

## How to Write a Theme-Based Literary Essay

- Think about the character's motivations, problems, and lessons learned and look for patterns.
- What does the character want, and what gets in the way?
- How does the character try to resolve his problems?
- What lessons does the character learn from trying to resolve his problems?
- Now what patterns can you see?
- Think about the patterns you see in universal terms. Ask yourself, "What big life lessons - what themes - can readers draw from the patterns in the story?"
- Craft a claim based on one of the themes.
- Search for the most compelling evidence that can support the claim, then add it to the essay like this:
  1. Quote some parts of the text.
  2. Story-tell other parts.
  3. Summarize yet other parts.
- To write an introduction to your essay, start with a universal statement about life and then transition to the text-based claim itself, focusing on the story you are writing about.

- To write a conclusion to your essay, show connections in at least one of these ways:
  1. Your thesis and emphasize why the claim and evidence matter
  2. Yourself and the life lesson you learned or realized
  3. The author's message
  4. Leave the readers with something to think about