

**Seven  
Steps  
to....**



# Profundity Means Depth

## The Profundity Scale as a Heuristic Construct

*Heuristic: Aiding or guiding in discovery. Inciting to find out.*

The Profundity Scale is a heuristic. It is a way of seeing through the surface of the story (physical plane) to the deep-level meaning at the theme or universal truth level. The lens, the story grammar, is clarified by what the author has intended to be understood: the setting, characters, problem, plot, events, and resolution. The seven planes of the Profundity Scale systematically organize thinking and give structure for delivering the core foundation of the text to find the lesson, theme, or principle. This “discovery” will ring true in other texts, in life, and in other content areas.

The Profundity Scale planes provide a perspective for comprehending something unknown through the known; promoting analogical and metaphorical thinking to solve problems and gain insights. It may provide an “ah ha” or give us unexpected insight. It is a heuristic device that leads us to discover new knowledge or new understandings.

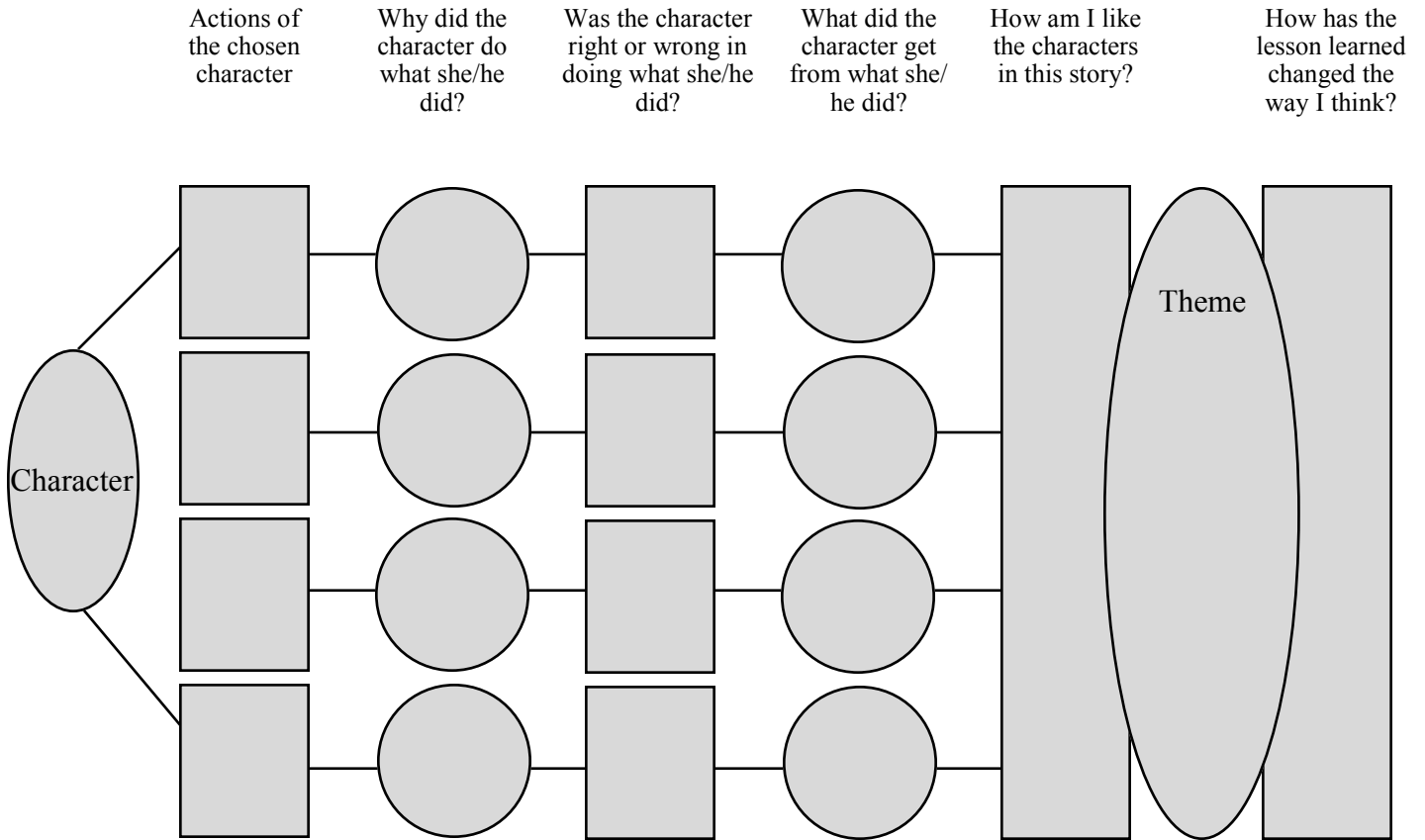
## Thematically Related Text Sets

Titles of paired texts	List four important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?

Jeff Beal, St Clair RESA

## How to Teach Profundity

# Teaching Profundity



Jeff Beal, St Clair RESA

## Interpreting Text

The reading process is an infinite process; it doesn't begin with the book we are reading and doesn't end with the last word of the book. It is always loaded with the memory of previous books and personal experiences.

Jacques Leenhardt

# Physical Plane

### Actions of Characters

#### Questions:

What did \_\_\_\_\_ do?  
What actions did \_\_\_\_\_ perform?



### Comprehension Strategies:

- Visualize
- Determine what is Important
- Summarize

### Example of Physical Plane

*Little Red Riding Hood*—What did Red Riding Hood do? (**Action**)

“Red” left home to visit grandmother with a basket and the safety advice of mother.

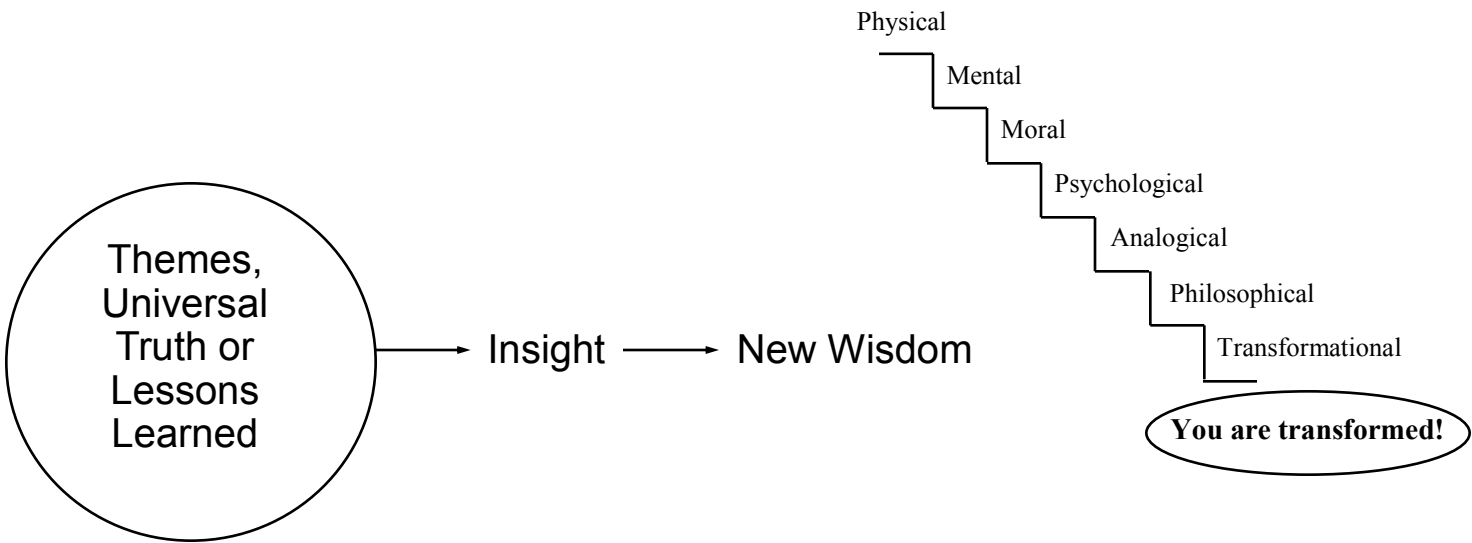
She stopped to pick wildflowers, watch butterflies and listen to the frogs.

She answered the questions of the friendly-sounding wolf.

She attracted the attention of the woodsman when she ran from grandmother’s house shouting “Help!”

*Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.*

(Mezirow, 2000, pp.7-8)



## Transformational Plane

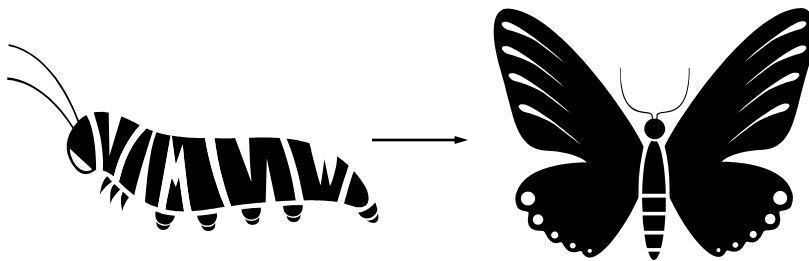
# Transformational Plane

**Questions:**

What did you learn that you could generalize to other stories or events in your life?  
 What is the big idea in the story that you can use to help yourself solve problems?  
 How has this story changed the way you think?

**Comprehension Strategies:**

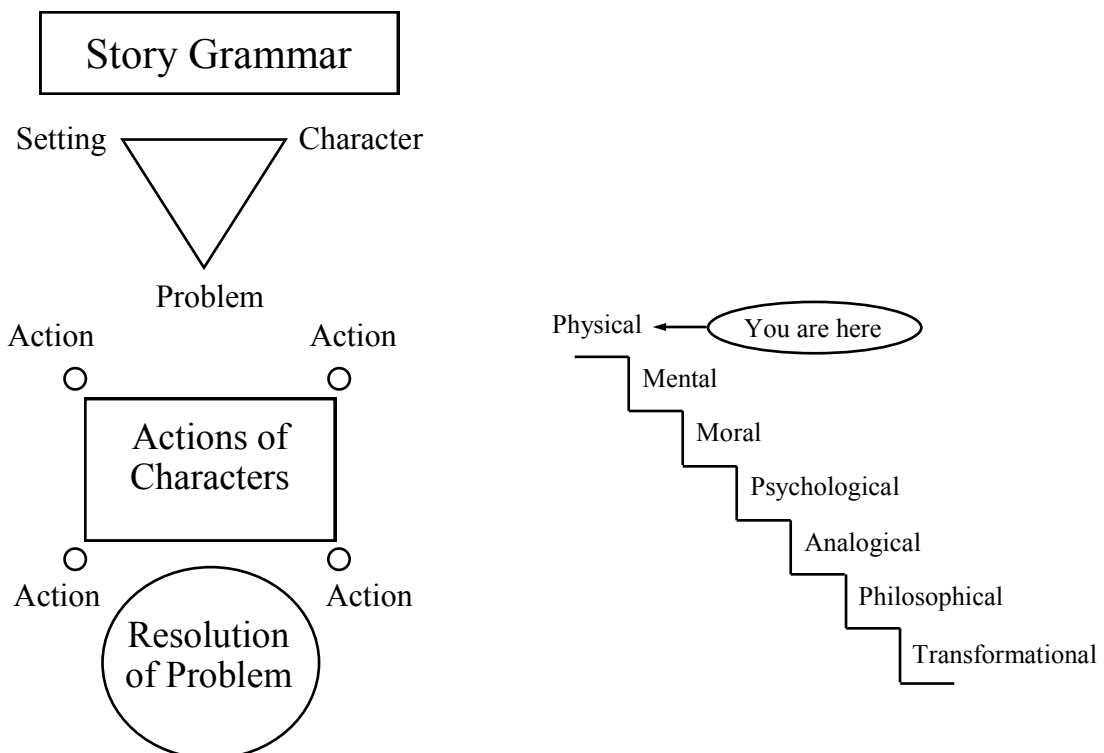
- Generalizing
- Connecting
- Generating



**Example of Transformational Plane**

*Little Red Riding Hood—How can this new wisdom change my life? (Transformation)*

Strength of rules is determined by consequences.  
 Most infractions of the law or rules must be negotiated through litigation.  
 No more black and white decisions about rules.  
 Choices influenced by consequences.  
 Balance your passion and your intellect.



**Physical Plane**

# Mental Plane

## Thoughts of Characters Questions:

What was the character thinking or feeling when s/he did \_\_\_\_\_?  
(State in 1st person)



## Comprehension Strategies:

- Infer
- Ask Questions
- Make Connections
- Determine what is Important

## Example of Mental Plane

*Little Red Riding Hood—Why did Red Riding Hood do what she did? (Intent)*

She wanted to visit her grandmother.

She wanted to enjoy the day picking flowers, watching butterflies, and listening to the frogs.

She wanted to share her adventure with someone.

She was trying to save her life.

## Example of Philosophical Plane

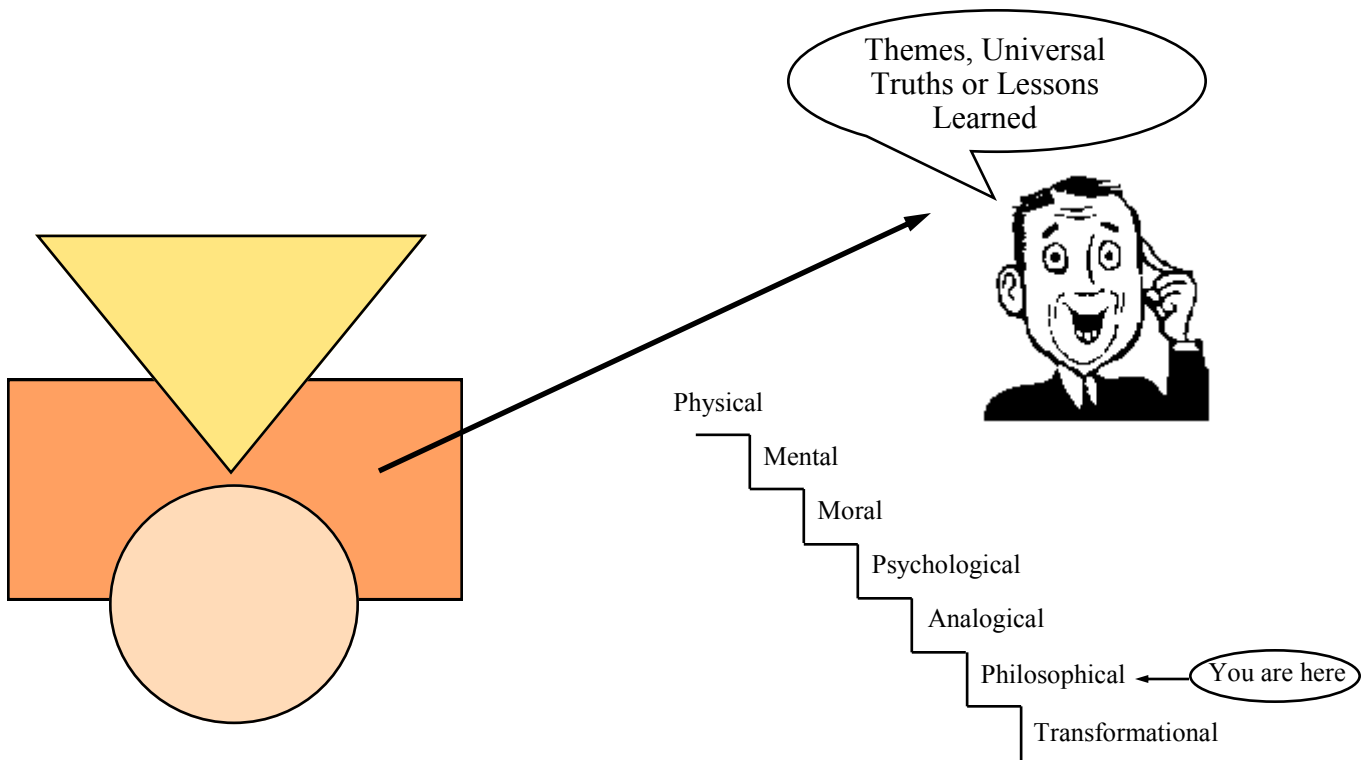
*Little Red Riding Hood—So what lessons can be learned from Red Riding Hood's actions and their consequences? (Abstract)*

Rules protect you.

You have it within you to protect yourself.

Choices we make have consequences.

Life is filled with temptations.



*All abstractions are simplifications in that they yield new and often multiple insights and meanings, using simplicity to reveal inobvious properties and hidden connections.*  
Root-Bernstein Sparks of Genius

# Philosophical Plane

# Philosophical Plane

**Questions:**

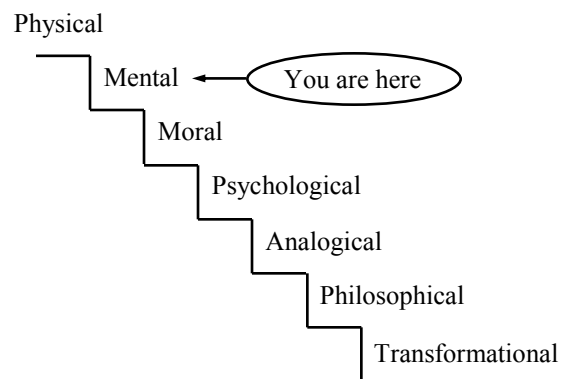
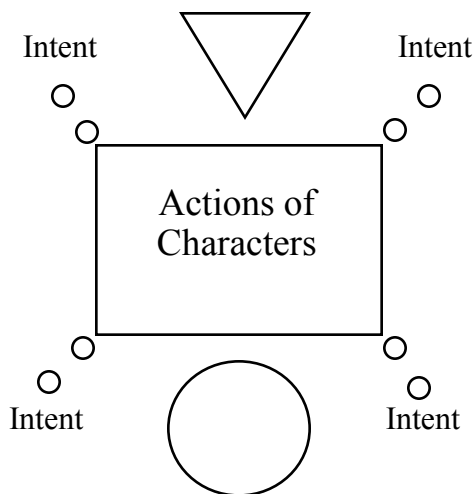
- What is the universal truth that can be derived from this story?
- What is the lesson learned from this story?
- What is the moral of this story?
- What is one word that describes the theme implied by this story?

**Comprehension Strategies:**

- Question
- Infer
- Determine what is Important
- Abstract

## Themes

- |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Symbols</li> <li>• Conflict</li> <li>• Beliefs/Facts</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• Interdependence</li> <li>• Wellness</li> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Commercialism</li> <li>• Cause and Effect</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Authority</li> <li>• Freedom &amp; Justice</li> <li>• Adversity</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Hope</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fate</li> <li>• Man vs. Man</li> <li>• Good and Evil</li> <li>• War</li> <li>• Prejudice</li> <li>• Censorship</li> <li>• Imagination</li> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Interactions</li> <li>• Patterns</li> <li>• Rhythm</li> <li>• Wealth</li> <li>• Exploration</li> <li>• Choices</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Tools</li> <li>• Accomplishment</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Institutions</li> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Dilemmas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identities</li> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Continuity</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> <li>• Survival</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity</li> <li>• Cycles</li> <li>• Courage</li> <li>• Heroism</li> <li>• Human Weakness</li> <li>• Pride</li> <li>• Truth</li> <li>• Man vs. Nature</li> <li>• Man vs. Society</li> <li>• Future</li> <li>• Adventure</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Happiness</li> <li>• Fantasy</li> <li>• Harmony</li> <li>• Invention</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power</li> <li>• Systems</li> <li>• Memories</li> <li>• Survival of the Fittest</li> <li>• Renewals</li> <li>• Success</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Revenge</li> <li>• Humor</li> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Perseverance</li> <li>• Necessity</li> <li>• Man's Inhumanity to Man</li> <li>• Social Issues</li> <li>• Abundance/Scarcity</li> <li>• Acceptance/Rejection</li> <li>• Adaptation</li> <li>• Aging/Maturity</li> <li>• Balance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Defense/Protection</li> <li>• Discovery</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Equilibrium</li> <li>• Evolution</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Honor</li> <li>• Order</li> <li>• Production/Consumption</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|--|--|



## Mental Plane

# Moral Plane

*The best we can hope for is that we be aware of our own perspective and those of others when we make our claims of “rightness” and “wrongness”*  
 Jerome Bruner, Acts of Meaning

**Questions:**

Do you agree or disagree that the character should have...?  
 Why or why not?  
 (Give both sides)



**Comprehension Strategies:**

- Summarize
- Infer
- Make Connections

**Example of Moral Plane**

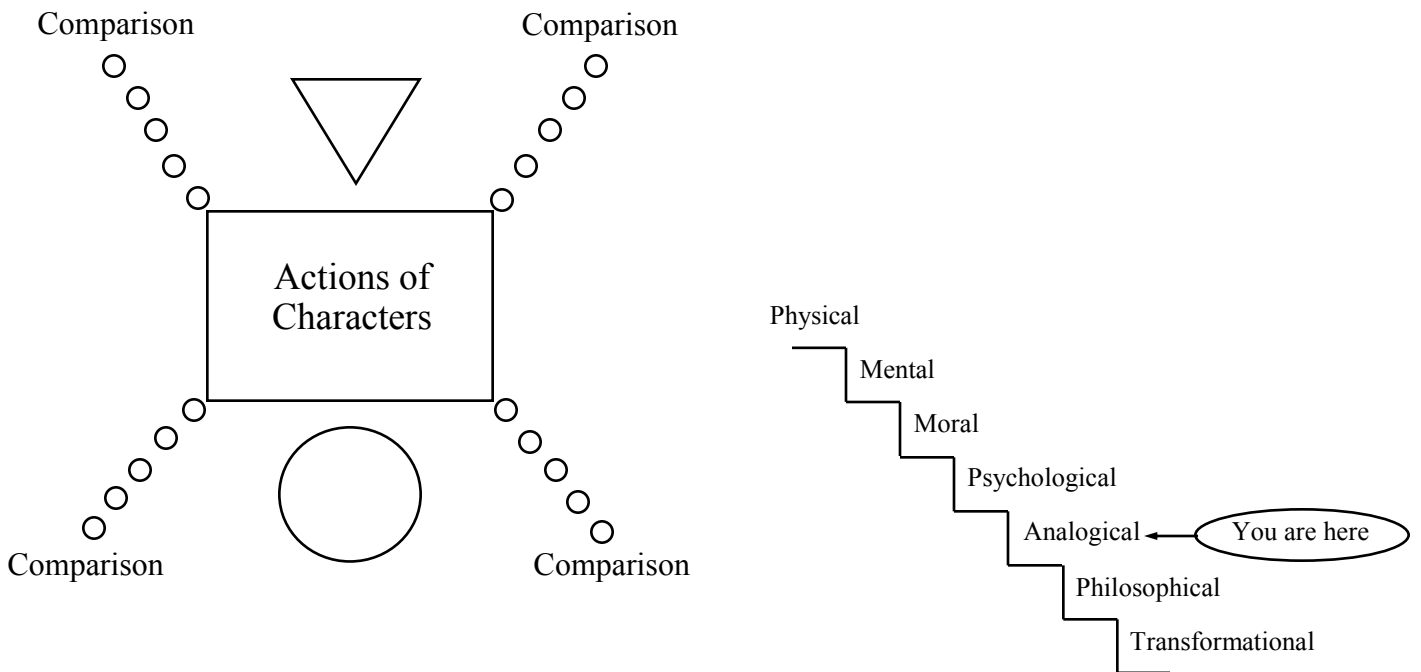
*Little Red Riding Hood—Did Red Riding Hood do the right thing? (Judgment)*

It is right that young people care enough about older people to visit them.

Modifying plans to enjoy the day is a good thing to do.

Speaking to strangers is dangerous and revealing the address of your destination is even more dangerous.

It was a good thing to take the initiative to save herself and her grandmother.



**Analogical Thinking**  
*When we seek out and find hidden identities of function and purpose, “degree by degree” we “surround” our perception of world and see with meaning. And then, suddenly, we understand.*

**Analogical Plane**



# Analogical Plane

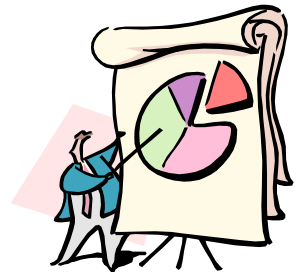
Analogy refers to functional resemblance between things that are otherwise unlike.

## Questions:

How are the characters in this story like you or other people you know?  
Do you know another story like this one?  
Are there events happening in the world that are similar to this story?

## Comprehension Strategies:

- Determine what is Important
- Make Connections



## Example of Analogical Plane

*Little Red Riding Hood*—How is Red Riding Hood connected to me, to the text I know, and to the outside world? (Comparison)

### Connection to Self

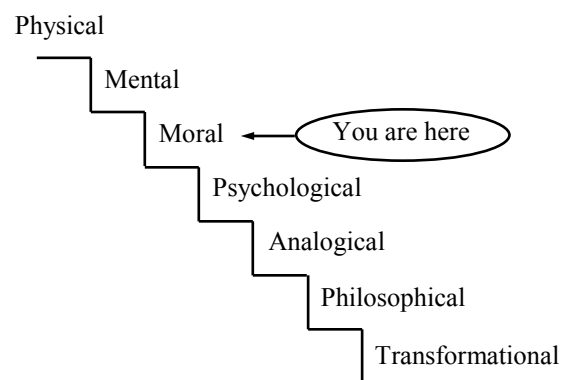
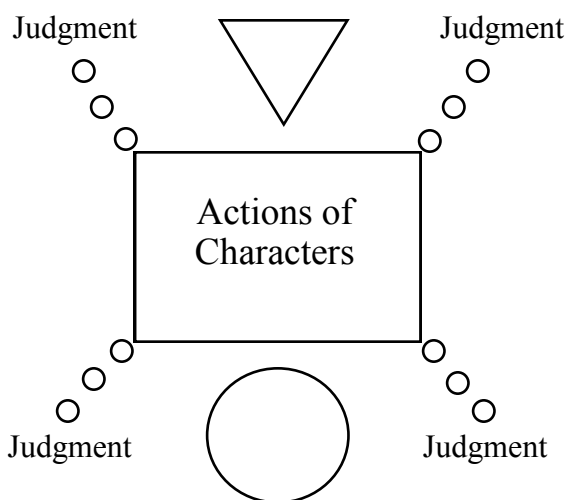
- Like Red, people do tend to bend the rules depending on the consequences.

### Connection to Text

- This story carries the theme of “life as a journey” where we are metaphorically faced with temptations and dangers to which we can respond with our passion or our intellect and do what is right or do what is wrong. This is like Homer’s *Odyssey*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* or R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*.

### Connection to the World

- Recent scandal reports of corporate CEOs not following the rules to misuse money and power.
- Martha Stewart bent the rules governing stock trading and she tried to cry “Help,” but the “woodsman” didn’t hear her in time.



## Moral Plane

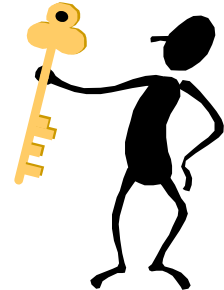
# Psychological Plane

## Questions:

What did she get from ....?  
Were there other reasons he acted like that ....?  
If you were in her shoes would you have done the same thing ....?  
How else could the problem have been solved ....?

## Comprehension Strategies:

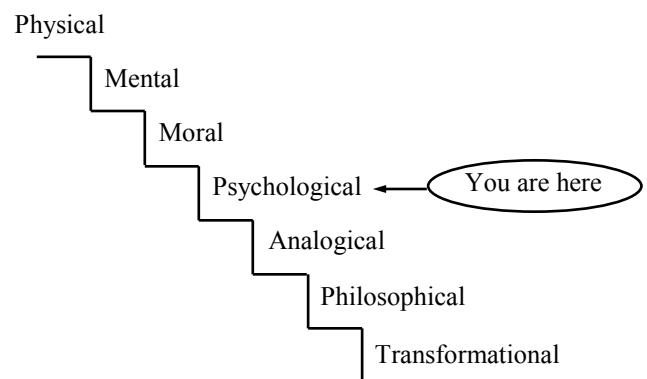
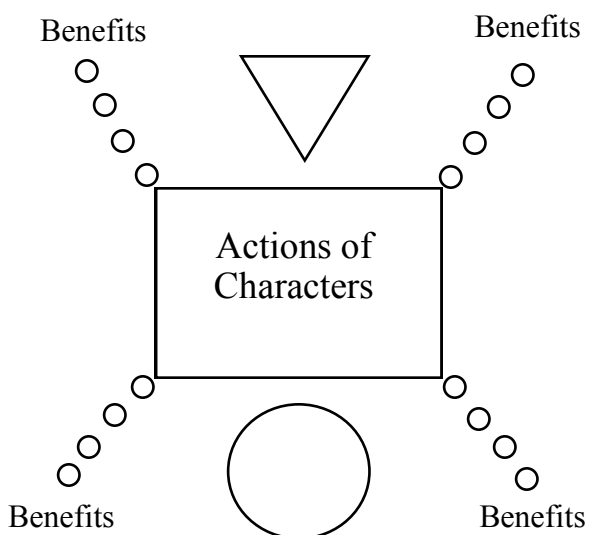
- Determine what is Important
- Make Connections



## Example of Psychological Plane

*Little Red Riding Hood—How did Red Riding Hood benefit from her actions? (Benefits)*

This gave “Red” an opportunity to visit her grandmother and enjoy her company.  
She could enjoy the outdoors plus have freshly-picked flowers for her grandmother.  
She had an opportunity to share her travel plans with another person.  
She was saved by the woodsman.



# Selecting a Narrative Text for Profundity

Hooking students on meaning from reading begins with the selection of the text. Choose stories that have the potential for engaging the student in deep levels of comprehension.

- First, identify the story grammar
  - Setting
  - Characters
  - Problem/goal
  - Events leading to solution/resolution
  - Solution/resolution
- Second, consider the characters. Are the characters sufficiently complex to allow the students to make decisions about the characters' actions or thoughts?
- Third, does the story have the potential for learning a lesson? Is there a universal truth that will lead to new insights, new considerations or solutions to problems?
- Finally, it is important to select books that have meaty themes or truths, but not themes that are beyond the concern or experiences of young readers.

With your students create a seminal selection experience by selecting a story that provides a good strong fit with criteria and provides a rich reading/thinking experience. You will then prepare students to begin to choose their own stories for rich and rewarding reading and thinking.

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