

Analyzing Theme in Poetry Lesson Plan

Standards

1. **RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. **RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. **RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
4. **L.9-10.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Procedures

1. **Discuss theme.** This can be part of note-taking or just a discussion.
2. **Find specific examples** in a single poem or multiple poems that provide evidence for one of the poem's themes.
3. **Interpret the examples** and explain their significance to a theme in the poem.
4. **Discuss student discoveries** with a small group and/or full class discussion.
5. **Optional:** Write a theme analysis of the poem

Assessment

The graphic organizer is an excellent opportunity to practice and discuss the lesson's stated objectives. In most cases it should be considered a formative assignment. In order to determine individual student mastery, a theme analysis writing assignment would suffice.

Theme in Poetry

Directions: Much of a poem’s meaning involves interpreting specific passages from the poem. This chart will help you analyze a poem and determine its theme. In the left column, provide a specific citation or example from the poem. In the middle column, identify the method used (imagery, metaphor, simile, etc.) and analyze and explain the passage. In the right column, write down what theme the example supports.

Specific Example	Method, Explanation and Analysis	Theme
<p>“I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills” (1-2)</p>	<p>The poet uses a simile, comparing himself to a cloud floating over valleys and hills. By doing so, he immediately makes himself one with nature. It's important to note that the speaker in the poem is looking down, as an all-knowing observer of the action.</p>	<p>Man, when connected with nature, reaches heights unattainable through other means.</p>

Theme in Poetry (Example for “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” by William Wordsworth)

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“I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills” (1-2)	The poet uses a simile, comparing himself to a cloud floating over valleys and hills. By doing so, he immediately makes himself one with nature. It's important to note that the speaker in the poem is looking down, as an all-knowing observer of the action.	Man, when connected with nature, reaches heights unattainable through other means.
“Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never-ending line” (5-9)	The poet utilizes personification and hyperbole with his description of “dancing daffodils.” He then uses hyperbole to describe their sheer numbers. The daffodils, representative of nature, are associated with “never-ending,” or eternity. They are also associated with the cosmos by an allusion to the milky way and the image of “twinkling.”	Humans become connected with the Universe/Deity/Creator through nature.
“A poet could not but be gay, In such a jocund company” (15-16)	The speaker mentions “poet” specifically, with the intimation that the poet sees things that <i>mere mortals</i> don't. One of the hallmarks of the Romantic poets is their view that poetry is the highest form of communication.	Poets see things <i>mortals</i> do not.
“For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude;”	We are now presented with the image of psychoanalysis, with a poet lying on the couch, allowing his subconscious mind to bring out true meaning. It is the vision of nature (“They” refers to the daffodils) that brings the speaker the secret meaning, connecting the poet directly with nature and indirectly with the cosmos.	Poets see things others don't with nature as the vehicle to the Universe.
“And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.”	Notice the poet's heart dances with the daffodils, metaphorically. He has now become one with nature and one with the Universe through introspection.	Poets see things others don't with nature as the vehicle to the Universe.

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