

Theme v. Thematic Topic

- A _____ is the subject of a work of literature.
- It is usually stated in a _____.
- The following words/phrase are types of theme topics:
 - Appearance v. Reality -- Greed
 - Madness -- Love
 - Morality -- Bravery
 - Doubt -- Heroism
 - Revenge -- Beauty
 - Individuality and unity -- Cruelty
- Look at the back of these notes for a thorough list of thematic topics.
- A work of literature conveys a central idea about life or human nature called a _____.
It is stated in a _____.
- Here are examples of theme statements:
 - Love is the greatest gift of all.
 - Money can't buy you love.
 - A gift must come from the heart.
 - Beauty comes from within.
 - Inability to admit guilt hinders our ability to find joy.
- Therefore:
 - A theme is _____

_____.
 - This observation or theme should be _____ throughout
the entire work of literature—not just in one spot.

101 Common Theme Topics

Think about the story/poem you just read. Is the author saying something about one of the topics below? Your answer to that question probably works as a theme statement. Use this list to help you write a theme statement.

- Appearance v. reality
- Beauty of simplicity
- Capitalism – effect on the individual
- Change of power - necessity
- Change versus tradition
- Chaos and order
- Character – destruction, building up
- Circle of life
- Coming of age
- Communication – verbal and nonverbal
- Companionship as salvation
- Convention and rebellion
- Dangers of ignorance
- Darkness and light
- Death – inevitable or tragedy
- Desire to escape
- Destruction of beauty
- Disillusionment and dreams
- Displacement
- Empowerment
- Emptiness of attaining false dream
- Everlasting love
- Evils of racism
- Facing darkness
- Facing reality
- Fading beauty
- Faith versus doubt
- Family – blessing or curse
- Fate and free will
- Fear of failure
- Female roles
- Fulfillment
- Good versus bad
- Greed as downfall
- Growing up – pain or pleasure
- Hazards of passing judgment
- Heartbreak of betrayal
- Heroism – real and perceived
- Hierarchy in nature
- Identity crisis
- Illusion of power
- Immortality
- Individual versus society
- Inner versus outer strength
- Injustice
- Isolation
- Isolationism - hazards
- Knowledge versus ignorance
- Loneliness as destructive force
- Losing hope
- Loss of innocence
- Lost honor
- Lost love
- Love and sacrifice
- Man against nature
- Manipulation
- Materialism as downfall
- Motherhood
- Names – power and significance
- Nationalism – complications
- Nature as beauty
- Necessity of work
- Oppression of women
- Optimism – power or folly
- Overcoming – fear, weakness, vice
- Patriotism – positive side or complications
- Power and corruption
- Power of silence
- Power of tradition
- Power of wealth
- Power of words
- Pride and downfall
- Progress – real or illusion
- Quest for discovery
- Quest for power
- Rebirth
- Reunion
- Role of men
- Role of Religion – virtue or hypocrisy
- Role of women
- Self – inner and outer
- Self-awareness
- Self-preservation
- Self-reliance
- Social mobility
- Technology in society – good or bad
- Temporary nature of physical beauty
- Temptation and destruction
- Totalitarianism
- Vanity as downfall
- Vulnerability of the meek
- Vulnerability of the strong
- War – glory, necessity, pain, tragedy
- Will to survive
- Wisdom of experience
- Working class struggles
- Youth and beauty