Read the following fable: The Monkey and the Snake

One winter a Monkey found a Snake stiff and frozen with cold. He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom. The Snake was quickly revived by the warmth, and resuming its natural instincts, bit the monkey, inflicting on him a mortal wound.

In your writer’s notebook, answer the following questions: What is the theme of this story? What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

ANSWER: The theme of this story is “Don’t be too trusting of others, especially when you have a reason to distrust them.” In the story, a monkey feels sorry for a cold snake and tries to make him warm. He was too trusting, though, because he obviously did not believe the snake would harm him for trying to be helpful. However, the snake’s natural instincts are to kill other animals; as a result, he kills the monkey despite the monkey’s attempt to save the snake’s life. This shows me that if you know a person is evil (like the monkey knew the snake was a killer), you should not trust that person too much. The monkey trusted the snake and ended up dead.
Read the following fable: The Flies and the Honey-Pot

A number of flies were attracted to a jar of honey which had been overturned in a housekeeper's room, and placing their feet in it, ate greedily. Their feet, however, became so smeared with the honey that they could not use their wings, nor release themselves, and were suffocated.

In your writer’s notebook, answer the following questions: What is the theme of this story? What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

ANSWER: The theme of this story is “Greed can land you in a sticky situation.” In the story, the flies’ greed for the honey makes them unaware of their surroundings. As a result, they become trapped by the honey and suffocate to death. This shows me that if you are greedy, like the flies were greedy for the honey, you can forget about important things (like your own safety and comfort) and end up in a situation that hurts you in the end.
Clockwork

• Read the following fable: The Goose with the Golden Eggs

• One day a monkey went to the nest of his Goose and found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But, on second thought, he took it home and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.

• In your writer’s notebook, answer the following questions: What is the theme of this story? What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

ANSWER: The theme of this story is “Giving in to your greed only leads to destruction.” In the story, the monkey becomes rich by selling the golden eggs he stole from a goose. He is so excited about his riches, he decides to kill the goose to steal all its golden riches. However, when he opens the goose, there is nothing there. This shows me that greed leads to destruction because the monkey’s greed led him to kill the innocent goose, and he gained nothing.
Clockwork

• Read the following fable: The Oxen and the Axle-Trees

A HEAVY WAGON was being dragged along a country lane by a team of Oxen. The Axle-trees groaned and creaked terribly; whereupon the Oxen, turning round, thus addressed the wheels: “Hullo there! why do you make so much noise? We bear all the labor, and we, not you, ought to cry out.”

• In your writer’s notebook, answer the following questions: What is the theme of this story? What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

• ANSWER: The theme of this story is “Don’t complain about your circumstances because there are others who are worse off.” In the fable, the axle-trees groan and creak terribly because they are carrying a heavy wagon. Their complaining is so loud, the oxen turn around and admonish them by pointing out that the oxen are, in fact, doing all the work of actually dragging the wagon around, whereas the axel-trees are merely holding the load. This shows me that even when your circumstances are bad, there are always others who are doing more work or who are dealing with more problems. Therefore, you shouldn’t complain.
Read the following fable: The Bundle of Sticks

An old monkey on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered them to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the sticks. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the bundle," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.

In your writer’s notebook, answer the following questions: What is the theme of this story? What happens in the story that leads you to believe this?

ANSWER: The theme of this story is “An individual is stronger in a group than when he/she is alone.” In the story, the father monkey teaches his children a lesson by using a bundle of sticks as an example. The sons are able to easily break an individual stick, but they are unable to break the sticks when they are in a bundle. This shows me that people are stronger when they are united as a group than they are when they are by themselves.