**A Thesis About A Theme**

* A theme is a statement about the author’s purpose. It should be a lesson about life or a generalized observation about humanity.
* Design your thesis sentence so it *does not* mention the details of the book or the characters in the novel. You need to save those specifics for the body paragraph because those details will work to *prove* your thesis.
* Try to avoid absolutes like *everybody, all, nobody, always …*
* Utilize qualifiers like *often, frequently, many, may…*
* Try to design a thesis statement that avoids overgeneralizations. Deliver real insight.
  + Which of these is a better thesis?
    - Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* demonstrates the evils of racism.
    - Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* demonstrates the emotional scars racism can leave on a victim of abuse.
* Avoid clichés like “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Blech!!!
* Avoid being moralistic: “We need to support each other in times of woe.”
* Avoid the pronouns “I” and “you”. In a literary analysis, there is no place for these words. The goal of the essay is to analyze the work.

**Extra tip:** The style analysis essay is about an author’s style. Therefore, a high-level essay is about Richard Wright’s choices – he decided to add the imagery, create the characters, choose the words, and make the symbols. Therefore, your essay should frequently mention Mr. Wright and how his choices created the theme.

**Which thesis statements are appropriate?**

* *Black Boy* shows us that we should never give up trying.
* Richard Wright’s message in *Black Boy* is that only through perseverance and resiliency can the downtrodden triumph in times of adversity.
* *Black Boy* shows how Richard lived in an unjust society.
* Richard Wright demonstrates through *Black Boy* how racial injustice permeated Southern society in the first half of the 20th century.
* *Black Boy* demonstrates that racism is evil.
* Richard Wright’s experiences with racism in *Black Boy* demonstrate the depths of hatred and misunderstanding fostered by an imbalance of power.

**Questions to consider as you design your thesis.**

1. Does my theme reveal an aspect of human nature?
2. Does my theme bring to light an aspect of the world?
3. Does my theme reflect on some aspect of the nature of life itself?
4. How will the book – and the author’s stylistic choices – support my thesis?

**For Monday**: Write at least your thesis statement if not your entire introduction. At extra help (2:30-3:15) we will also be working with your essays. Write the whole essay if you want!