

THEME

- A controlling idea or the central insight of the story
- Unifying generalization about life stated directly or indirectly by the author or characters
- Ask: What is the central purpose of the story?
- Theme can be stated briefly (one sentence) or at greater length
- Theme gives the story unity
- Not all stories have a theme
- Moral and theme are not the same thing
- May not always follow our ideas about life

Theme exists only when an author:

- Has seriously attempted to record life accurately or reveal some truth about it
- Has mechanically introduced some concept or theory about life and his story illustrates it

Important Principles of theme:

1. Theme must be expressed in the form of a statement
ie. Loyalty (subject)
“Loyalty to a country often inspires heroic self-sacrifice” (theme)
2. Theme must be a **generalization** about life
3. Theme is the central and unifying concept of the story
4. There is no one way of stating theme
5. Avoid statements which reduce the theme to a cliché.
Ie. “You can’t judge a book by its cover”