

A thematic analysis is nothing more than a standard 3rd person point of view essay about a work of literature, with an introduction, a body of multiple paragraphs, and a conclusion. It contains a thematic statement, which is nothing more than a specific type of thesis statement.

Here is a sample outline of how to construct your paper:

I. Introduction

- A. Name of author of work
- B. Title of work
- C. Thematic statement
- D. 2 or 3 or more supporting points to establish theme

II. Body of paper

- A. Multiple paragraphs using supporting points as topic sentences
- B. References and/or quotes from the text or film to support your topic sentences
- C. Transition to next paragraph

III. Conclusion—show how you proved your point

Thematic Statement: You create a thematic statement the same way you create any other thesis statement, but this thesis statement is about the theme of the work. Specifically, the theme demonstrates how a universal principle affects an individual, a group of people, even a nation (as in the assignment for the *Atlas Shrugged* film.) Following are some sample thematic statements:

- An individual who fails to forgive others will never achieve happiness (“The Jilting of Granny Weatherall.”)
- An individual who fails to make important decisions will live an unfulfilled life (“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”)
- A nation longing for peace and harmony in society must stop fearing the unknown and embrace justice for all citizens (*Cry the Beloved Country*.)
- A person who craves freedom from oppression must learn to take responsibility for her lifestyle or continue to be oppressed (*The Awakening*.)
- A person who craves freedom from oppression can overcome the oppression by refusing to allow others to dominate her (*Jane Eyre*.)

These are only samples. Reader response theory contends that each individual responds to a great work of literature by the person’s own experience in life. People who were born during the Great Depression have different outlooks on life than Baby Boomer (hippies of the 50s and 60s) and those born during the last years of the 20th century understand society in different ways and may see different themes than those expressed above. All you must do is be able to support the theme you select and be able to demonstrate your position with either quotes or other direct evidence from the text or film.