

Sketch To Stretch



Reading Skills

- Identifying main ideas/themes and visually expressing themes
- Recognizing/analyzing cause-and-effect relationships
- Making inferences
- Drawing conclusions
- Forming generalizations
- Creating summaries

Overview of the “Sketch To Stretch” Strategy

By drawing symbolic representations of their interpretations of a story, students can use the “Sketch to Stretch” (STS) reading strategy to help them effectively identify the main ideas or themes of a literary work. This visual expression of a story’s main ideas facilitates students’ identification and understanding of symbols while allowing students to use symbols to express their personal responses to a text. Though most effective as an after-reading strategy, STS can be used as a before-reading or a during-reading strategy.

One STS response to *Wish You Well*, which the teacher can draw as an example (and which will demystify sketching), is a simple sketch of a coin. On a sheet of unlined paper, draw a circle about the size of a saucer. In the circle, sketch a simple line drawing of a face in profile, similar to the face on a quarter. The profile doesn’t have to look like anyone in particular. Instead, it is supposed to symbolically represent Diamond, the mountain boy. Above the profile, print the word *LOYALTY* in capital letters in an arc that follows the edge of the coin. Below the profile, print the word *PRICELESS*. Add any other features you wish. Show this simple drawing to your class by making a transparency to project or enlarging it onto poster-board, a flip chart, or chalk/dry-erase board.

Activities for the “Sketch To Stretch” Strategy

- Have students read *Wish You Well* in its entirety, and then explain the STS reading strategy to them.
- Model the STS reading strategy by doing the following:
 - 1) Read aloud the model passage (chapter 18, paragraphs 20–29) about Diamond and his lump of coal.
 - 2) Discuss the embedded comparison of a lump of coal hiding a diamond and a rough person hiding a gem of a human. Focus on the challenge of discovering a person’s — any person’s — true worth with only the external form of that person as an indicator of value.
 - 3) Share with the students your STS drawing of the coin, which represents Diamond.
 - 4) Remind the students that artistic ability is not the point here, but their ability to interpret text and identify themes and symbols is the focus. Explain that your simple sketch is a symbolic representation of a main idea or theme that you identified in *Wish You Well*. The sketch symbolically illustrates the theme that all people are of value, even those who, based upon first impressions, seem to have little to offer. Discuss how that can be true, soliciting real life examples from students.
 - 5) Ask the students to look at a series of drawings you have created to represent various themes from three works of literature the students have read while in your class.

- 6) Discuss each sketch and its symbolic meaning(s), reminding the students that each drawing is a symbolic representation of a theme of a literary work, not a literal illustration of an event from the work.
- 7) Have the students brainstorm themes from other works the class has recently read, then select one of these themes, and suggest what they might sketch to represent the selected theme.
- 8) On the board, draw (or allow a volunteer to draw) the suggested sketch that symbolically represents the identified theme. Allow the students to make suggestions as you draw, but remember to keep it simple.
- 9) Discuss the class-generated drawing, pointing out their use of symbolism to interpret the main idea they chose to illustrate symbolically.

- For reinforcement of the STS reading strategy, have the students practice (individually, with partners, in small groups, or as a class) creating STS drawings for themes from children’s literature, such as

<i>Androcles</i>	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	<i>The Three Bears</i>
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>	<i>The Three Little Pigs</i>
<i>Cinderella</i>	<i>Rapunzel</i>	<i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i>
<i>The Emperor’s New Clothes</i>	<i>Rumpelstiltskin</i>	<i>The Ugly Duckling</i>
<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	<i>The Velveteen Rabbit</i>

- For individual practice of the STS reading strategy, do the following:
 - 1) Distribute the blackline master of the STS worksheet for *Wish You Well* (see pages 76–77).
 - 2) Remind students that novels, including *Wish You Well*, have multiple themes, so no one right answer exists. Each individual must interpret a selection from the text, identifying a relevant theme.
 - 3) Have students think about their favorite passages or sections of *Wish You Well*, sharing their favorites and brainstorming until each student has a list of at least three such passages or sections. Tell them that “favorite” does not only mean best or most uplifting; it may also mean most appealing, most graphic, most memorable — for whatever reason it captures attention and holds interest.
 - 4) Ask students to record their three favorite passages or sections on the blackline master and then choose one with which to work in an STS exercise.
 - 5) Ask students to draw a symbolic representation(s) of their interpretation of the theme(s) of the passage or section. Remind them that they are not to illustrate events from the novel. Instead, they are to draw a symbolic representation(s) of their interpretation of a main idea(s) or theme(s). They may interpret the text, verbalize main ideas, make inferences, draw conclusions, form generalizations, identify cause-and-effect relationships, and summarize in order to decide what to draw to create the symbolic sketch representing their identified theme(s).
 - 6) Ask students to make simple line drawings or sketches only, but allow them to explore beyond those boundaries if they wish to do so.
 - 7) Have students share their STS drawings in groups of four to six students without making comments, allowing the others in the group to make statements about what they think the sketches symbolize. Only after hearing the theories of their peers may the artists explain what their sketches are intended to mean.
 - 8) In the same manner, have students share representative STS drawings with the class.
 - 9) Discuss student interpretations of the text and emerging themes from *Wish You Well*, asking students to identify related themes and the main theme from the novel.

Assessment

Use the following rubric to assess the student's ability to identify themes and recognize/generate symbols for Sketch To Stretch drawings:

- **EXEMPLARY (Score 4):** The student can effectively interpret text and identify themes and can recognize/generate symbols which represent identified themes.
- **ACCOMPLISHED (Score 3):** The student can identify most themes and recognize/generate many symbols.
- **DEVELOPING (Score 2):** The student can identify some themes and recognize/generate some symbols.
- **BEGINNING (Score 1):** The student cannot identify themes or recognize/generate symbols.

Sketch to Stretch

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Skill: Identifying Themes and Recognizing/Generating Symbols

Part 1. List at least three memorable passages or sections from *Wish You Well*:

1. (pages _____ – _____) In this passage/section of *Wish You Well*, _____

2. (pages _____ – _____) In this passage/section of *Wish You Well*, _____

3. (pages _____ – _____) In this passage/section of *Wish You Well*, _____

Part 2. Choose a partner or work alone. Select one of the above passages or sections, one of your partner's, or one shared in class discussion to work with for this exercise. Think about what the passage or section means to you. What might you draw to symbolically represent this meaning?

Part 3. On a separate sheet of paper, draw a symbolic sketch to represent what the passage or section you selected in Part 2 means to you. Be sure to incorporate the ideas you wrote down in Part 2 into your sketch.

Part 4. Write an explanation of why you drew what you drew. Give evidence from the novel to support your interpretations, opinions, and ideas.
