

Identifying Theme

A Theme Is...

- ... an opinion or argument.
- ... an insight into human nature.
- ... a complete sentence.
- ... an author's belief ABOUT a major issue, e.g., gender, identity, power, money, class, religion, destiny.

A Theme is NOT...

- ...a question (However, a theme might be an *answer* to a question!)
- ...a noun clause (e.g., *Macbeth* shows what Shakespeare thinks.)
- ...a plot summary
- ...only one word (e.g., The theme of *Macbeth* is destiny.)

Which of the following is (and is not) a theme?

1. The theme of *Macbeth* is the impact of free will.
2. The theme of the play is that free will is an illusion.
3. The play illustrates the theme of how far a person will go to gain power by any means possible.
4. The tragedy *Macbeth*, written by William Shakespeare around 1600, portrays a soldier, Macbeth, who is told what fate has in store for him and, having been made Thane as the witches predicted, wished to become king as was also their prediction; however, if Macbeth had been left alone and the wheels of fate were to turn on their own, provided the witches had kept that information to themselves, some things they predicted might not have come true.
5. The main underlying message of the story is simple: no one can escape their fate.
6. ...therefore showing the theme of power in the play as well as how people will do anything to get that power.
7. *Macbeth*...portrays how unchangeable the destiny Macbeth was given by the three witches, therefore explaining how destiny remains in motion until the ultimate end.