

Theme

The subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition; a topic.

Difference between a Theme and a Subject

It is important not to confuse a theme of a literary work with its subject. Subject is a topic which acts as a foundation for a literary work while a theme is an opinion expressed on the subject. For example, a writer may choose a subject of war for his story and the theme of a story may be writer's personal opinion that war is a curse for humanity. Usually, it is up to the readers to explore a theme of a literary work by analyzing characters, plot and other literary devices. For example, the theme of war has been explored in literature since ancient times. The literary works utilizing this theme may either glorify or criticize the idea of war. Most recent literary works portray war as a curse for humanity due to the suffering it inflicts. A famous example is *The Odyssey* by Homer

Examples Include:

- Birth - life after loss, life sustains tragedy
- Death - death as mystery, death as a new beginning
- Heroism - false heroism, heroism and conflicting values
- Escape - escape from family pressures, escaping social constraints
- Love - love sustains/fades with a challenge
- Journey - most journeys lead back to home
- Coming of age - boy becomes a man
- Patriotism - inner conflicts stemming from patriotism
- Peace and war - war is tragic, peace is fleeting
- Hope - hope rebounds
- Hopelessness - finding hope after tragedy
- Generation gap - experience versus youthful strength
- Home - security of a homestead
- Betrayal - fading bonds of love

- Power - Lust for power
- Isolation - the isolation of a soul
- Judgment - balance between justice and judgement
- Fortune - a fall from grace and fortune
- Family - destruction of family
- Sense of self - finding strength from within
- God and spirituality - inner struggle of faith
- Good and evil - the coexistence of good and evil on earth
- Duty - the ethics of killing for duty
- Survival - man against nature
- Conformity - industrialization and the conformity of man
- Individualism - choosing between security and individualism
- Deception - appearance versus reality
- Race relations - learned racism
- Suffering - suffering as a natural part of human experience
- Alienation - creating emotional isolation

