

PREVIEW

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Theme

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Theme

- **Theme** is the central idea of a work of literature that depicts a message or moral from the author.
- Theme is not just one word, such as "love" or "war." It must be a concept expressed using a complete sentence, in message form, such as: "love requires sacrifice," or "war can turn ordinary people into heroes."
- Stories can contain more than one theme.

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Universal Theme

- A theme is not specific to one person or setting. It must be **universal**.
- You can express the same message to someone living in France in 1805 that can also be said to someone living in America in 1970.
- It is a timeless message.

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Finding Theme

Ask: What message is the author trying to tell me?

Concept → Message → Universal = Theme

For example, a concept from a text = Love.
But, love is not a message. A complete theme = Love is risky and irrational.

You can warn anyone from any time period that love is risky and irrational. It's universal.

Theme doesn't have to be a true statement; it is just the opinion of the author based on evidence from the story.

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Example

Cinderella

Concept = family

What is the author trying to tell me?

Message = If you put up with your evil step-family, a fairy Godmother will help you find a husband

Make it universal = If you are a good person, good things will come your way

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Practice

Directions:

- Number your paper 1-10.
- Analyze each incomplete theme to the best of your knowledge and re-write a complete theme for each story. (more than one correct answer)

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1

PREVIEW

The Three Little Pigs
Incomplete theme:

Do not build your house
of straw because a wolf
will come blow it down

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1

PREVIEW

The Three Little Pigs

**Complete theme: Make
wise decisions to protect
yourself or criminals will
take advantage of you**

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2

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Pinocchio

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Incomplete theme:

If you lie, your nose will
grow

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2

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Pinocchio

Complete theme:

**Lying is wrong and there
are consequences**

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3

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The Boy Who Cried Wolf

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Incomplete theme:

Dishonesty

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3

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The Boy Who Cried Wolf

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Complete theme:

**If you are always dishonest,
people will never believe
you, even when you tell the
truth**

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The Little Mermaid

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Incomplete theme:

Sacrifice

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The Little Mermaid

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**Complete theme:
Sacrifice is necessary
when it comes to
getting what you want**

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Finding Nemo

Incomplete theme:

If you disobey your father,
you will face killer sharks
and grave danger

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Finding Nemo

Complete theme:

**Listen to your parents
who are trying to protect
you**

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Aladdin

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Incomplete theme:

Wealth and poverty

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6

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Aladdin

Complete theme:

**Being yourself is
more important than
being rich**

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7

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Toy Story

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Incomplete theme:

Friendship

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Toy Story

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Complete theme:

**Friendship is a vital part
of life**

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8

PREVIEW Frozen

Incomplete theme:

If you are different because
you have magical powers,
you should run away from
home and forget about your
family

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Frozen

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**Complete theme: Let go
of your past choices, and
focus on the future**

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9

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Hansel and Gretel

Incomplete theme:

Even old ladies can turn
out to be evil witches who
want to kill you

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Hansel and Gretel

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**Complete theme: Even
the least suspecting
people can be villainous,
so be careful who you
trust**

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10

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How the Grinch Stole
Christmas

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Incomplete theme:

Even if you try to steal Christmas
from a whole community, the
townspeople will still forgive you

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10

PREVIEW

How the Grinch Stole
Christmas

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**Complete theme: People
will likely forgive those who
feel remorse**

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Name:

Class:

Theme Notes

Theme

• **Theme** is the central idea of a work of literature that depicts _____ from the author.

• Theme is not just _____, such as "love" or "war." It must be a concept expressed using a complete sentence, in message form, such as: "love requires sacrifice," or "war can turn ordinary people into heroes."

• Stories can contain more than one theme.

Universal Theme

• A theme is not specific to one _____. It must be universal.

• You can express the same message to someone living in France in 1805 that can also be said to someone living in America in 1970.

• It is a _____ message.

Finding Theme

Ask: What message is the author trying to tell me?

_____ → _____ = Theme

For example, a concept from a text = Love. But, love is not a message.

A complete theme = Love is risky and irrational.

You can warn anyone from any time period that love is risky and irrational.

Theme doesn't have to be a _____ statement; it is just the opinion of the author based on evidence from the story.

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Make it universal = If you are a good person, good things will come your way