

The background is a detailed illustration of a school desk. On the left, a brown notebook is partially visible. In the center, a large sheet of white lined paper is spread out. On the right, a spiral-bound notebook with a yellow cover is open, showing a yellow sticky note with the words "Home Read" written in red. At the bottom, a yellow pencil with a red eraser and a sharpened lead tip lies horizontally. On the left side of the paper, there are some yellow pencil shavings. The entire scene is set against a light wood-grain background.

Themes and Ideas





This icon indicates that the slide contains activities created in Flash. These activities are not editable.



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College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading:

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

What is a theme?



Hidden within any good story are subtle messages about a topic, idea or opinion. These are called **themes**.

- A theme must be substantial enough to study, e.g. running through all, or part, of the text.
- Themes are usually linked with the protagonist.
- Themes are closely linked with the purpose of the text. They help us explore the message that the author is trying to get across.



Themes develop as a text moves toward its **destination**. We can think of the reader as being on a journey toward this destination, gradually gaining more insight.



The development of themes is significant, as it often mirrors the development of the protagonist and other key characters.

Thematic “tracking” is a useful way to analyze how themes and characters change throughout a text.



A starting point for themes



The title of a text often suggests some of the key themes and ideas that the author wishes to explore.

Consider the following titles:

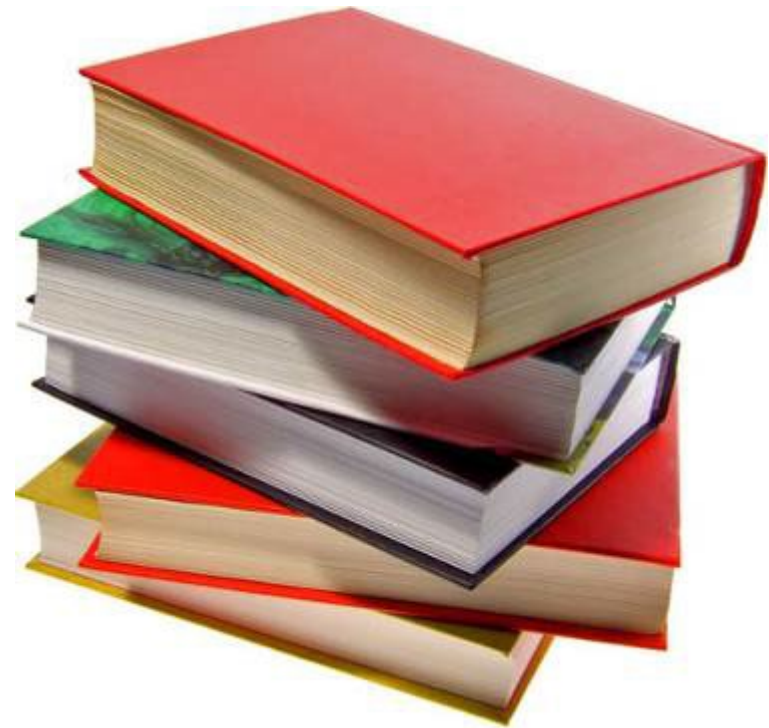
Great Expectations

Pride and Prejudice

Heart of Darkness

The French Lieutenant's Woman

A Streetcar Named Desire



Tracking themes: opening



Conflict is significant to the development of themes because of its importance to the protagonist.

Themes can help the reader understand the conflict that the protagonist may be facing.



The **climax** of the conflict in *Great Expectations* occurs when Pip discovers that the ex-convict Magwitch is his benefactor. The themes of **expectations** and **innocence and guilt** help the reader interpret this point in the text.

Tracking themes: climax



Making links through themes



The ending of a text is particularly important to the development of themes and ideas.

At the end of a text, the reader should be able to draw conclusions about the author's purpose based on how the author has developed the key themes in the narrative.

The author may provide **resolution**, or closure, at the end of the text. This means that the plot has been concluded without loose ends.

Alternatively, a writer may choose to leave issues **unresolved**, or leave readers to draw their own conclusions regarding key themes in the text.



Why might an author leave an ending unresolved?

The ending of *Great Expectations*



The ending of *Great Expectations* is somewhat **ironic**.

Pip visits the remains of Satis House and meets Estella. They are both “destroyed,” like Pip’s original expectations, but they have also moved on; Estella is a better person and Satis House is going to be built upon.



Just before the final chapter, we find out that Pip has been punished for his crime (his debts). He leaves England (like Magwitch does) and he has to work hard to pay his debts back.



The ending of *Great Expectations*

In Chapter 58, Pip reflects on how he has matured now that his ingratitude is gone:

“I was... enlightened by the reflection, that perhaps the inaptitude had never been in him at all, but had been in me.”

The young Pip visits the grave and we are left with a sense of **continuity** – the story begins again.

Why might Dickens end the story this way?



Name the theme



Glossary

