**The Literary Element of *Theme***

The original meaning of *theme:* from Latin thema, from Greek, literally, something laid down, from tithenai to place.

From: (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/theme)

**Theme:**

• the central, underlying, and controlling idea or insight of a work of literature.

• the idea the writer wishes to convey about the subject—the writer’s view of the world or a revelation about human nature.

**Identifying the Theme in Five Steps** The WR121 [**Story chart**](https://www.classfolios.org/learningresource/storycharting2.doc) may help in finding a theme, and the primary conflict in the story.

Use these steps to determine the theme for a work ***as you understand it****.*:

1. Summarize the plot by writing a one-sentence description for the exposition, the conflict, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the resolution.
2. Identify the subject of the work. This may change with more analysis.
3. Identify the insight or truth that you learned about the subject.

• How did the protagonist change?

• What lesson did the protagonist learn from the resolution of the conflict?

4. State how the plot presents the primary insight or truth about the subject.

5. Write one or more generalized, declarative sentences that state what was learned and how it was learned.

**Theme Litmus Test**

1. **How does the title relate to/reveal a possible theme?**
2. What specific evidence from the story supports the theme?
3. How are the author’s choices of plot, character, conflict, and tone controlled by this theme?