

Theme is a story's central idea. Theme differs from the subject of a story in that the theme is a message about life or human nature that a writer wants to convey. Themes can be directly stated, but more often, readers must infer themes from clues in key story elements, such as:

- the story title
- how characters change and the lessons they learn about life
- conflicts in story action
- words or phrases that express important ideas such as *courage* or *freedom*

Use a chart like the one below to gather clues that help reveal a story's theme.

Title:

Author:

Key Element	Clues
Title	
Characters	
Conflict	
Words and Phrases	
Possible Theme:	