

Themes List

(Quotations, Mottos, Proverbs and Old Sayings)

Prejudice

- Things are not always as they appear.
- Things are usually not as bad as you think they will be.
- Look for the golden lining.
- Beauty is only skin deep.
- Prejudice leads to: wrong conclusions, violence, false perceptions, a vicious cycle, oppression.
 - Don't judge a book by its cover.
 - Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- Beware of strangers.
- People from other cultures are really very much like us.
- Look before you leap.

Belief

- Believe in yourself. To succeed, we must first believe that we can.
- Believe one who has proved it. Believe an expert.
- The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen.
- One needs something to believe in, something for which one can have whole-hearted enthusiasm.
- As long as people believe in absurdities, they will continue to commit atrocities.
- Moral skepticism can result in distance, coldness, and cruelty.

Change

- People are afraid of change but things always change.
- Things are usually not as bad as you think they will be.
- Knowledge can help us prepare for the future.
- Forewarned is forearmed.
- It is impossible to be certain about things.

Good and Evil

- Good triumphs over evil.
- Evil is punished and good is rewarded.
- Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- Bullies can be overcome.
- Good manners have positive results.
- Greed leads to negative outcomes: suffering, disaster, catastrophe, evil, callousness, arrogance, megalomania.
- It is possible to survive against all odds.
- Jealousy leads to negative outcomes: guilt, resentment, loneliness, violence, madness.
- Good and evil coexist.

Love

- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Act kindly without seeking ultimate reasons. Practice random acts of kindness.
- Love is blind.
- Love triumphs over all: hate, selfishness, cruelty, tragedy, death
- Love one another.
- Love your neighbor.
- Non-human animals are beings with rights that deserve protection.

- Friends are a person's most valuable possession.
- Blood is thicker than water.
- When in love, one must suffer.
- Love is a force for happiness and fulfillment.
- One should be willing to sacrifice for the person one loves.

Politics

- Follow the rules.
- Our system of government is better than other systems.
- Our system of government would be better if we would change.
- Rules are there to protect and help us.
- Personal freedoms, like those listed in the United States Bill of Rights, are good and necessary.
- Personal freedoms have gone too far and must be curtailed.
- Freedom cannot exist without personal responsibility.
- Freedom is worth fighting (or dying) for.
- Peace is worth fighting (or dying) for.
- Our system of government is worth fighting (or dying) for.

Growing up

- Growing up is a great time of life.
- Growing up is a challenge for everyone.
- It takes a village to raise a child.
- It takes a family to raise a child.
- Good communication between generations leads to: satisfaction, understanding, better relationships, cooperation.

Ambition

- Too much ambition leads negative results: self-destruction, envy, greed, neurosis, downfall.
- One needs ambition in order to succeed.
- Hard work can bring a great reward.
- We grow small trying to be great.
- Goals are dreams we convert to plans and take action to fulfill.

Courage and Fear

- Understanding feelings of cowardice.
- Accepting a challenge leads to positive results.
- One can be courageous and cowardly at the same time.
- Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.
- Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.
- Face your fears.
- Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be.
- I have not ceased being fearful, but I have ceased to let fear control me.

Intentions

- Actions speak louder than words.
- It's not the gift that counts.
- Don't cry over spilled milk.
- It is difficult to say who does you the most harm: enemies with the worst intentions or friends with the best.

Knowledge

- Knowledge is power.
- Ignorance is bliss.
- Ignorance is never better than knowledge.

- If you have knowledge, use it to help others.
- Know your enemy.
- Too much learning is a dangerous thing.
- Be curious always! For knowledge will not acquire you: you must acquire it.

Perseverance

- Never give up.
- Try, try again.
- When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.
- The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running.
- To protect those who are not able to protect themselves is a duty which every one owes to society.
- It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.
- Our duty is to be useful, not according to our desires, but according to our powers.

Happiness

- Enjoy life while you can.
- Happiness is not having what you want. It is wanting what you have.
- Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling.
- The Grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.
- Happiness depends upon ourselves.
- To ease another's heartache is to forget one's own.

Truth

- You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time.
- Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it.
- Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.
- Nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true.
- The truth which has made us free will in the end make us glad also.
- Falsehood is easy, truth so difficult.
- Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!

Theme • Story Planning Framework

Your story's characters may be human or anything that has the actions and feelings that humans have. Think about how you will have the main character learn the lesson that your theme teaches.

Name: _____	Date: _____
Theme:	
Past, Present, or Future:	
Location:	
Environment:	
Main Character:	
Main Character's behavior at the beginning of the story and at the end:	
Helper for Main Character (if any):	
Character that makes things more difficult (if any):	
Nature's Role (if any):	
What event will teach the main character (or the audience) the lesson of your theme?	
What other events will happen as story takes place?	

Paulo's Story

May 10, 2009 by Julia

Paulo was just 17 years old when he was charged and incarcerated¹ as an adult at the D.C.² Jail.

When he looks back he sees a lost young man with no goals or dreams. "I didn't think much about my future or my life. I lived day-by-day. I was too preoccupied with hanging out with my friends, stealing and causing problems," he says now.

"I didn't like to read or write before I came to prison," says Paulo. "It bored me...I was in the 10th grade and I didn't even know how to compose a complete sentence."

All of that changed when Paulo joined Free Minds³. Initially, the first time he was told it was time for "Book Club," Paulo attended only because he was so desperate to leave the isolation of his cell. But it was that one Monday morning that he says helped him change his life.

"Thanks to Free Minds, I now place a great value in books and in writing," he says. "I have come to understand why so many people hold on to their books and writing as a treasure...Free Minds has taught me how to select books and how to value them, and in writing, how to free my mind and be creative. What it has emphasized to me, moreover, is that reading and writing are fun! Free Minds was the kick a car needs to sometimes start."

Since his transfer to federal prison, Paulo has remained in touch with Free Minds. He not only receives letters regularly, but also new books. "Every book that I have received from Free Minds has taught me something. I always learn something from a book whether it's a new word, a new writing style, or a new idea," he says. "Books are always leaving a mark on my life." The book that has had the greatest impact upon Paulo is A Place to Stand, the autobiography of acclaimed poet Jimmy Santiago Baca⁴. "He writes about what I'm going through," Paulo says. "I speak not of the physical, but of the mental struggles and of how he dealt with them. I see myself following his footsteps."

Paulo also writes to his Free Minds volunteer pen pal, Kristen. "Over the years, I never thought that I would meet someone like my pen pal," he says. "It is people like her that make one reflect upon one's life."

Paulo has come a very long way since he first came to Free Minds at the DC jail in 2003. He has not only earned his GED, but he now teaches courses to other inmates in federal prison helping them to pursue higher education. In 2007, he and a partner developed a seminar to teach other inmates how to get their GED and earn a bachelor's degree while incarcerated. Paulo has already successfully completed three college courses and earned high grades in all of them. He plans to obtain his undergraduate degree and then pursue graduate school to become a psychologist.

"Changes are happening every day in my life," Paulo says. "I see myself as more mature...I have become more caring and responsible. Finally, I have changed my entire perspective on how I should live my life."

Large empty rectangular box with horizontal lines, likely for student responses or notes.

¹ Incarcerated- imprison

² D.C.-District of Columbia

³ Free Minds "Empowering young inmates to write new chapters in their lives."

⁴ Jimmy Santiago Baca- is an American poet and writer of Apache and Chicano descent.

Theme Story Planning Example: Paulo's Story

Your story's characters may be human or anything that has the actions and feelings that humans have. Think about how you will have the main character learn the lesson that your theme teaches.

Name: _____	Date: _____
Theme:	A good book can teach forever
Past, Present, or Future:	2003- Present time
Location:	D.C. (District of Columbia) jail then a federal prison
Environment:	Isolated prison cell, Prison book club
Main Character:	Paulo
Helper for Main Character (if any):	Kirsten a 'Free Minds' penpal
Main Character's behavior at the beginning of the story and at the end:	At the beginning of the story, Paulo is in jail and gets into a lot of trouble. At the end of the story, Paulo is more mature, caring and responsible
Character that makes things more difficult (if any):	No one. Paulo makes things hard for himself.
Nature's Role (if any):	None - the weather and the climate do not matter in this story.
What event will teach the main character (or the audience) the lesson of your theme?	"The book that has had the greatest impact upon Paulo is A Place to Stand, the autobiography of acclaimed poet Jimmy Santiago Baca. 'He writes about what I'm going through,' Paulo says. 'I speak not of the physical, but of the mental struggles and of how he dealt with them.'"
What other events will happen as story takes place?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I didn't think much about my future or my life. I lived day-by-day. I was too preoccupied with hanging out with my friends, stealing and causing problems," 2. All of that changed when Paulo joined Free Minds 3. Paulo also writes to his Free Minds volunteer pen pal, Kristen. 4. earned his GED, In 2007, he and a partner developed a seminar to teach other inmates how to get their GED and earn a bachelor's degree while incarcerated and completed three college courses and earned high grades