

Cambridge International AS & A Level Literature in English 9695

Introduction to Literature – Lesson 4: Themes	
Learning objectives:	By the end of this lesson learners will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand how themes and the writer’s messages are linked. • use evidence from the text to support their points.
Lesson objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will explore the ways in which a writer presents key themes. • Learners will be able to understand and write about the themes in a text.
Vocabulary:	lexical/semantic field, motif, revelation, purpose, moral, conflict, purpose, unifying ideas, cause and effect, protagonist, antagonist.
Previous learning:	Learners have explored aspects of context, character and plot in earlier lessons.
Plan	
Activities	Guidance
<p>Beginning</p> <p>In pairs, learners think of a text that they have read previously.</p> <p>Learners consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the key themes? • How did you know? • How did the title relate to the themes? • Did the title give you a sense of the thematic content before reading? • Did the main theme(s) emerge through the plot or was it first suggested by a character in the text? <p>As a class draw up a list of possible themes that you may encounter in a text.</p> <p>Explain to learners that they need to understand the plot before identifying the main theme or minor themes within the text.</p>	<p>Explain that a theme is a recurring concept or idea which is given repeated/extended attention.</p> <p>The main theme helps to convey a writer’s message(s) to the reader/audience.</p> <p>Themes are not always obvious and may be presented quite subtly so that the reader needs to draw inferences.</p>
<p>Middle</p> <p>Learners should be given an extract or short story to read.</p> <p>Ask learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the main theme? • What is the writer’s or narrator’s attitude to this? • Is there a progression or change in this attitude? • Are any other themes or concerns evident? <p>In pairs, learners test whether they have identified the main theme by considering whether their choice is supported within the work. Discuss if the writer’s choice of plot, character and tone is influenced by your chosen theme?</p> <p>Learners find evidence to support their chosen main theme by drawing up a lexical field of</p>	<p>Remind learners that their first impressions need to be refined as they analyse the text in more detail.</p> <p>Explain to learners that exploring lexical/semantic fields can help with understanding texts and writer’s ideas. Words that share a thematic link offer important clues</p>

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	<p>words or phrases from the text that are associated with the theme.</p> <p>Learners individually write a paragraph explaining how the main theme suggests the writer's ideas/attitude, considering language, form and structure. Points should be supported by relevant textual evidence.</p> <p>Learners share their paragraph with the class and explain how they reached their conclusions.</p> <p>Ask learners: Is there a consensus about the concerns/themes that have been found in the text?</p> <p>In groups, learners discuss how major themes/concerns have changed over time and consider what major themes/concerns may be found in a 21st century text compared with those of the 19th or 20th centuries (for example). Feedback ideas to the rest of the class.</p> <p>Ask learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a consensus on the sorts of themes and ideas which most engage modern readers?• Can you think of any universal themes that might span the centuries?• What cultural influences may there be on a writer's choice of themes/concerns? <p>Resources: Extract or short story</p>	<p>on the overall meaning and the impact on the reader/audience.</p> <p>Suggest to learners that in an examination they could use colour code (or symbols) for the main theme and minor themes to help organise their response to a text.</p> <p>Make sure learners understand that any list of themes produced is not definitive but is speculative – this is educated and informed conjecture, from studying the text, of what the writer was interested in and sought to highlight in the work.</p>
End	<p>Remind learners that the writer conveys their ideas and message through plot, context, character and themes, etc. In the extract/short story explored today, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the main character change?• What made him/her change?• What lesson(s) did the character learn?• What are the characters' feelings about the events they experience?• What conflicts does the character engage in and what is the impact of these on the character?• How does the character's experiences relate to the main theme(s) of the extract/short story?	

Additional information

Differentiation	Assessment
<p>Select extracts that are more accessible or more challenging in terms of language choices for learners. Different pairs/groups can work on different extracts or different sections of an extract.</p>	<p>Learners should write an essay in response to: 'How does the writer develop character and themes in this extract/short story?' Learners should support their essay with evidence from the text and refer to language, structure, plot and context in their response.</p>

Follow-up work

Look at suitable extracts to examine the themes of different cultures and the effect on the writers. Ask learners to analyse how the writers use their own experiences to create a new identity through their writing.