

## Identifying Theme

### What is a theme?

- A theme is a general idea or insight the author wishes to share about life.
- A theme will not mention specific character names or specific plot line events as it is supposed to be able to be applied to other texts and other people.
- A theme must be a complete sentence.
- A theme must have textual evidence or proof from the text to support the idea.
- A theme is an idea, opinion, or generalization about the subject. The subject is what the text is about, but the **theme requires that an opinion be formed about the subject.**

#### Examples:

- The subject of "The Man Who Had No Eyes" could be: not giving up vs giving up.
- A theme for "The Man Who Had No Eyes" could be: We should overcome our unfortunate circumstances in life, and not let them get in the way of our success and happiness.

### Why are themes important to us?

- We learn things about life through the choices and experiences of others, that we may or may not have experienced ourselves.

#### Examples:

- if we watch someone burn their hand on a wood burning stove, we are going to learn from that person's experience. We will avoid touching a hot stove ourselves.
- If we read about a character who makes the right choices, and gains inner happiness from these choices, we can generalize that we might also experience success in the same way. If we learn from example, we might increase our inner self worth or happiness if we try to make similar good choices.

### Can there only be one theme for a text?

- A text will often have smaller sub-themes that work towards the larger theme
- Different people will often form different themes from the same text, and this is fine, and encouraged.
- What is important to remember is that any chosen theme must be supported with textual evidence or proof from the text itself.

### How do I determine the larger theme of a text?

- Examine the title and look for connections to it within the text.
- Look for repeating ideas or meaningful symbols within the text.
- Look for positive or negative transformations/changes within the main character
- Examine the conflict to determine which forces are opposing each other and which side wins out in the end.
- Watch for the author to clearly give you the theme within the text as sometimes writers just cannot help themselves from telling you what their main message should be.