



ELA Virtual Learning

English IV

April 21, 2020



Lesson: Tuesday, April 21

Objective/Learning Target:

1. Cite evidence to support analysis of a text.
2. Find and analyze two or more themes in a text.

Quickwrite: 4/21/2020

On a separate sheet of paper or Google Doc, respond briefly to the following prompt:

How do you go about finding the *theme* of a text, film, or song? How do you know when you've found it?

New Information

It's likely that you've been asked to find the theme of a text or other material before, but it's not always clear as to *how* a theme is found. Sometimes you might be able to find it based on instinct, but here we'll explore a slightly more specific strategy.

Let's discuss briefly the concept of "literature as a mirror." Just like a mirror shows us features (such as strengths and imperfections) of our appearance, so literature (broadly defined to include music, art, film, etc.) can reflect features of individuals and groups!

Example #1: “Try A Little Tenderness” by Otis Redding

Check out [this classic jazz song](#) that has been recorded by greats from Frank Sinatra to the cast of *Glee*! [Read over the lyrics here](#) as well. As you listen/read, consider the following questions:

- Considering this song as a “mirror,” what do you think Redding wanted us to see in it?
- This song is clearly geared toward men, and some of Redding’s advice in the lyrics may seem a bit like common sense, so why do you think he included such advice in the song?

Example #2: “Both Sides Now” by Joni Mitchell

Here’s another example to analyze, and this one is a little trickier. [This song by Joni Mitchell](#) made an appearance on season 13 of *The Voice*. You can find the [lyrics to the song here](#).

If you’re a bit more confused or annoyed by this song, that’s okay! The exact meaning is a little more unclear with this one. To help get closer to identifying a theme, consider these questions during/after listening:

- Taking this song as a “mirror,” what do you think Mitchell wanted us to see reflected in it?
- As the narrator describes her experiences in a way, has she gained anything from them? If so, what?

Guided Practice

Look back at both of the song examples given. Pick one of them, then on a separate sheet of paper or Google Doc, respond thoughtfully to the following prompt:

As a “mirror,” what do you think this song was meant to reflect about individuals and groups? Explain your answer while citing evidence from the lyrics and any other helpful sources.

Guided Practice: Answer Key

Check out [this example](#), which would be considered a valid response to the prompt on the previous page.

Note how I argued for how Otis Redding's song reflects both individuals and broader society while also citing multiple examples of supporting evidence from the song lyrics.

Additional Resources

Try looking at songs that you are familiar with or enjoy to see what these songwriters intend to reflect about us as individuals and groups. Clearly on some songs these reflections will be more obvious than others.

For a real challenge, examine songs that are intentionally written to be obscure, such as [this one by Elton John](#); this song has stumped many others before, including me!