questions
- Multiple choice and short answer
- Preps students for state testing
- Rigorous and research-based approach to questioning



Mag CORE

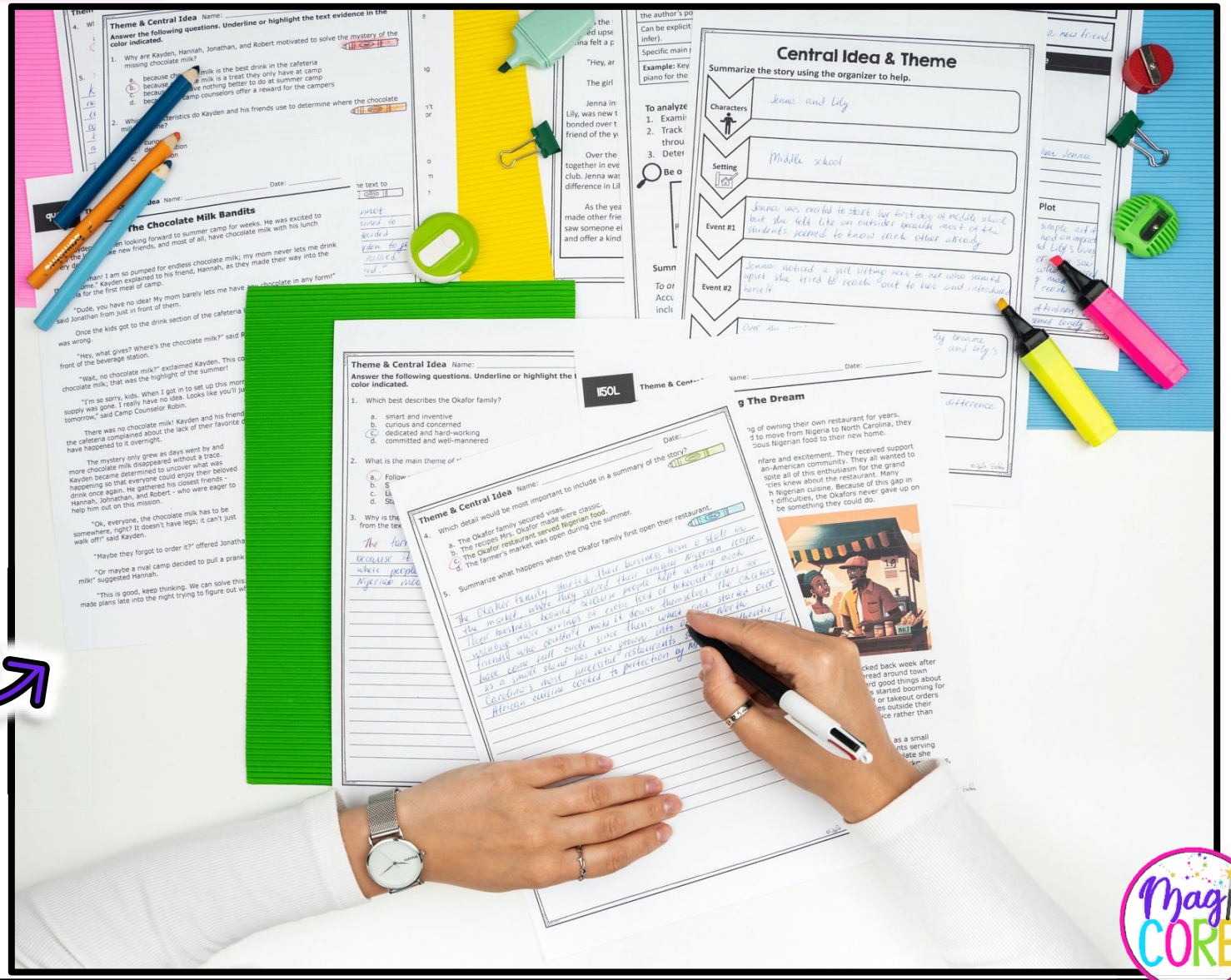
ANCHOR CHART

- Anchor chart breaking down theme and central idea
- Practice passage and warmup activity sheet
- Use to introduce the skill
- Students reference throughout the unit
- Use in student journal as a reference



ASSESSMENTS

- Same format as practice
- Two tests with different Lexile levels
- Color-coding
- Follows best practices for standardized assessments



WHY IT WORKS

- Certified Lexile measures
- High - interest texts to motivate readers
- Cross - curricular topics
- Scaffold approach will help your students meet grade level expectations.
- Classroom tested! Trusted by over 1,000 teachers… and counting!… To help students grow their reading skills



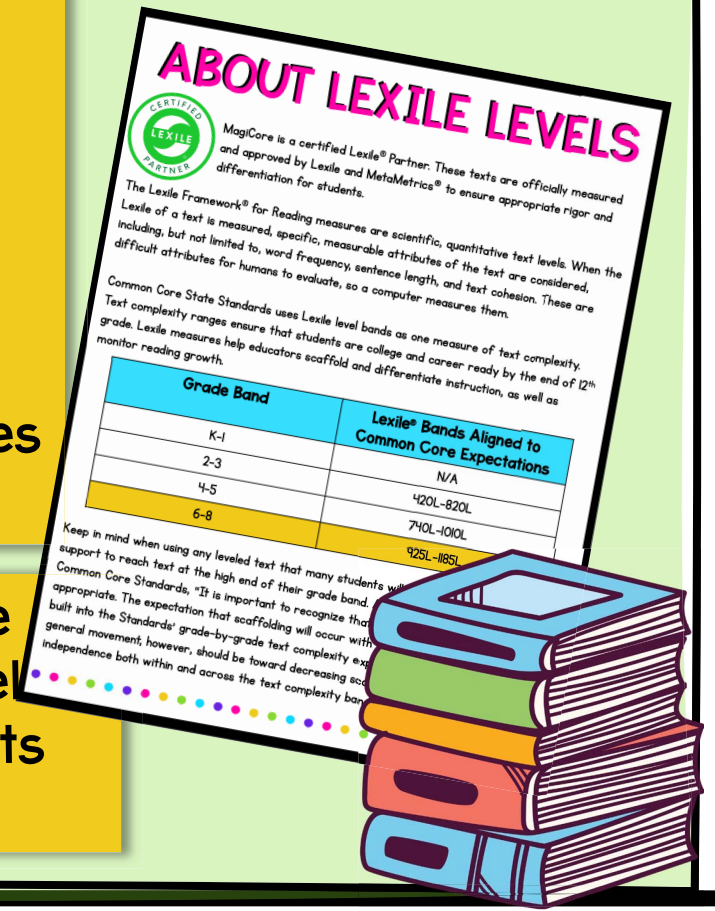
ALIGNS TO SCIENCE OF READING

Research shows that wide reading has the biggest impact on student reading progress.

Our passages provide that essential variety of fiction structures and topics.

Students need scaffolded instruction to access grade level texts. Without it, students are not exposure to linguistic and textural features, putting them further behind.

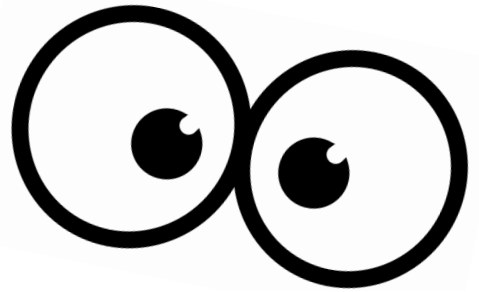
Our texts help students grow full-steam ahead. With certified Lexile levels in the Common Core text complexity band, students will 100% engage with appropriate text and sentence structures, vocabulary, and more. Plus, every passage provides teachers with opportunities to scaffold instruction.



Fun fact! From 2nd grade on, students make greater reading gains when taught from texts that are as much as two grade levels above their "instructional" reading level.

Lead the way! Our texts are leveled to master grade-level expectations and set students up for success.

TAKE A PEEK



Central Idea & Theme

Vs.

Central Idea	Theme
The central idea is the main point the author is trying to convey. The central idea is one sentence that summarizes the author's point for writing the text.	Theme is the recurring or universal idea or message that is explored in the text. Theme can be applied to multiple texts and to real-world situations.
Can be explicit (stated) or implicit (you infer).	It is typically implicit but sometimes explicitly stated at the end.
Specific main point.	Broad or abstract idea or message.
Example: Keyana spent hours practicing piano for the recital.	**Example:** Hard work pays off.

To analyze the development of a theme or central idea:

1. Examine how the theme or central idea is introduced.
2. Track how the theme or central idea is developed in the middle through the characters, setting, and plot.
3. Determine how the theme or central idea is resolved by the end.

Be on the lookout for:

- Repeated words & phrases
- Symbols
- The characters' actions & motivations

Summarize objectively:

To analyze the development of a theme or central idea:
Accurately and concisely summarize the main events and ideas without including personal opinions or interpretations.

©Gale Bickers

Central Idea & Theme

Reread the story. Jot down any notes about the following:

- Repeated words & phrases
- Symbols
- The characters' actions & motivations

Central Idea	Theme

1. How is the theme introduced? _____
2. How is the theme developed through the...

Characters	Setting	Plot

3. How is the theme resolved? _____

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Central Idea & Theme

Summarize the story using the organizer to help.

- Characters
- Setting
- Event #1
- Event #2
- Event #3
- Central Idea or Theme

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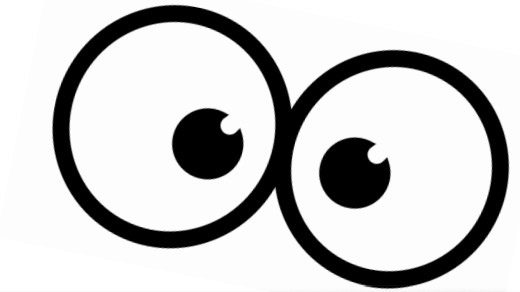
AND ANOTHER PEEK



960L **Theme & Central Idea** Name: _____ Date: _____

The Legend of Sun Wukong
A Chinese Myth

In ancient China, there lived a monkey who was born out of a stone egg on the top of a mountain. He was known as Sun Wukong and was mischievous and rebellious. One day, he decided to visit the palace of the Jade Emperor, the ruler of Heaven.

As he arrived, he saw the Jade Emperor sitting on his throne and exclaimed, "Who are you to sit on such a grand throne? I should be the one sitting there!" He then proceeded to cause chaos in the palace, disrupting the order and stealing the Peaches of Immortality. Furious at Sun Wukong's behavior, the Jade Emperor ordered his armies to capture him, but they failed.

The Jade Emperor then called upon the Buddha for help. The Buddha said, "Sun Wukong, you have caused much trouble and chaos. It is time for you to be punished." He used his magic to trap Sun Wukong under a mountain for five hundred years.

During this time, Sun Wukong repented for his misdeeds and learned many skills and magic from a Taoist monk who was passing by. He said to the monk, "I have caused much trouble and harm. I want to learn how to be a better monkey and become a force for good in the world." The monk replied, "You have much potential, young monkey. I will teach you the ways of Taoism and the art of transformation."



After being released from the mountain, Sun Wukong became a follower of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang, who was on a pilgrimage to India to retrieve sacred texts. Sun Wukong, along with other companions, including a pig named Zhu Bajie and a water demon named Sha Wujing, protected Xuanzang on his journey, facing numerous challenges and battles along the way.

One day, Sun Wukong said to Xuanzang, "Master, I have caused much harm in the past, and I want to make amends for my misdeeds. I promise to protect you and help you complete your pilgrimage." Xuanzang replied, "I forgive you, Sun Wukong. You have shown me loyalty, bravery, and compassion. Together, we will overcome any obstacle."

Through their journey, Sun Wukong faced many challenges and battles but showed his loyalty, bravery, and compassion. He also used his magic and transformation skills to help his companions and protect Xuanzang. Eventually, they reached India and retrieved the sacred texts.

After their journey, Sun Wukong returned to China and was granted an audience with the Jade Emperor. He said, "I am sorry for my past misdeeds. I have learned the error of my ways and have become a better monkey." The Jade Emperor replied, "Sun Wukong, I forgive you. You have shown great courage and have proven yourself to be a force for good in the world." He granted Sun Wukong the title of "Victorious Fighting Buddha," and he became a revered figure in Chinese mythology.

Even today, Sun Wukong remains a popular character in Chinese culture and is often depicted in literature, films, and television shows.

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer the following questions. Underline or highlight the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. Which statement best describes Sun Wukong at the beginning of the story? (red)

   a. He is a troublemaker.
   b. He is a loyal friend.
   c. He is hopeful.
   d. He is patient.

2. Why is the Taoist monk an important character in the story? (orange)

   a. He allows Sun Wukong to avoid his punishment.
   b. He teaches Sun Wukong to become a better monkey.
   c. He shows Sun Wukong how to learn from sacred texts.
   d. He helps Sun Wukong escape from under the mountain.

3. What lesson does Sun Wukong learn in this story? Use at least **two** details from the passage to support your response. (yellow)

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date: _____

4. How does Sun Wukong prove he is a changed monkey? (green)

   a. By remaining under a mountain for five hundred years
   b. By teaching others how to become a force for good
   c. By returning to the palace of the Jade Emperor
   d. By protecting and helping Xuanzang

5. Summarize why Sun Wukong remains a popular character in Chinese culture. Include key events from the story to support your response. (blue)

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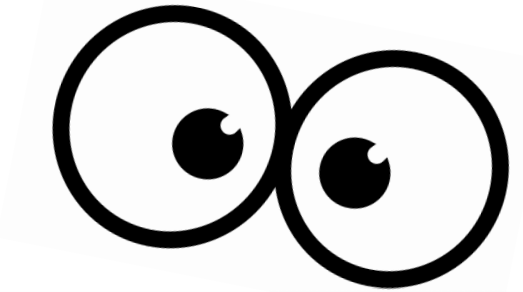
PREVIEW

CHECK THIS OUT TOO!



1030L **Theme & Central Idea** Name: _____ Date: _____

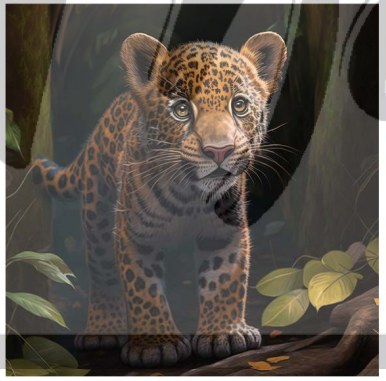
Maria and Xipó

Maria had always lived in the heart of the Amazon Rainforest. Her parents were part of the indigenous tribe that had lived there for centuries, and they had taught her to respect and appreciate the beauty of the forest.

As a young girl, Maria had always been fascinated by the jaguars that roamed the rainforest. The jaguar has been a culturally significant animal in South America since ancient times. In many indigenous cultures, the jaguar was seen as a powerful symbol of strength and courage, known for its ability to traverse both land and water. It was respected as a majestic creature of the forest, with a mysterious and magical connection to the spiritual realms. Maria had heard stories about the jaguar; she'd heard about its great beauty and strength. Occasionally, she would even hear about tribes who believed that their shamans could transform into jaguars while in trance states, allowing them to commune with the gods or travel through unseen realms of existence! The power of the jaguar was also harnessed by warriors who believed wearing its hide gave them supernatural powers during battle. While a fearsome creature, Maria longed to see a jaguar up close.

One day, while out foraging, Maria stumbled upon a jaguar cub. At first, Maria was startled and scared. If you happen upon a jaguar cub, its mother is sure to be close by. In fear, Maria quickly darted back behind a tree and began rubbing some dirt from the ground on her arms. She was trying her best to hide her scent in case the cub's mother was soon to arrive. However, as Maria watched and waited, breathing hard, no fierce and frightening jaguar mother emerged. This cub was small and helpless with no mother in sight. Maria knew that she couldn't leave the cub to die, so she cautiously approached the young jaguar.

"It's ok little one. Where's your mother, huh?" Maria looked around again, still scanning the tree line for the cub's mother. "She's really gone, isn't she?" Maria said, looking into the little cub's eyes. The cub was unafraid and seemed almost eager to be rescued from its loneliness. It was decided. Maria scooped up the cub in her arms and took it back to her village.



At first, the other members of her tribe were hesitant to accept the jaguar cub. They knew that jaguars were dangerous predators, and they didn't want to risk their safety. Jaguars were sacred beasts, not to be disturbed or messed with. But Maria pleaded with them, and eventually, they agreed to let her keep the cub as a pet, as long as she take sole responsibility for its feeding and care.

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date:_____

Answer the following questions. Underline or highlight the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. Why does Maria decide to keep the jaguar cub? red

   a. The members of the tribe will be happy.
   b. Its mother is nowhere to be found.
   c. She has always wanted a pet.
   d. Jaguars bring good luck.

2. What is a theme of this story? orange

   a. Trust your elders.
   b. Danger is everywhere.
   c. Control your surroundings.
   d. Friends are loyal to one another.

3. Describe how the author uses the Amazon rainforest setting to develop the theme of this story. Use at least **two** details from the text to support your response. yellow

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date:_____

4. Why don't members of Maria's tribe want her to keep the jaguar cub? green

   a. They don't want to risk their safety.
   b. They know Maria won't care for it properly.
   c. They know the cub's mother will return for it.
   d. They don't believe a jaguar is a symbol of strength.

5. In your own words, summarize why the jaguar is important to many indigenous cultures in South America. blue

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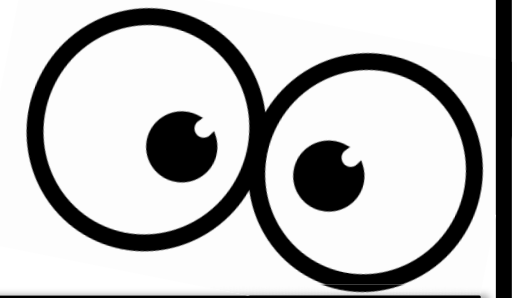
DON'T FORGET THIS!



1200L **Theme & Central Idea** Name: _____ Date: _____

The Family Recipe

Miguel had been living in Mexico City for several years now, but he still felt like a little kid when he came home to visit his abuela Esperanza. He remembered how she used to pinch his cheeks and smile at him with her kind eyes. But ever since Miguel had gone off to culinary school and become a professional chef, something changed between them.

Esperanza was always so proud of Miguel and the success he achieved. However, whenever Miguel tried to show her what new dishes he'd created or suggest that they try one of his restaurants together, Esperanza would resist. She would just shake her head and say "I don't want any of your fancy cooking! I like things the way I know them - traditional recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation. That's all we need in this family!"

Miguel wanted nothing more than for Esperanza to appreciate the food that made him who he was today; after all, it was because of those same family recipes that sparked his love for cooking in the first place. He loved learning how those generations before him cooked their dishes with such passion and skill; it was truly inspiring. However, no matter what words Miguel said or how hard he tried, there seemed no way around breaking through Esperanza's stubbornness regarding trying new foods. This resistance hit Miguel hard; was he not allowed to explore new ways of cooking? Wasn't tradition meant to be celebrated by innovating with old recipes?



Suddenly an idea struck him: why not host a holiday cooking contest between himself and his Abuela? So, for this year's Christmas feast, Miguel and Esperanza decided on having a friendly contest; whichever dish turned out better according to their family members' taste buds would be declared the winner, even if neither actually won since everyone seemed excited about tasting both unique creations! This time around, though, instead of following the exact recipe step by step like Esperanza usually did (adding extra spice here or less sugar there), she decided to keep things exactly as they were written while letting Miguel add whatever twist inspired him most - which ended up being an exciting combination of flavors from two cultures combining into one delicious plateful!

The whole family gathered around eagerly awaiting their turn at trying each dish until finally everyone took a bite...and they loved it! Even though they could tell right away which plate belonged to whom due to its distinct flavorings, none could decide which tasted best because both plates represented something special: tradition versus innovation; old vs young; familiar vs daring - untying itself into its own story-like narrative within every morsel taken in joyous appreciation by each member present there that night, including Abuela Esperanza. Esperanza eventually hugged her beloved grandson tightly. She thanked him for reminding her why traditions are meant not only to be kept alive but also reinvented over time so future generations can discover them once again through unique perspectives.

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date:_____

Answer the following questions. Underline or highlight the text evidence in the color indicated.

1. What motivates Miguel to follow his love for cooking? red

   a. his abuela
   b. family recipes
   c. restaurants in Mexico City
   d. holiday cooking contests

2. Which sentence from the story best states the theme? orange

   a. "However, no matter what words Miguel said or how hard he tried, there seemed no way around breaking through Esperanza's stubbornness regarding trying new foods."
   b. "So, for this year's Christmas feast, Miguel and Esperanza decided on having a friendly contest; whichever dish turned out better according to their family members' taste buds would be declared the winner, even if neither actually won since everyone seemed excited about tasting both unique creations!"
   c. "The whole family gathered around eagerly awaiting their turn at trying each dish until finally everyone took a bite...and they loved it!"
   d. "She thanked him for reminding her why traditions are meant not only to be kept alive but also reinvented over time so future generations can discover them once again through unique perspectives."

3. How does Esperanza change in the story? Use at least **two** details from the passage to support your response. yellow

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Theme & Central Idea Name: _____ Date:_____

4. Which event in the story is the most important to the development of the theme? green

   a. the holiday cooking contest
   b. when Esperanza hugs her Miguel
   c. Miguel visiting his abuela Esperanza
   d. Esperanza's refusal to go to one of Miguel's restaurants

5. Write a summary of the important events in the story. blue

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UPGRADE THEIR SKILLS!

The INFERENCES & EXPLICIT ANALYSIS Unit Contains:

- 12 Digital and Printable Lexile Leveled Reading Comprehension Passages
- Anchor Charts
- Rigorous comprehension questions for each passage
- Assessment Passages and Question
- Prepares students to cite evidence to make inferences

Love this unit but want to focus on Nonfiction Skills? Try the INFERENCES unit!

