



# Character Motivation

Essential Question: How do readers analyze character motivation, including how it advances the plot and theme in a story?

**WORDS IN BLUE ARE NOTES FOR YOU!**

## Movie Time!!!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6sBbm5qUo0>
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK\\_LCjQQCPk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK_LCjQQCPk)



## Conscious Motivation

Conscious motivations are the easiest because they're the ones most likely driving the full force of the plot. You know what your character wants and why they want it.

Try pinpointing what your character wants and why.

- Do they think about why they want to act?
- Do they state the why outright through dialogue?
- What types of actions suggest the motivation without spelling it out?

## Example: Conscious Motivation

A young woman who has worked at an environmental plant for several years decides to go back to college to earn an advanced degree in Environmental Engineering because she can make more money.

How? *The young woman is aware of or conscious of **why** she wants to go back to school-- she wants to make more money.*



## Unconscious Motivations

- Unconscious motivations are trickier because the character doesn't realize why they're behaving as they are.

Questions to consider when analyzing characters' motivation:

- Can you show their motivation by what they don't do or say?
- Do they think one way and act another?
- Do they comment on what they unconsciously want to do in an offhand manner?
- Do they act in a way that alludes to the unconscious motivation? Can you make an inference about why they're acting the way they are?

## Example: Unconscious Motivation

A basketball player who was abandoned by his dad when he was a young teenager plays terribly for his basketball coach as a way to punish his father.

How? *The basketball player is angry at his father for leaving, but he isn't aware or conscious yet of just how upset he is; his anger, however, comes out directed towards his coach when he doesn't play well.*



## How does character motivation advance the plot and/or theme of a story?

- Readers can find the **theme** of a story by looking at what the characters go after and the challenges they face in the process.
- In the video clip, focus on the characters' **motivations**: why do they do what they do? Are their **motivations** conscious or unconscious? Jot down notes on what you think about the characters' motivations.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJJW7EF5aVk>

## How does character motivation advance the plot and/or theme of a story?

Discussion:

- What do you think the Coyote's motivations are?
- What is the outcome for the Coyote?
- Connect the Coyote's motivations, what he wants and why, to what happens to him, the outcome.
- The connection between the character's motivation and the result or outcome is a great clue as to what our theme could be.



## How does character motivation advance the plot and/or theme of a story?

- Based on the connections you made between the character's motivation and the outcome, determine a theme of this clip.
- We'll combine your ideas for a class list.



## How does character motivation advance the plot and/or theme of a story?

- Now it's your turn!
- Create a T-Chart like the one we made together. Label one side "Motivations" and the other "Outcomes." At the bottom, add a spot for "Theme."
- Read "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" and complete the chart.
- Fill in the chart and write a sentence that explains how the character's motivation generates the theme of the text.



# Compare/Contrast

Compare Peter Rabbit's motivation in the story to a time when you had a similar motivation. How were your motivations similar? How were they different?

Turn this in as you leave!

## Small Groups

**Group One:** This group will be working on an assignment in Google Classroom. Complete the assignment in the classroom and then see me for your paper assignment. Turn in the paper assignment when you finish. Listen for your name to be called.

**Group Two:** Pick up a black Close Reader from the back shelf (by the back door), turn to page 71, and create a t-chart using motivation, outcomes, and theme (just like we did together in class). Read the story and complete the chart analyzing the characters' motivations and how that helps to determine theme.

**Group Three:** You will create a short story with at least two different characters who have at least two different motivations; each character must have one conscious motivation and one unconscious motivation. The story must also include all of the major elements of plot (an exposition, introduction of conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution). The story must also have a theme that can be determined by analyzing the characters' motivations and outcomes; your reader should be able to make the same t-chart we've made to determine the theme.