Thematic Paragraph Song Lyric Project

Mrs. Terry
Language Arts
Themes in Music

1. Write a one-sentence summary of your song.
2. What is the author trying to say?
3. What are some universal themes (truths about life, society, or human nature) that are revealed in the song?
4. What conflicts are present in the song (person vs. self, society, etc.)?
5. What is the mood (feeling, atmosphere) of your song?
6. What is the tone (writer’s attitude) of your song?
7. Using your gold figurative language glossary, highlight and label examples of figurative language.
How to Write a Thematic Statement

Start with a subject. Choose one that is *abstract* (love, jealousy, peace, friendship, hope) vs. *concrete* (basketball, school, WWII, dragons).

Theme is an abstract idea plus a comment or observation which addresses:
- human motivation
- human condition
- human ambition

**RULES:**
- **AVOID** – clichés– your thematic statement should not sound like a fortune cookie or the moral of an Aesop’s fable.
- **INSTEAD** – put it into your own words, elaborate, add sophistication
- **AVOID** – absolute words – all, everyone, each, none, always, never, etc...
- **INSTEAD** – sometimes, often, we, adolescents, frequently, etc...
- **AVOID** – specifics of plot, character name and setting

Abstract idea + comment or observation = thematic statement
Thematic Statements for Song Lyrics

Lyrics
Find one or more lines from the song to support your idea.

Hint: Finding the lyrics first can help you write the thematic statement. Focus on what the author is trying to tell us in those lyrics- What is their tone? What is the message that they are trying to convey?

Thematic Statement
Write the theme of your song in a one-sentence thematic statement.

Refer to the examples on the following slides.
Lyrics

“I’m a thousand miles away girl but tonight you look so pretty... Hey there Delilah, don’t you worry about the distance, I’m right here if you get lonely.”
(from “Hey There Delilah” by Plain White T’s).

Thematic Statement

A theme from the song “Hey There Delilah” by the Plain White T’s is that no matter how far away you are from someone, if you love them enough, you can make it work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lyrics</th>
<th>Thematic Statement</th>
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<td>“My tummy’s turning and I’m feeling kinda homesick. Too much pressure and I’m nervous. That’s when the DJ dropped my favorite tune... So I put my hands up...and the butterflies fly away.”</td>
<td>The song “Party in the USA” by Miley Cyrus reminds us that when we are nervous and feel out of place, letting go of our fears and focusing on what is positive in our lives can change our mood and our outlook.</td>
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<td>(From “Party in the USA” by Miley Cyrus)</td>
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Thematic Statements for Song Lyrics

Lyrics

“You got designer shades to hide your face and you wear them around like you’re cooler than me”
(From “Cooler than Me” by Mike Posner)

Thematic Statement

A theme from the song “Cooler than Me” by Mike Posner is that some people use materialistic things to hide their own insecurities.
Lyrics

“The wind of change blows straight into the face of time, like a storm wind that will ring the freedom bell for peace...”
(from “Wind of Change” by The Scorpions)

Thematic Statement

One theme from the song “Wind of Change” by The Scorpions is that like the wind in a storm, change is often turbulent, but with change comes hope for freedom and peace.
Writing a Thematic Paragraph for Song Lyrics
Template/ACE (Answer, Cite, Explain)

• TS: topic sentence, ANSWER

• CD: concrete detail, fact, example, passage from text, CITE

• CM: commentary, your thoughts, analysis, explanation of how the CD relates to the TS, EXPLAIN

• CM: second sentence of commentary, tell me more, elaborate, dig deeper, CONTINUE TO EXPLAIN

• Write a second chunk (repeat pattern from above, CD, CM, CM)

• CS: concluding sentence, summarize your ideas and relate back to your TS
One theme from the song “Times Like These” by the Foo Fighters is that the darkest and most difficult points in our lives can lead to restored hope, reinvention, and revitalization. For example, the second verse begins by saying “I’m a new day rising, I’m a brand new sky, to hang the stars upon tonight.” This metaphor compares the writer to the dawn of a new day. After the despair and loneliness in his life, he is rising above his challenges to find a glimmer of hope in the darkness. The chorus of this song repeats the following line: “It’s times like these you learn to live again.” When we go through challenging and worrisome experiences, we often feel as if the life we know is coming to an end. However, if we can channel these emotions into something positive, we can begin our lives anew. Overall, this song reminds us that we need to experience the depths of despair to fully appreciate the joy and promise that the future may hold.
One theme from the song “Times Like These” by the Foo Fighters is that instead of dwelling on the pain and heartbreak from the past, we should learn from these experiences and progress toward a better tomorrow. The first stanza says that “I’m a street light shining, I’m a white light blinding bright, burning on and on.” Just like a street light that continues to shine through the dark of night, the writer continues to live on despite his grief and despair. The use of the word “blinding bright” suggests that he is not just getting by, but he is fully embracing the wondrous future ahead of him. The writer goes on to say that “it’s times like these you learn to live again.” This shows that every challenge and loss we go through in life can teach us something about who we are and what is important in our lives. Emerging from these situations can also strengthen our faith and hope for a brighter tomorrow. Overall, this song reminds us to be hopeful during the tough times and grateful for the good times.
6th hour

One theme from the song “Times Like These” by the Foo Fighters is to leave the pain and tragedy in the past and remember the promise of tomorrow. For example, in the second stanza, the writer says “I’m a little divided, do I stay or run away and leave it all behind?” This shows that he is torn between the choice to run away from his problems, or to overcome the obstacles from his past. It may sometimes seem easier to give up or attempt to escape from reality, but by persevering, we can learn to rebuild our lives and restore our hope. In addition, the third stanza says “I’m a new day rising, I’m a brand new sky to hang the stars upon tonight.” This metaphor uses a sunrise to describe the rebirth and renewal that we experience after we rise above the troubled times in our lives. His reference to the stars reminds us that there is always a glimmer of hope in our darkest hour. In conclusion, this song reinforces the idea that even when life takes an unexpected turn, if you have hope, you can find a way to a brighter tomorrow.
Your Assignment:

• Write a thematic paragraph for your song lyrics.
• Write your paragraph neatly on a sheet of plain white paper or type and print it.
• Glue it onto a large piece of construction paper or poster board.
• Write the name of the song and artist in large letters on your poster.
• Include a picture or design that symbolizes or represents the theme of your song and adds to your poster’s visual appeal.
• If you are proud of your work, put your name and hour on the front, if not, put it on the back.