



Module 3: Self-Discovery Through Moments of Weakness
Topic 4 Content: Writing a Theme Analysis

Introduction

Writing a Theme Analysis

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How do you analyze a literary work for theme and then write a theme analysis? Click on each of the dots to learn more about exploring theme, creating a thematic statement, and writing a theme analysis.



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Exploring Theme within a Literary Text

The screenshot shows a digital learning interface. At the top, a dark header contains the text 'Writing a Theme Analysis'. Below this, a white box contains the sub-section title 'Exploring Theme within a Literary Text'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a paragraph of text and a bulleted list of elements to look for. The right column features a dark rectangular graphic with the text 'Explore Theme' written in a white, chalk-like font. Below the text area, a progress bar consists of three colored arrows pointing right: green, red, and blue. A small white box with the text 'Exploring Theme within a Literary Text' is positioned above the green arrow, indicating the current step in the process.

Writing a Theme Analysis

Exploring Theme within a Literary Text

As you explore theme within a literary text, you must ask yourself the following question, "What universal concepts are present throughout this text?" As you explore the text, read for the following elements:

- The character's actions and thoughts
- The character's tone
- The movement of the plot
- Repeated images or symbols
- Figurative language
- Diction/language used

As you read, draw connections and identify dominant themes within the text. Once you have identified themes, you are ready to move into

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The Theme Analysis and Thematic Statement

Writing a Theme Analysis

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Before you write your theme analysis, you must choose your focus. Although you will find multiple themes within a text, you must choose the dominant theme. A dominant theme is a theme that is present throughout the entire literary piece. Choose the dominant theme, and create your thematic statement.

The thematic statement usually starts as a theme/subject and evolves into a statement. Within your thematic statement, you are discussing what is being revealed. Review some guidelines about writing a thematic statement below:

- When creating your thematic statement, do not refer to specific names or events from the

Create a Thematic Statement

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The thematic statement usually starts as a theme/subject and evolves into a statement. Within your thematic statement, you are discussing what is being revealed. Review some guidelines about writing a thematic statement below:

- When creating your thematic statement, do not refer to specific names or events from the literary text. A theme reflects upon the literary pieces. Instead of using specific names from the text, you are to use general words such as “individuals,” “young adults,” “society,” etc.
- Stay away from clichés. Examples such as, “Don’t worry be happy,” or “Actions speak louder than words” are not appropriate thematic statements.
- A theme is not a moral. It does not give an order. A theme does not tell us how to behave and it does not judge. When writing your thematic statement, stay away from words such as “should” or “ought.” For example, “Don’t use drugs,” is not a thematic statement.
- When creating your thematic statement do not use absolute terms. Do not use words such as “all,” “none,” “everything,” or “always.” Use words such as “we,” “sometimes,” or “often.”

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- View the following example of a thematic statement dealing with Man/Woman vs. Fate:
Although we have the free will to choose our own path, we cannot escape our pre-determined path.

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Organizing Your Theme Analysis

Writing a Theme Analysis

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Within a theme analysis, your thematic statement is your central idea. Once you have your thematic statement, organize your thoughts and produce an effective and sound theme analysis. When organizing your theme analysis, follow the standard essay format: introduction with thematic statement, body paragraphs with topic sentences, and conclusion.

Introduction: Begin with an attention grabber; briefly introduce the text and topic and connect to a thematic statement.

Body Paragraphs: Begin with a topic sentence. Your topic sentence should provide the reader with the focus of the body paragraph. It must connect

Introduction
↓
Body Paragraphs
↓
Conclusion

Organizing Your Theme Analysis

Progress bar: Green arrow (selected), Red arrow, Blue arrow

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Body Paragraphs: Begin with a topic sentence. Your topic sentence should provide the reader with the focus of the body paragraph. It must connect to your thematic statement. Your body paragraph should elaborate on the focus of the thematic statement and the topic sentence. Provide details from the text as well as an analysis. If you decide to provide a quote or paraphrase ideas from the text, you must follow the proper format when citing material. For example, if you wanted to use a quote from Act II, Scene 3, Line 115, use the following format: “Quoted material from the literary text” (Act II, Scene 3, 115). If you paraphrased or summarized material from the Act II, Scene 3, Line 115, you do not need quotes; however, you are to use the parenthetical citations (Act II, Scene 3, 115). Once you are finished with the body paragraph, do not end with a quote; however, transition into the next body paragraph.

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Conclusion: When you are ready to bring your analysis to a close, do not begin with “In conclusion;” rather, focus on what was revealed. Connect the ideas expressed within your analysis with a real world connection, or a bigger picture issue.