

## How to Write a Theme Essay

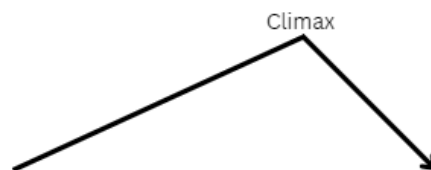
Has your teacher asked you to write an essay about a theme in a story? We're here to help! Good stories teach us something about ourselves or our world because they make us think about what we would do if we were in the story. The statement that a story makes about a big idea is called a theme. You can learn how to identify a theme in a story with our resource "[How to Identify Theme](#)." Here, we'll go over the next steps on how to write your essay about the theme you've found in the story:



### Finding Examples

If you've chosen the theme correctly, then there will be examples of both the big idea and the story's statement on it throughout the story. In an essay, you need to find those examples to create the **evidence** for your paragraphs. Here are some other good places to look for evidence:

- Sometimes, authors will tell you why they are telling the story at the beginning of the story. Generally, you'll find this part in the first few paragraphs.
- Focus on the **protagonist**, or the main character of the story. One way to tell the protagonist from other characters is that they are normally the character who changes the most. How they change and what makes them change is closely related to what the story is teaching about the big idea.
- In all stories, there is a **climax**, which is the moment of greatest tension in the story when the protagonist must make a big decision or experiences something that changes them. What happens at the climax and the way the protagonist reacts often gives us a clue about the statement on the big idea for that story.



- Authors will also sometimes have a sentence or two towards the end of the story that summarizes what the characters learned or why the story was important.

## Finding Examples of the Theme “Little Red Riding Hood”

Let’s say we were writing a theme essay about “Little Red Riding Hood.” If you’ve not read the story, you can read it by clicking on this link: [Little Red Riding Hood \(americanliterature.com\)](http://americanliterature.com)

One theme of “Little Red Riding Hood” is to be careful when trusting strangers. Before we write the essay, we need to find evidence for this theme.

If we look at the beginning of the story, Red’s mother tells her not to stray from the path, but not trusting her mother’s wisdom leads her to trust the wolf and pick flowers. At the end of the story, she trusts the Woodsman but only because the Woodsman saved her life, and her grandmother said it was okay.

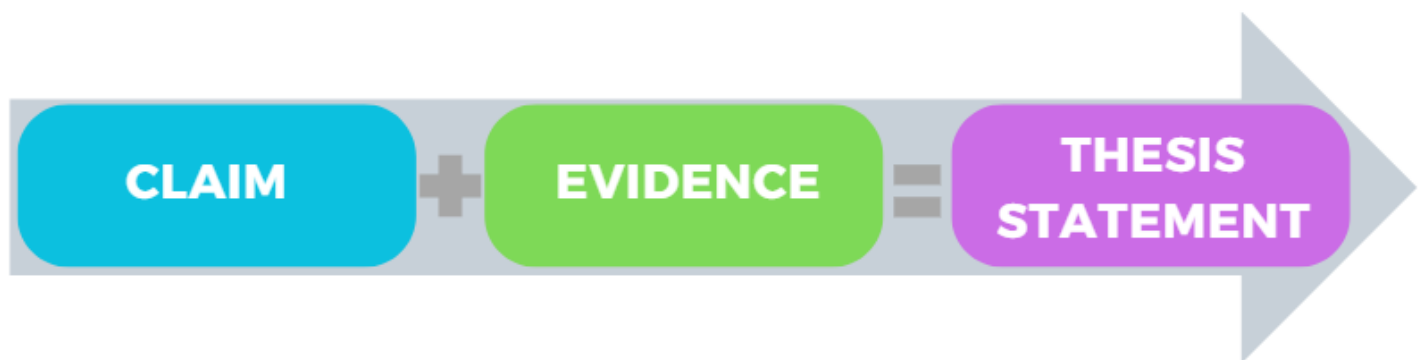
So that gives us several pieces of evidence:

- the bad decision to trust the wolf at the beginning
- the bad decision to trust the wolf at the climax
- not trusting her mother at the beginning
- the reason she trusts the Woodsman at the end



## Creating a Thesis Statement

Next, we need to use our theme and evidence to create our thesis statement. If you need help on writing a thesis statement, you can look at our guide [here](#). A thesis statement includes the claim you are making and the evidence you are using to show your claim is right.



In a theme essay, **your claim will be the theme** you’ve discovered about the story, and the evidence you will use is the examples you found in the story about that theme. It’s best to put this all together in one sentence.

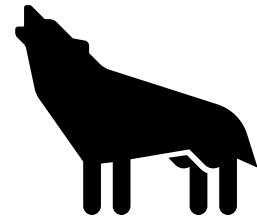
## Creating a theme thesis statement about “Little Red Riding Hood”

To create the thesis statement, we need to take the theme and evidence and put them together.

Theme: **One theme of “Little Red Riding Hood” is to be careful when trusting strangers.**

Evidence:

- the bad decision to trust the wolf
- not trusting her mother at the beginning
- the reason she trusts the Woodsman at the end



Then we just put those together in a sentence, like this:

One theme of “Little Red Riding Hood” is to be careful when trusting strangers, which is shown by her bad decision to trust the wolf, not trusting her mother at the beginning of the story, and the reason she trusts the Woodsman at the end.

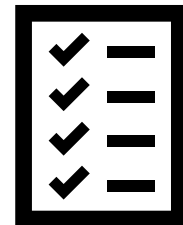
## Drafting the Essay

The last step is to write the essay. You’ve already done all the hard stuff; now you just need to put it in paragraph form. Your thesis statement will be the last sentence of your introduction. Each of the pieces of evidence you mentioned in the thesis statement will become a paragraph in the body of your essay. If you need help with how to create the paragraphs in an essay, you can use our guide [here](#) to learn more about it.

## Drafting the Essay Around Your Theme Thesis Statement

When we write the essay, each point in our thesis statement will be one body paragraph. To show you how this looks, we’ll create an outline, which is a plan for how you’ll write the essay.

- Introduction
- Body Paragraph 1: the bad decision to trust the wolf
- Body Paragraph 2: not trusting her mother at the beginning
- Body Paragraph 3: why she trusts the Woodsman at the end
- Conclusion



And that’s it! You now have everything you need to write your essay on the theme of a story!