Universal Themes

- abuse of power
- action vs apathy
- beating the odds
- beauty
- coming of age
- corruption
- courage
- effects of the past
- faith
- fall from grace
- family
- fate
- fear
- fear of failure
- freedom
- friendship
- greed
- hate
- heritage
- heroes
- honesty
- innocence
- justice
- love
- loyalty
- manipulation
- mothering
- nature
- need for change
- obligation
- parent-child relationships
- peace
- peer pressure
- perseverance
- Power of the mind vs authority
- prejudice
- price of progress
- pride
- quest for knowledge
- religion
- revenge
- secrecy
- security/safety
- seizing the moment
- survival
- the overlooked
- the road not taken
- war
- winners and losers

Identifying Themes in Literature – Dr. Seuss

Freshmen Humanities

Goal

Once you have a universal theme in mind, you must narrow it down to a theme statement. This statement represents the **idea the writer wishes to convey about the subject—the writer's view of the world or observation about human nature**

Process

1. Read through the list of universal themes to familiarize yourself with the list. If any are unclear, please ask.
2. Read your Dr. Seuss story out loud, making note of any evidence of themes being explored.
3. When you're finished reading, brainstorm together any aspect of the story that seems to relate to any universal themes.
4. Choose one universal theme to focus on. Look at the following areas: title, character, plot, point of view, symbols, allusions, and patterns.

Compose

Write one or more generalized, declarative sentences that state what was learned and how it was learned.

Test

• Is the theme supported by evidence from the work itself?
• Are all the author's choices of plot, character, conflict, and tone controlled by this theme?

Possible universal themes to get you started

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Universal Theme:

Title: *Explain how the title might indicate or emphasize some important aspect of the universal theme*
Character: *List the protagonist's lessons learned, struggles, motivations, and anything else that seems to set him/her apart from the rest*
Plot: *List significant events and conflict that occur. Explain how conflicts are dealt with or resolved*
Point of View: *List the narrator's comments about other characters and lessons learned. Explain how the narrator is involved with significant events and conflicts*
Symbols, Allusions, & Patterns: *List any symbols, etc. that relate to the universal theme*

Theme Statement:

Central Conflict: Support:	**Moral:** Support:

See if you can find more than one theme statement in your story:

Theme Statement: Support:	Theme Statement: Support: