
Thematic Concepts & Thematic Statements

Theme Anchor Chart

A **thematic concept/topic** is **one word or short phrase** that is an **abstract** concept that the work explores.

Examples:

- Injustice
- Love
- Isolation
- Losing hope
- Man against Nature
- Social Mobility

- A **thematic statement** is a complete **sentence** that expresses a **theme**.
- A thematic statement will state what the **author** is saying about a **thematic concept**.
- A thematic statement is **universal**. It can apply to any culture or time period.

1. A theme is **not one word**. That is a topic.

Bad example 1: The theme is love.

2. A theme is **not a definition or a statement of fact**.

Bad example 2: Love is when you have feelings for someone.

3. A theme is **not specifically about one story or character**;
rather, it is universal.

Bad example 3: Romeo and Juliet acted too hastily in their
decisions about love.

Some **GOOD** Theme Examples

Concept /Topic: **Love**

Unconditional love withstands any obstacle.

Concept / Topic: **Hope**

Hope can help a person to survive any dark time.

Concept / Topic: **Courage**

True courage means facing one's fears, even when an individual knows he is already defeated.

Concept / Topic: **Jealousy**

Jealousy can cause lasting damage to individuals and relationships.

When discussing theme...

- ★ **Provide** more than just a factual statement. Identify a universal message.
- ★ **Avoid** using statements that are clichés (statements that are overused and too general)
 - **Ex.** Don't judge a book by its cover.
 - When life gives you lemons, you should make lemonade.
- ★ **Identify** elements of the text that develop the theme (setting, characterization, plot, point of view, literary elements, etc.).
- ★ **Explain** how those elements develop theme.

Steps that lead to a thematic statement

1. Think about a **key idea** of the story.
2. How does that **key idea** convey a **message or lesson** within the context it is discussed?
3. Identify some **thematic concepts**.
4. After choosing one **thematic concept**, articulate what the author wants **to teach, change, or show** about that topic.
 - The thematic concept/topic you identified should be in the thematic statement.
 - Ex. If your thematic topic is determination, the word “determination” should appear in your thematic statement.

Helpful templates for theme statements

Without [thematic concept], an individual [consequence].

Without [thematic concept,] society will [consequence].

[Thematic concept] is necessary for individuals to be able to....

[Thematic concept] prevent individuals from being able to...

A society [with/without] [thematic concept] is...

A society that does not value [thematic concept] is...

Unless the individual has [thematic concept], they will [not/never] be able to...

An individual will only be able to [have thematic concept] if...

Sample thematic statements

Ex. [Thematic concept] promotes...

Ex: **Feminism** promotes self-belief and the confidence to challenge the limits that society often places on females.

[Thematic concept] is more important than...

Ex: **Family** and **respect** are more important than maintaining power.

Text	Quote	What does this mean?	Theme Concepts	Theme Statement
<p><i>Of Mice and Men</i></p>	<p>“Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They belong to no place... With us it ain’t like that. We got a future. We got someone to talk that gives a damn about us.”</p>	<p>Even though George and Lennie shouldn’t be optimistic, they are still looking towards the future because they support each other.</p>	<p>Friendship Hope Home Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having a someone to consider family, even if they’re not biologically related, is necessary for one to maintain hope for their future. -Without a sense of belonging or family, an individual cannot maintain hope for their future. -Having support from a friend will give one a sense of belonging, even if they don’t necessarily have a physical home or biological family