How to Write a Strong Thematic Statement About Literature

There are many ways to start your thematic statement

*Approach 1*

1. Generate (write) a list of topics from your story.

Examples for Absolute True Diary: Hope, Risks, Poverty, Loyalty, Happiness, Success

1. Identify topics (or one topic) that “go together” and ask yourself, what is the relationship between these topics in your story?

Example for Absolute True Diary:

2a) Topics that “go together”: Risks, Happiness, Success

2b) **Thematic Statement +** **Why is it important**?: Often, when people are not satisfied with the course of their life, they will take risks to change their future. People often hope that the decisions and risks they take will lead them to happiness and success.

*Approach 2*

1. **Identify essential moments in the texts.**

***Essential Moment 1***: Junior leaves the reservation school, Wellpinnit, to attend Reardan High School, a school for wealthy white students. Junior leaves because he thinks he can have a chance at a better future if he goes to a “good” school.

***Essential Moment 2***: Mary ( Junior’s sister) marries a cowboy and moves to Colorado. She leaves the poor and trouble-stricken reservation for a new start.

1. **Ask yourself, “What topics are popping up in these moments?”**

Topics: Leaving home, Risks, Success, Happiness

1. **What does the evidence communicate/ teach/ say about these topics? Why is it important in the real world?**

Often, when people are not satisfied with the course of their life, they will take risks to change their future. People often hope that the decisions and risks they take will lead them to happiness and success.

*Approach 3:*

1. **What is the BIG conflict in the story?**
2. **What does the protagonist learn as a result of overcoming the conflict?**
3. **What can people who live in the real world learn/understand from the protagonist?**
4. **Why is this important?**