



INKLINGS

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

Fall 2010, Volume 10, Issue 3

Current Project List

- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources**
Interpretive Exhibit Mgmt.
Indiana Dunes SP
Turkey Run SP

Interpretive Planning
Chain O' Lakes SP

Interpretive Sign
Brown County SP
- **Bloomington Parks and Recreation (IN)**
B-Line Trail signs, Phase II
- **Noblesville Stormwater Management (IN)**
Interpretive Signs
- **Elkhart County Parks (IN)**
Interpretive Sign Design
- **Chikaming Open Lands (MI)**
Interpretive Sign and Brochure Design
- **City of Grand Ledge (MI)**
Interpretive Sign Design

Interpretive Themes

A good theme will save hours of time

Lise Schools

The hardest part of a project is developing an interpretive theme statement. It requires an understanding of the topic, the audience and the agency represented. It also requires time to get wording that provokes the reader to want to learn more. Once a good theme is developed, however, the hard work is done. The project creates itself.

A theme will lead the visitor to ask questions. For example:

Theme: Camp Glenn represented a period when our nation encouraged civilian readiness. This is a theme that provokes the questions:

- What was that period the result of?
- What was done to encourage civilian readiness?
- Was it successful?

These questions provide the basis of text and graphics. They also focus the media (sign, exhibit) on one concise theme.

Another example, taking it one step further:

Theme: As the Wabash river nears the end of its 475-mile journey, it takes on a Southern appearance.

Diagrammed out from the theme, it might look like this:

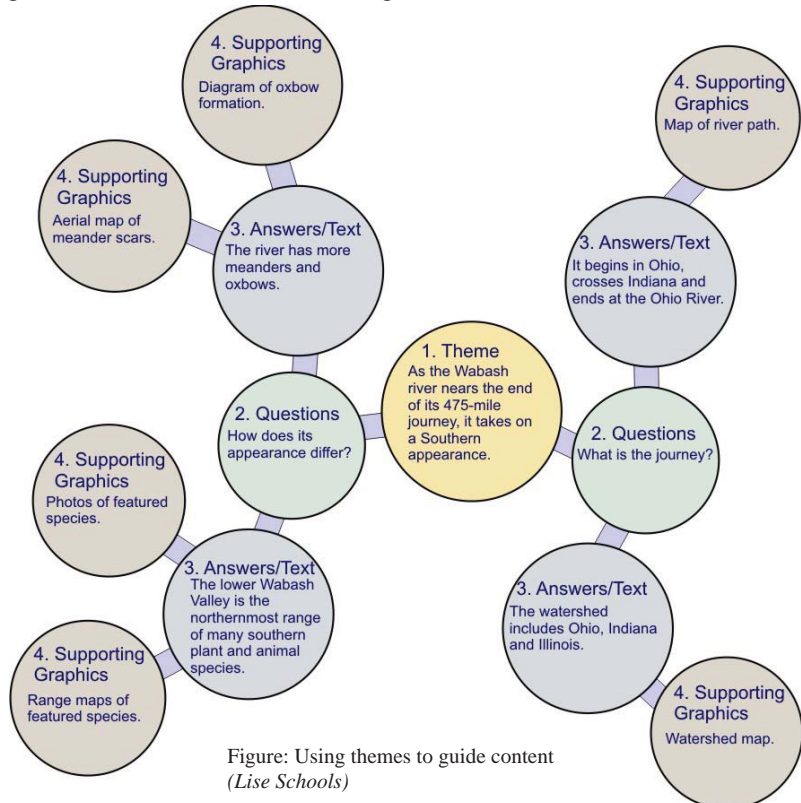


Figure: Using themes to guide content
(Lise Schools)

INKLINGS is available in pdf format. To get on the pdf list, contact lise@interpretiveideas.com



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Or in outline format:

Questions:

1. What is its journey?

a. *Answer/text:* it begins in Ohio, crosses Indiana and ends at the Ohio River, forming the Indiana/Illinois border. The watershed includes Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Possible Graphics: Map of the river path

b. *Answer/text:* The watershed includes Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Possible Graphics: Watershed map.

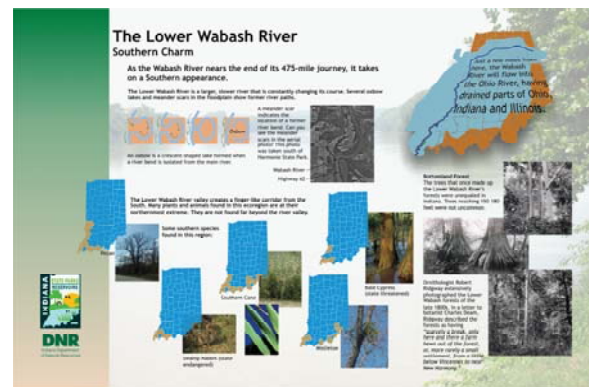
2. How does its appearance differ from the northern portion of the river?

a. *Answer/text:* The river has more meanders and oxbows. The elevation drop is more gradual.

Possible Graphics: Diagram of how oxbows form, aerial photo of meander scars

b. *Answer/text:* The lower Wabash valley is the northernmost edge of many southern plant and animal species.

Possible Graphics: Photos and range maps of featured southern species.



Finished sign using theme to define content

In either format, the project has taken shape as a result of an interpretive theme.

Creating a good interpretive theme is the hard part of any project. Once created, however, the project will easily fall into place.