**Universal Themes**

**Common Theme Ideas Drawn from Myths, Traditional Stories, and Religious Works**

* Good and evil
* Master and servant
* Rich and poor
* Wise and foolish
* Old and young
* Beautiful and ugly
  + Beautiful is better.
  + The quest for beauty is the cause of much suffering.
* Mean and generous
* Just and unjust
* A quest or search
  + To find something and be rewarded, but usually a metaphor for another kind of search, including the search for truth or self
* A journey
  + Often a symbol of self-discovery
* Trials and forfeits
  + To test individuals’ skills and strength, or their human characteristics such as intelligence, patience and endurance
* The origins of the Earth, its people, and animals
* The relationship between people and the seen or unseen world around them
  + The importance of family and community connections
* Reward for goodness and punishment for evil
* Dominance of fate
  + No human can escape fate
* War:
  + War is an inescapable part of existence
  + Bloodshed leads to bloodshed
  + The greatest warriors are proud and/or arrogant.
  + It is an honor to die in battle.
* Sacrifice:
  + The surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher importance
* Love
  + Love is often unrequited.
  + Love often leads to tragedy.
  + Lovers are often abandoned by those they love.
  + Selfish love ends in suffering.