

## Organizational Patterns in Children's Literature

### Common Theme Patterns

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciate/take care of what you have / there's no place like home</li> <li>• Following directions / advice is wise</li> <li>• It's best to be honest</li> <li>• Look out for one another/ work for fairness</li> <li>• Relationships/friendships take work</li> <li>• Be yourself / believe in yourself</li> <li>• Our choices have consequences</li> <li>• Following directions / advice is wise</li> <li>• Acceptance/differences are good/ not everything can be changed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things are not always what they seem</li> <li>• Underdogs often save the day</li> <li>• Persistence/hard work pays off</li> <li>• Teamwork is better than working alone</li> <li>• Use resources available to help yourself &amp;/or others</li> <li>• Challenges/danger can be overcome by problem-solving</li> <li>• Adversity often makes us stronger</li> <li>• Sacrificing for others is the highest kindness</li> <li>• Good usually triumphs over bad</li> </ul> |
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**Characters are rewarded for internal character traits and/or willingness to change. Rewards can be external with praise and prizes or internal with pride or personal satisfaction or both.**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtful/ conscientious/ reflective/pensive</li> <li>• Caring/ compassionate</li> <li>• Brave/courageous /heroic</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Giving/benevolent</li> <li>• Efficient</li> <li>• Meticulous / precise</li> <li>• Organized/ orderly</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> <li>• Flexible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reliant / independent</li> <li>• Generous</li> <li>• Resilient</li> <li>• Dependable/ responsible / steady/ trustworthy</li> <li>• Curious</li> <li>• Protective</li> <li>• Observant</li> <li>• Confident in self/others</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kind</li> <li>• Determined/ Persistent</li> <li>• Hopeful</li> <li>• Creative / imaginative / resourceful</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Focused on goals</li> <li>• Forgiving / gracious / understanding</li> <li>• Risk-taker</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honest/ genuine</li> <li>• Clear-headed / rational</li> <li>• Wise / insightful /clever/ perceptive</li> <li>• Hard-working</li> <li>• Self-sacrificing</li> <li>• Honorable/ upright/admirable</li> <li>• Loyal/ faithful</li> <li>• Thankful/ appreciative</li> </ul> |
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**In response to events, characters work to overcome internal challenges with negative reactions or to overcome challenges presented by characters with negative traits. Negative consequences usually appear for not changing/overcoming negative traits that include loss of praise, prizes and/or relationships.**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive/disruptive</li> <li>• Authoritarian/bossy/ strict/willful</li> <li>• Casual/undisciplined/ unconcerned/ mellow</li> <li>• Overly cautious / reserved/ hesitant /shy</li> <li>• Old-fashioned /unwilling to change</li> <li>• Inflexible/stubborn/ rigid</li> <li>• Thoughtless/sloppy/ careless/absentminded</li> <li>• Cantankerous/ grumpy/ irritable</li> <li>• Angry/hostile</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untrusting/ skeptical</li> <li>• Self-conscious/ self-doubt</li> <li>• Unmotivated/ unambitious/ lazy</li> <li>• Pre-occupied/ unfocused/ distracted</li> <li>• Worried/anxious</li> <li>• Artificial/ false/ superficial/ insincere</li> <li>• Perfectionist</li> <li>• Greedy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fearful</li> <li>• Critical</li> <li>• Dishonest/sly/ deceitful/scheming</li> <li>• Demanding</li> <li>• Prideful</li> <li>• Irrational</li> <li>• Irresponsible</li> <li>• Meddlesome/ troublesome</li> <li>• Selfish/ miserly/ possessive</li> <li>• Thoughtless</li> <li>• Self-absorbed</li> <li>• Envious</li> <li>• Pessimistic</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtless / impulsive</li> <li>• Unreliable</li> <li>• Ungrateful</li> <li>• Shortsighted/ single-minded</li> <li>• Uncaring/ cold-hearted</li> <li>• Dependent/ reliant on others</li> <li>• Easily discouraged/ fickle</li> <li>• Disloyal</li> <li>• Wasteful/frivolous</li> <li>• Excitable/jumpy</li> </ul> |
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**Characters search for/want what they don't have. They either find what they are looking for or realize that what they wanted isn't so great/isn't attainable/was already in their possession. Rewards come from getting what they want and/or what was learned along the way.**

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| • sense of belonging                             | • friendship/love                        | • being accepted/<br>understood | • self-acceptance  |
| • self-identity                                  | • realizing what is<br>important in life | • answers/ information          | • fairness/justice |
| • tolerance and<br>understanding<br>about others | • peace from<br>struggles                | • self-confidence               | • return to normal |
|  |  | • change their world            | • ability to trust |

**Common story structures**

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|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| • lost and found                 | • overcoming<br>adversity                     | • forming friendships/<br>relationships | • what is first<br>rejected<br>becomes<br>important later |
| • crime and<br>punishment        | • turning tables<br>on tricksters/<br>bullies | • mending friendships/<br>relationships |   |
| • adventure/ quest               |   | • ending friendships/<br>relationships  |   |
| • impossible<br>becomes possible |   |   |   |

**Basic conflict patterns within structures**

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|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • character vs. self | • character vs.<br>character | • character vs. society | • character vs.<br>nature |
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**Consequences from not changing**

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • loss of friends/<br>loneliness | • guilt/remorse<br>• sadness | • punishment<br>• looking foolish | • loss of rewards<br>• loss of faith in... |
| • becoming outcast               |                              |                                   |  |