Theme

Study Guide

You will have a formative test on theme on Friday, October 8.

Central Idea: What the text (story, poem, etc.) is mostly about.

Topic: Two or three words that sum up what the text is about.

Theme: The life lesson or message that the author wants the reader to understand.

* A complete sentence
* Examples: Don’t be greedy. Different people have different ideas about beauty. Change can be both sad and exciting.

**How do I identify the theme?**

Identify the most important details, then ask yourself: What is the lesson learned?

Most themes are implicit, or implied, and you have to infer them. To make a reasonable guess, you have to consider certain clues. The elements in the chart serve as clues to the theme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title | The title may hint at a theme by highlighting an important idea, setting, image, or character. Ask:   * To what in the story does the title refer? * What ideas does the title emphasize? |
| Plot and Conflict | A story’s plot often focuses on a conflict that is important to the theme. Ask:   * What conflicts do the characters face? * How are the conflicts resolved? |
| Characters and Actions | Characters can reflect a theme through their actions, thoughts, and words. Ask:   * What do the main characters do and say? * How do the characters deal with the conflicts? * What lessons do the characters learn? |
| Setting, Images, and Stylistic Elements | The setting, images, and stylistic elements an author uses can suggest a theme. Ask:   * What aspects of the setting does the author emphasize? * What stylistic elements, such as traditional motifs, or recurring ideas, does the author include? * What images stand out as especially memorable? * What conflicts does the setting create? |