***Helpful Hints: Surviving 10th Honors Literature***

When stating theme in 10th grade, don’t write one word (e.g, “love”) or restate the subject of the poem as if it were a theme; use a universal truth. Make it a complete sentence about the human condition. In other words, “Get global and noble.”

**Samples of how not to state a theme:**

“The theme of this poem deals with a widow’s thoughts about the loss of her husband.”

“This poem deals with how we feel about our parents.”

“This poem is about finishing a harvest.”

**Samples of a basic theme:**

Grief

**Sample of a more specific theme:**

Grief of losing a loved one

**Samples of combining themes with author’s purpose: (your claim with additional textual evidence being your warrants)**

“The grief of losing a loved one never goes away, and periodically one will be reminded of the loss.”

“A parent’s loving care often goes unnoticed and unappreciated, despite the effort it demands.”

“After a man has worked hard in life, he may not have accomplished everything he set out to but still may find satisfaction in what he did finish.”

**In your analysis:**

* Do not confuse the SPEAKER with the AUTHOR; sometimes the author and speaker are the same person, sometimes not.
* In poetry it is the speaker, in fiction it is the author, in nonfiction it is the author/authorial voice.
* Do analyze; do not paraphrase.
* Use textual evidence to support warrants for you claims.

**Therefore, what NOT to write:**

The author said …

Then goes on to claim ….

The word “...” is an example of ... imagery.

The poet talks about….

**The RIGHT words to use:**

This … suggests that ….

The word “…” has multiple connotations; it can mean … but also connotes … and …, adding depth to the theme by ….

…plays on the word “…” using both its … and …, emphasizing how …(theme).

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| **Paraphrasing Words (bad!)** | | Analytical Words (Good!) |  |  |
| Says | | Suggests | Differentiates | Shifts |
| Begins | | Implies | Dispels | Alludes to |
| Concludes by | | Reveals | Enunciates | Alters |
| Claims | | Connotes | Elucidates | Depicts |
| Mentions | | Reflects | Hints at | Emphasizes |
| Basically | | Assumes | Ignites | Constrains |
| Proceeds | | Examines | Transcends | Construes |
| States | | Asserts | Stirs |  |
| Writes | | Illustrates | Reveals |  |
| Ends | | Conjures | Repudiates |  |
| Continues | | Conjures up | Refutes |  |
| Considers | | Creates | Juxtaposes |  |
| Expresses | | Clarifies | Invokes |  |
| Saying how | | Explores | Heightens/lessens |  |
| Tells | | Evokes | Inspires |  |
| **Weak/illegal Words** |
| Uses |
| Utilizes |
| Shows |
| Demonstrates |
| Produces  Portrays  Very  Always  Good  This quote  The reader |