

The Elements of Theme

A theme is an **abstract concept** and is the distillation of an author's ideas and feelings about a particular subject developed throughout the written work. It deals with what the author believes it means to be human and with moral and philosophical beliefs and implications for us as members of the reading audience.

When writing about a theme, it is important to remember that the author has taken an entire written work to develop the thought and feeling about a particular subject. **Be very careful about giving a full attempt at analyzing the theme. Avoid simplicity or generalizations.** A sentence or paragraph is not sufficient to present the evidence and development required for thematic explication.

The author rarely announces a theme boldly, rather, themes are discerned by examining the totality of a work and developed by looking closely at all elements such as **title, tone, characterization, setting, irony, timelessness, plot or structure, language and point of view.**