

WRITING A THEME PAPER

This assignment requires that you write an essay in which you identify and discuss the main theme, as well as any sub-themes, within a work of literature. Your essay must be 750 words (minimum); which would be approximately 2.5 to 3 pages, using 12 font Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins all around. You must have at least four (“4”) direct long quotes (4 lines or more) from the book which help to support your ideas about the theme.

Remember that “theme” (sometimes called the “thesis”) is the central and controlling idea of a literary work. The theme is represented by the actions, images, and the style of a literary work. Typically, the theme is an insight into the serious, tragic, or comic truth of the human condition. It is important to note that the theme is not the same as the subject or the conflict. The theme usually cannot be expressed in a single word. In order to uncover the theme of a literary work, you must ask yourself the following fundamental question:

- What main ideas, lessons, morals, or important concepts does the author want me to learn from the story?

As always, substantiate your claims with textual support – using a least four (“4”) long quotes and other examples from the text. Without the textual support, who can believe your claims? Your score will certainly go down! Be sure to use correct grammatical form, use quotations for all quotes, and cite your quotes with (Author, page #). In your “Works Cited” section, list both the book and any other secondary sources you may have used or quoted. Caution: failure to properly cite all sources used to write your paper amounts to “plagiarism.”

See Scoring Rubric Below:

THEME PAPER RUBRIC

Theme Papers Are Worth Up to 32 Points!

SCORE:	8 I'm Impressed!	6 Applause!	4 Average!	2 Boring!	0 "Zero"
Intellectual Quality	Instructor is Totally Impressed with Student's Depth of Thinking, Quality of Research, and Style of Writing!	Student Shows High Performance Level and Demonstrates Care and Diligence in Research and Writing...	Student does an Average Job; Gets the Assignment done, But with Minimal Thought, Care, or Diligence...	Student is Careless or Forgetful; Makes Repeated Mistakes that Should Have Been Mastered Already...	Missing Work!
Word Count	Student Does A Lot More Research and Writing than is Required!	Student Exceeds the Word Count Requirements	Student Misses the Necessary Word Count Requirement, But Not By Much!	Student Misses the Necessary Word Count Requirement By More than 10%	
Literary Skills	Pleasure to Read; Because there are Virtually "No" Grammar, Spelling, or Formatting Errors!	Fun to Read; Because there are Very Few Grammar, Spelling, or Formatting Errors!	Boring to Read; Due to All the Grammar, Spelling, or Formatting Errors!	Difficult to Read; Due to Repeated Grammar, Spelling, and Formatting Errors!	
Source Referencing (Use of Literary Quotes and Examples)	Excellent Source Referencing: All Ideas Backed Up By Good Quotes and Examples from the Text; Correct Quote/Source Citations; Properly Formatted "Works Cited" Section!	Good Source Referencing: Most Ideas Backed Up By Quotes and Examples from the Text; Correct Quote/Source Citations; Properly Formatted "Works Cited" Section!	Average Source Referencing: Many Ideas Not Backed Up By Quotes or Examples from the Text; Missing Some Quote/Source Citations; Improperly Formatted "Works Cited" Section!	Low Level Source Referencing: Few if Any Ideas Backed Up By Quotes or Examples; Missing Quote/Source Citations; Missing "Works Cited" Section!	Plagiarism!