

Theme Study Guide

Terminology and Analysis Application:

Theme—the central idea, or insight, about life or human behavior that a story reveals

Theme Revelation in text:

- The theme is not stated directly. Instead, it is revealed to us through the characters' experiences.
- What does theme generalize? *Theme* is a **generalization** about life or human nature.

Universal Themes: (Know all of these facts-I may ask you about all 4)

- come up again and again (repetition) in literature (this is called a literary motif)
- **deal with basic human concerns—Themes: good and evil, life and death, love and loss**
- shine a light on our common experiences
- help guide us through our lives

Finding the Theme:

- The theme is not the same thing as the subject
- The **subject** is simply the topic. It can be stated in a single word, such as *loyalty*
- The **theme** makes some revelation about the subject and should be expressed in a sentence: "Loyalty to a leader is not always noble."

Conflict Reveals Theme: Think about this: What is the **conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces, that the main character faces?

Conflict

Two friends find a wallet. One friend wants to return it to the owner; the other wants to keep it.

Resolution

They return the wallet and share a small reward.

THEME

People are often rewarded for making the right moral decision.

Be prepared to analyze several examples like the one above previously studied in class.

Here are two examples for your practice. After reading the conflict and resolution, develop a theme (expressed in a sentence) in the same format as the on page 1 in the **conflict** section.

A Moral Story: Clever Thief

Let us enjoy reading this story of **Clever Thief**.

Devan was one of the evil king's men and a clever thief. He stole from the rich, which included the king, and gave all to the sick and the needy villagers. The King had no mercy for his starving people so he ruled as if they did not exist and were of small importance to the matters of the kingdom.

The other soldier's were jealous because the townspeople admired Devan. They planned to get rid of him by challenging him to do the impossible, steal the evil King's Pajamas.

Devan accepted the challenge. After that he prepared to execute the new challenge. He charted out a plan to steal from King. He prepared himself mentally to carry out a plan.

He went to the evil King's palace and found him sleeping. He opened a bottle of red ants on the bed. The King was badly bitten. In the midst of the bites he cried for help. The servants, (whom were also townspeople suffering from the wrath of the king), rushed in. They pretended to look for ants. Devan removed the King's Pajamas and escaped. The other soldiers were dumb founded.

They accepted Devan as the lead soldier because of his cleverness.
