

Response to Literature Essay
Analysis of Theme

Task:

In class, you have read an informational article "Do Kids Have Too Much Power?" and a fictional science fiction story "The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury. You have examined the theme in both readings, and identified a common theme for both selections.

You will now write a multi paragraph essay (minimum five paragraphs) in which you will discuss the theme, and illustrate how the theme is demonstrated in each selection. Use reasoning and quotes as evidence to support your statements. Use the discussion notes you took in class.

Turn in this page with your essay.

Rubric

Titles, types of texts and authors are introduced in the first paragraph. The theme is clearly stated as your thesis statement. _____/5

In your body paragraphs, you have explained, in clearly articulated statements, how the theme is illustrated in each selection. You have included quotes or examples from the texts to support your statements. _____/10

The concluding paragraph summarizes the main points of your essay and includes a reflection, reaction or personal connection on one or both readings _____/5

Your essay contains minimal spelling or grammar errors. Your essay includes transitional words and phrases. Word choice is formal and appropriate. _____/5

Total:

_____/25

Organizer for Theme Analysis Essay

Introductory Paragraph:

- Title, genre, author and brief (1-2 sentences) summary of first selection.
- Title, genre, author and brief (1-2 sentences) summary of second selection
- Thesis statement (central idea of the essay). What is the common theme in both selections?

Body paragraphs:

- Discuss the first selection (fiction). Don't retell the story, instead explain what the theme is, providing examples from the text. You may end up retelling part of the story, but the summary should not overpower the narration.
- Use your note-taking organizer to help you with this task. Use the quotes in your organizer regarding theme. (1 or more paragraphs).
- Discuss the second selection (non-fiction). Don't summarize the whole article; rather explain how the theme is made clear through the words, the tone and attitude of the author.
- Provide textual references and examples, and use your note-taking organizer for the task. (1 or more paragraphs)

Concluding paragraph:

- Restate your thesis statement and summarize the main points of your essay, perhaps providing a comparison between the two texts. For example, although the underlying theme is the same for both selections, the theme is addressed very differently in each one.
- You may include a personal reflection or connection to the readings.

Guiding Questions

Some guiding questions that may help you with the body paragraph that examines the **fiction** piece are: How does the plot support the theme? What happens in the story that reveals the theme? What elements does the author use to reveal the theme? What role does figurative language and strong imagery play in the revealing of the theme?

Guiding questions for the **non fiction** piece: How does the author reveal the theme? Is it stated anywhere in the article? What elements help to reveal the theme? (For example, the direct statements of the author, his opinions, his tone, or his attitude).

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English

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People have a deep-seated fear of losing their identity. This is demonstrated in both selections, "The Fear of Losing a Culture" by Richard Rodriguez and *Dark They Were and Golden Eyed* by Ray Bradbury. When we are introduced into a new world, city, or school, it is not hard to lose track of who we are. We meet new people, and they influence our personalities; for better or for worse. A new place to stay can also have an impact on who we once were. A new larger house might make one's ego go through the roof, while a smaller house might make him appreciate his old life more. Anything and everything has an effect on someone's personality, and the struggle to hold on to an identity is part of human nature.

In the story *Dark They Were and Golden Eyed* by Ray Bradbury, the author writes about the battle of a man to hold on to his identity after he and his family had to move to Mars due to an Atom war on earth. Throughout the story, Harry Bittering notices changes in his family and others on Mars. These changes are happening too slowly for anyone else to notice, and Harry cannot convince them they are happening. An example of this could possibly be if you have a pet. If someone has a puppy, they get to see it grow over time. However, if this person's grandparents visit the puppy, and come back after a few months, the amount of how much the dog has grown is clearly visible. Mr. Bittering would often say "I feel like a salt crystal in a mountain stream, being washed away." When introduced to a new place it isn't

hard to forget who we once were and lose track of our culture. As the reader progresses in the story, Mr. Bittering gets more and more stressed, warning his family and the other settlers on Mars that they must go back to Earth; he even goes as far as starting to build a rocket. He notices little changes the others do not, such as flowers having a different smell or extra leaf, crops turning different colors, and his family's eyes changing colors. Eventually the Martian air and sun get the better of Mr. Bittering. He and his family and all the others that settled on Mars completely lose their identity and move to a different part of the red planet.

In the personal essay "The Fear of Losing a Culture" by Richard Rodriguez, the author writes about the struggle to stay in touch with his Hispanic heritage in America. At the beginning of the essay, he gives the reader examples of why some people might immigrate into the U.S. It may be for work, money, food, a home, or trying to get out of harm's way; there are many reasons to settle in America. However, immigrants might find their heritage getting lost somewhere along the way. Rodriguez writes, "The U.S. Border Patrol works through the night to arrest the flow of illegal immigrants over the border, even as Americans stand patiently in line for La Bamba." Latin American culture has a massive role in U.S. movies, music, television, and comedy. I feel America takes the Hispanic-Americans for granted, as they have given so much to our country. Whether it is American customs such as fast food like Taco Bell or Del Taco, or more traditional customs like art, Hispanic culture has a huge impact on our lives in America.

"We come from an expansive, an intimate, culture that has long been judged second-rate by the U.S. Out of pride as much as affection, we are reluctant to give up our past," writes Rodriguez. This tells the reader that Hispanics are very proud of their heritage and that they will hold on to it as long as they can. Rodriguez also writes, "For a long time, Hispanics in the U.S.

felt hostility. Perhaps because we were preoccupied by nostalgia, we withheld our Latin American gift." He is giving an example of hiding your old self, and starting again. Other examples of this can be shown when someone changes schools or moves to a new neighborhood or community.

These are two very different selections, but they share a common theme. No one wants to lose sight of who he really is. Sometimes the change is too much and we completely lose our identity. Other times the two cultures blend, forgetting that the first one was ever there, although it stays with us subconsciously. Regardless, the theme of this struggle that we necessarily go through when we confront major changes in our lives, rings true in both of these selections which otherwise are so different in nature.