



AP NEED-TO-KNOW: PASSAGE ANALYSIS - Bukowski

5S STRATEGY: SUBJECT, STRUCTURE, SPEAKER, SHIFTS, SYNTAX

/rev 2016

Crux – the root, the core, the bottom line, the nitty-gritty, the most crucial line(s) in a poem or prose passage that shows the main point

Dialogue – the conversation of two or more people that presents an inter-play of ideas and personalities.

Diction - author's word choice such as denotation, connotation, etc.)

- **Connotation** – the emotional implications & associations that a word carries
- **Denotation** – the dictionary definition
- **Dialect** – speech within the same language with marked regional or social differences
- **Jargon** - specific phrases and words by writers in a particular situation, profession or trade
- **Slang** – informal language typically restricted to a particular context or group of people
- **Verb Choice** – strong/weak, active vs. passive / linking / helping

Figures of Speech - states something that is not literally true *in order to create an effect*

- **Hyperbole** – exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally; e.g., "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse," "shut up before I kill you"
- **Litotes** – intentional use of understatement that renders an ironical effect using double negatives, e.g., "not too bad," "They do not seem the happiest couple around," "your apartment is not unclean," etc.
- **Metaphor** – comparison of two unlike things; e.g., "Time is money," "the monstrous chin, a freakish shelf jutting from the lower face."
- ***Metonymy** – the writer substitutes the actual word with an associated object; e.g., The White House instead of the President
- **Oxymoron** – an image of contradictory terms; e.g., jumbo shrimp; bittersweet, sweet sorrow
- **Paradox** – a statement that at first seems contradictory but, in fact, reveals truth; e.g., "I must be cruel, only to be kind" (Hamlet)
- **Personification** – giving human qualities to inanimate objects (difference between the specifics of anthropomorphism); e.g., "*Guilty feet have got no rhythm, The high yellow moon won't come out to play*"
- **Simile** – a comparison of unlike things using like or as; e.g., "He is as cunning as a fox, Tormenting itself in its invincible ignorance like a small bird beating about the cruel wires of a cage."
- **Symbol / Symbolism** - an object, person, or situation has another meaning other than its literal meaning or the actions of a character, word, action, or event that have a deeper meaning in the context of the whole story.
- ***Synecdoche** – utilizes a part as representative of the whole; e.g., wheels for car, plastic for credit cards, the police for one officer, etc.

Imagery- descriptive words that appeal to the five senses

- Sensory (Hearing = *auditory*, feeling = *tactile*, smelling = *olfactory*, tasting = *gustatory*, seeing =)
- Parallel
- Grotesque
- Image patterns (3+)
- Contrasting images

Irony- surprising, interesting or amusing contrast between reality and expectation

- **Dramatic** – the audience knows more than the characters on stage
- **Situational** – a situation or event that is the opposite of what is or what appears to be or what might be expected
- **Verbal** – an expression of an attitude that is the opposite of what is actually meant
- **Sarcasm** – mockery, scorn, cynicism

Meter – The rhythmic pattern of beats in poetry

Mood – The atmosphere in the work oftentimes noted in our study of setting (where/when)



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Motif – The repetition or variations of an image or idea in a work which is used to develop theme or characters (*know the difference between motif and symbol!*)

Plot – the sequence in which the author arranges the story events – developed by conflict, flashback, foreshadowing, suspense

- Conflict
- Freytag's Pyramid: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement
- Flashback
- Foreshadowing
- Subplot – a secondary plot
- Suspense

Point of View – from whose view is the passage related – note any shifts of speakers

- **Person** – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, omniscient, limited omniscient
- **Perspective**
- **Shift**

Punctuation – e.g., dashes, commas, end punctuation, italics, parentheses

Sentence types in our study of Syntax

- **Declarative** – statement – The queen is dead.
- **Exclamatory** – emphasis or strong emotion – Long live the king!
- **Imperative** – command – Clean your room!
- **Interrogative** – question – Are you sick?
- **Rhetorical**
- ***Simple** – contains one independent clause: The dog chased the rabbit.
- ***Compound** – contains two independent clauses connected by FANBOYS (coordinating conjunctions): The dog chased the rabbit, but the rabbit got away. (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
- ***Complex** – contains an independent and one or more subordinate clauses: Because the singer was tired, she went to bed after the concert.
- ***Compound-complex** – contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses: The singer bowed while the audience applauded, but she sang no encores.
- ***Cumulative/loose** – a sentence that continues with modifying phrases but could have ended earlier: We reached France that morning after a turbulent flight, tired but exhilarated, full of stories to tell our friends.
- ***Periodic** – a sentence that makes sense only when the reader reaches the end.
- ***Balanced** – phrases & clauses balance each other by likeness & structure. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters."
- **Fragment**
- **Run-on**

Sentence Variety – Variation of sentence beginnings, sentence patterns, subject/predicate order, etc.

Shifts – sudden changes in diction, syntax, tone, sentence length, rhythm, punctuation, or patterns of imagery, etc., look for transition words such as but, however, etc.

Sound Devices

- Alliteration – repetition of initial consonant sounds; e.g., Peter Pan
- Assonance – repetition of similar vowel sounds
- ***Cacophony** – harsh, discordant sounds in a line or passage
- Consonance – repetition of consonant sounds within and at the ends of words
- ***Euphony** – the pleasant, mellifluous presentation of sounds



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- Onomatopoeia – word that imitates the natural sounds of a thing. It creates a sound effect that mimics the thing described, making the description more expressive and interesting. For example buzz, gushing, whisper, meow, tweet, etc.
- Rhyme
- Rhythm

Style – The unique way an author presents his ideas in his use of diction, syntax, imagery, structure, content, and details

Syntax Techniques – notice sentence length, sentence order, use of punctuation, use of italics, ellipses, rhetorical questions, etc.

- **Anaphora** – repetition of same word or group of words at the beginning of a sentence; e.g., I have a dream
- **Anastrophe** – also known as inversion, the normal order of words is reversed in order to achieve a particular effect of emphasis or meter. Inversion is achieved by doing the following: placing an adjective after the noun it qualifies e.g. *the soldier strong*, placing a verb before its subject e.g. *shouts the policeman*, placing a noun before its preposition e.g. *worlds between*
- **Antithesis** – a figure of speech in which an opposition or contrast of ideas is expressed by parallelism of words that are the opposites of, or strongly contrasted with, each other, such as “hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins”
- ***Asyndeton** – deliberate omission of conjunctions in a series of related clauses: “I came, I saw, I conquered.”
- ***Ellipsis** – used in narratives to omit some parts of a sentence or event, giving the reader a chance to fill in the gaps while acting or reading. It is usually written between the sentences as “...”. Apart from being convenient, ellipsis also helps in advancing the story. The part of a sentence or an event that is left out by substituting it with ellipses is often used to either save time or use it as a stylistic element by allowing the reader to fill in the gaps by using their imagination.
- ***Enjambment** – A run-on line in poetry which carries over from one line to the next
- ***Juxtaposition** – Unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, often creating the effect of wit or surprise.
- **Parallelism** – the use of components in a sentence that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction, sound, meaning or meter, e.g., He loved swimming, running, and playing golf.
- ***Polysyndeton** – “bound together”, deliberate use of many conjunctions (FANBOYS) for special emphasis: The meal was huge—we ate bread and spaghetti and salad and cheesecake and fruit and...
- **Punctuation** – Period, question mark, exclamation point used to determine sentence type, etc., comma, semi colon usage, etc.
- **Repetition** – a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer, or for particular emphasis. It could be a word, a phrase or a full sentence or a poetical line repeated to emphasize its significance in the entire text.
- **Rhetorical Question** – asked just for effect or to lay emphasis on some point discussed when no real answer is expected. A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer but the questioner asks rhetorical questions to lay emphasis to the point.

Theme – the underlying ideas that the author illustrates through characterization, motifs, language, plot, etc. The insight about human life that is revealed in a work. A full sentence statement of the central idea.

Tone – the author’s/character’s attitude towards his/her subject; e.g., tonal shift, voice. (examples are comic, serious, scornful, angry, sarcastic, etc.)

Advanced Placement English Test Terms

Related Terms

The following words and phrases have appeared in recent AP literature exam essay topics. While not a comprehensive list of every word or phrase you might encounter, it can help you understand what you are being asked to do for a topic.

Style: Stylistic devices
Rhetorical devices
Stylistic/rhetorical techniques

Tone: Attitude
Speaker's attitude

Diction: Word choice
Language
Figurative language
Figures of speech

Detail: Imagery
Sensory language
Facts

Point of view: Focus
Narrative focus

Organization: Structure
Narrative techniques
Pattern

Syntax: Sentence structure
Phrasing

Devices: Figures of speech
Syntax
Diction-

Words to Describe Tone

Positive

lighthearted	confident	amused	complimentary	amiable
relaxed	soothing	jubilant	encouraging	reverent
hopeful	cheery	elated	passionate	whimsical
romantic	calm	enthusiastic	elevated	exuberant
optimistic	sympathetic	proud	fanciful	appreciative
consoling	ecstatic	jovial	loving	compassionate
friendly	pleasant	brave	joyful	energetic

Negative

angry	wrathful	threatening	agitated	obnoxious
insulting	choleric	disgusted	bitter	accusing
arrogant	quarrelsome	surly	outraged	irritated
condemnatory	belligerent	disgruntled	furious	indignant
inflammatory	aggravated	brash	testy	

Humor/Irony/Sarcasm

scornful	bantering	disdainful	irreverent	condescending
pompous	mocking	ridiculing	wry	sarcastic
taunting	cynical	insolent	patronizing	whimsical
malicious	droll	critical	ironic	facetious
flippant	mock-heroic	teasing	quizzical	comical
satiric	amused	sardonic	contemptuous	caustic
ribald	irreverent			

Sorrow/Fear/Worry

somber	mournful	concerned	morose	hopeless
remorseful	poignant	melancholy	solemn	fearful
pessimistic	grave	staid	ominous	sad
serious	despairing	sober	solemn	resigned
horror	disturbed	apprehensive	gloomy	foreboding
regretful				

Neutral

formal	objective	questioning	learned	authoritative
disbelieving	sentimental	pretentious	apathetic	conventional
judgmental	reflective	ceremonial	candid	instructive
factual	incredulous	urgent	fervent	histrionic
callous	forthright	lyrical	sincere	restrained
clinical	matter-of-fact	didactic	shocked	nostalgic
earnest	resigned	contemplative	haughty	objective
detached	admonitory	informative	baffled	reminiscent
patriotic	meditative	intimate	obsequious	

More Help Describing Tone

Another set of words to describe tone:

upset/concerned

- Provocative = Stimulating, exciting
Audacious = Daring, bold, insolent
Persuasive = Written to convince or win over
Condescending = patronizing, arrogant
Disdainful = Arrogant, lordly, superior, unsympathetic
Sarcastic = Snide, mocking, sharp taunting that wounds
Sardonic = Derisively mocking, scornful and cynical
Satiric = Ridiculing, ironic, mocking, farcical, exposing folly
Mock-heroic = Ridiculing a "hero"
Apprehensive = anxious, uneasy, worried
Ominous = Fateful, ill-boding, foreboding, dire
Urgent = imperative, critical, intensely necessary
Threatening = Menacing, intimidating
Horrific = Appalling, shocking, gruesome
Disappointed = Deceived, crestfallen, let down
Regretful = Contrite, apologetic, sorry (spans mere disappointment to a painful sense of dissatisfaction or self-reproach)
Remorseful = Moral anguish, penitent, contrite, rueful over past misdeeds
Somber = Bleak, depressing, dismal
Elegiac = Lamenting, poignant, funereal

upbeat/neutral

- Amused = Entertaining in a light and playful manner
(directing attention away from serious matters in an agreeable & pleasing manner)
Bantering = Teasing, joking, playful
Simpering = Smiley in a silly, self-conscious, often coy way
Whimsical = Capricious, unpredictable
Reverent = Venerating, worshipping
Reflective = Contemplative, meditative, introspective
Intimate = Personal, informal, private
Sympathetic = Compassionate, sensitive, sharing or understanding feelings
Factual = Certain, absolute, irrefutable, unbiased
Detached = Aloof, impartial, disconnected emotionally
Pedantic = Scholarly, making a show of knowledge
Provocative = Stimulating, exciting

Adapted from materials from Ron Smith, Roby [Texas] HS and Susan VanDruten

Using a dictionary of synonyms

proud, arrogant, haughty, lordly, insolent, overbearing, supercilious, disdainful mean showing superiority toward others or scorn for inferiors

Proud may suggest a feeling or attitude of pleased satisfaction in oneself or one's accomplishments that may or may not be justified and may or may not be demonstrated offensively <a *proud* man, unwilling to admit failure>. **ant** humble, ashamed

Arrogant implies a claiming for oneself of more consideration or importance than is warranted and often suggests an aggressive, domineering manner an *arrogant* business executive used to being kowtowed to>. **ant** meek, unassuming

Haughty suggests a blatantly displayed consciousness of superior birth or position <a *haughty* manner that barely concealed his scorn>. **ant** lowly

Lordly implies pomposity or an arrogant display of power <a *lordly* indifference to the consequences of their carelessness>..

Insolent implies insultingly contemptuous haughtiness <suffered the stares of *insolent* waiters>. **ant** deferential

Overbearing suggests a tyrannical manner or an intolerable insolence <wearied by demands from her *overbearing* in-laws>. **ant** subservient

Supercilious implies a cool, patronizing haughtiness <*supercilious* parvenus with their disdainful sneers>.

Disdainful suggests a more active and openly scornful superciliousness <*disdainful* of their pathetic attempts>. **ant** admiring, respectful

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms. Merriam-Webster, 1992,. [p. 310]

Tone Words and Definitions

Tone is more than merely an author's attitude toward his/her audience and characters; it is the stylistic means by which an author conveys his/her attitude(s) in a work of literature.

Tone is an integral part of a work's **meaning** because it controls the reader's response which is essential to fully experiencing literature. **To misinterpret tone is to misinterpret meaning.**

In order to recognize **tonal shift** and to interpret **complexities of tone**, the reader must be able to make inferences based on an active reading of the work. The author's tone or voice is revealed by organization, choice of detail, and sentence structure, but **word choice** is probably the strongest indicator of tone.

*Directions: Familiarize yourself with the denotations and connotations of the following **tone words**. This is by no means a comprehensive list! You should also practice utilizing adjective and adverb forms of each word:*

adjective: Leo uses a mocking tone when he describes Mrs. Bilse as a literary genius.

adverb: Leo mockingly describes Mrs. Bilse as a literary genius.

1. **Abashed:** *ashamed or embarrassed; disconcerted*
2. **Abhorring:** *to regard with extreme repugnance or aversion; detest utterly; loathe; abominate*
3. **Abstruse:** *difficult to understand*
4. **Absurd:** *ridiculous; silly*
5. **Accusing:** *to charge with the fault, offense, or crime*
6. **Acerbic:** *harsh or severe, as of temper or expression*
7. **Admiring:** *to regard with wonder, pleasure, or approval*
8. **Admonishing:** *cautioning, advising, or counseling against something; reproofing or scolding, especially in a mild and good-willed manner; reminding*
9. **Adoring:** *to regard with the utmost esteem, love, and respect; honor.*
10. **Affectionate:** *showing, indicating, or characterized by affection or love; fondly tender*
11. **Afraid**
12. **Ambiguous:** *open to or having several possible meanings or interpretations*
13. **Ambivalent:** *uncertainty or fluctuation, esp. when caused by inability to make a choice or by a simultaneous desire to say or do two opposite or conflicting things*
14. **Amused:** *pleasurably entertained, occupied, or diverted*
15. **Angry**
16. **Annoyed:** *To cause slight irritation to (another) by troublesome, often repeated acts*
17. **Antagonistic:** *acting in opposition; opposing, esp. mutually/ hostile; unfriendly*
18. **Anxious:** *full of mental distress or uneasiness because of fear of danger or misfortune; greatly worried; solicitous/ earnestly desirous; eager*
19. **Apathetic:** *having or showing little or no emotion/ not interested or concerned; indifferent or unresponsive*

20. **Apologetic:** *containing an apology or excuse for a fault, failure, insult, injury*
21. **Appreciative:** *feeling or expressive of gratitude*
22. **Apprehensive:** *uneasy or fearful about something that might happen*
23. **Approving:** *to speak or think favorably of; pronounce or consider agreeable or good; judge favorably*
24. **Ardent:** *characterized by intense feeling; passionate; fervent; intensely devoted, eager, or enthusiastic; zealous; vehement; fierce*
25. **Arrogant:** *making claims or pretensions to superior importance or rights; overbearingly assuming; insolently proud*
26. **Audacious:** *extremely bold or daring; recklessly brave; fearless*
27. **Authoritarian:** *having an air of authority; accustomed to exercising authority; positive; peremptory; dictatorial*
28. **Baffled:** *to confuse, bewilder, or perplex*
29. **Bantering:** *Good-humored, playful conversation*
30. **Belligerent:** *warlike; given to waging war*
31. **Bemused:** *bewildered or confused/ lost in thought; preoccupied*
32. **Benevolent:** *characterized by or expressing goodwill or kindly feelings*
33. **Bewildered:** *completely puzzled or confused; perplexed*
34. **Biting:** *nipping; smarting; keen/ cutting; sarcastic*
35. **Bitter:** *having a harsh, disagreeably acrid taste, like that of aspirin, quinine, wormwood, or aloes/ characterized by intense antagonism or hostility/ hard to admit or accept*
36. **Blithe:** *joyous, merry, or gay in disposition; glad; cheerful*
37. **Blunt:** *abrupt in address or manner/ slow in perception or understanding; obtuse*
38. **Bold:** *not hesitating or fearful in the face of danger or rebuff; courageous and daring; not hesitating to break the rules of propriety; forward; impudent*
39. **Bored**
40. **Brisk:** *quick and active; lively/ sharp and stimulating*
41. **Brusque:** *abrupt in manner; blunt; rough*
42. **Burlesque:** *an artistic composition, esp. literary or dramatic, that, for the sake of laughter, vulgarizes lofty material or treats ordinary material with mock dignity*
43. **Calm:** *without rough motion; still or nearly still/ free from excitement or passion; tranquil*
44. **Candid:** *frank; outspoken; open and sincere/ free from reservation, disguise, or subterfuge; straightforward*
45. **Capricious:** *flighty; led by whims; erratic*
46. **Casual:** *without definite or serious intention; careless or offhand; passing/*
47. **Caustic:** *making biting, corrosive comments*
48. **Celebratory:** *seeming or tending to be indifferent to what is happening; apathetic; unconcerned*
49. **Censorious:** *severely critical; faultfinding*
50. **Ceremonial:** *of, pertaining to, or characterized by ceremony; formal; ritual*
51. **Cheerful:** *characterized by or expressive of good spirits or cheerfulness*
52. **Cheery:** *in good spirits*

53. **Childish:** *of, like, or befitting a child/ puerile; weak; silly*
54. **Choleric:** *extremely irritable or easily angered; irascible*
55. **Clinical:** *concerned with or based on actual observation and treatment of disease in patients rather than experimentation or theory/ extremely objective and realistic; dispassionately analytic; unemotionally critical*
56. **Cold**
57. **Colloquial:** *characteristic of or appropriate to ordinary or familiar conversation rather than formal speech or writing; informal.*
58. **Comforting:** *To soothe in time of affliction or distress.*
59. **Comic** - *funny; humorous*
60. **Commanding:** *appreciably superior or imposing; winning; sizable*
61. **Compassionate:** *having or showing compassion*
62. **Complex:** *characterized by a very complicated or involved arrangement of parts, units, etc.:*
63. **Complicated:** *composed of elaborately interconnected parts; complex*
64. **Complimentary:** *of the nature of, conveying, or expressing a compliment, often one that is politely flattering*
65. **Conceited:** *having an excessively favorable opinion of one's abilities, appearance, etc.*
66. **Concerned:** *interested or affected/ troubled or anxious/ having a connection or involvement; participating*
67. **Conciliatory:** *To overcome the distrust or animosity of; appease*
68. **Condemnatory:** *To express strong disapproval*
69. **Condescending:** *showing or implying a usually patronizing descent from dignity or superiority*
70. **Confident:** *having strong belief or full assurance; sure/ sure of oneself; having no uncertainty about one's own abilities, correctness, successfulness, etc.; self-confident; bold*
71. **Confused:** *to perplex or bewilder/ to make unclear or indistinct*
72. **Contemptuous:** *showing or expressing contempt or disdain; scornful*
73. **Contented:** *Desiring no more than what one has; satisfied./ Ready to accept or acquiesce; willing*
74. **Contentious:** *tending to argument or strife; quarrelsome/ causing, involving, or characterized by argument or controversy*
75. **Conversational:** *The spoken exchange of thoughts, opinions, and feelings; talk*
76. **Critical:** *inclined to find fault or to judge with severity, often too readily*
77. **Curt:** *rudely brief in speech or abrupt in manner/ brief; concise; terse; laconic*
78. **Cynical:** *scornful of the motives or virtues of others; bitterly or sneeringly distrustful, contemptuous, or pessimistic*
79. **Demanding:** *requiring or claiming more than is generally felt by others to be due/ calling for intensive effort or attention; taxing*
80. **Depressed:** *sad and gloomy; dejected; downcast/ pressed down, or situated lower than the general surface*
81. **Derisive:** *characterized by or expressing derision; contemptuous; mocking*

82. **Derogatory:** *tending to lessen the merit or reputation of a person or thing; disparaging; depreciatory*
83. **Despairing:** *To be overcome by a sense of futility or defeat/ To lose all hope*
84. **Desperate:** *reckless or dangerous because of despair or urgency/ having an urgent need, desire, etc.:*
85. **Detached:** *impartial or objective; disinterested; unbiased/ not involved or concerned; aloof*
86. **Diabolic:** *having the qualities of a devil; devilish; fiendish; outrageously wicked*
87. **Didactic:** *intended for instruction; instructive*
88. **Diffident:** *lacking confidence in one's own ability, worth, or fitness; timid; shy*
89. **Direct:** *proceeding in a straight line or by the shortest course; straight; undeviating; not oblique*
90. **Disappointed:** *depressed or discouraged by the failure of one's hopes or expectations*
91. **Disbelieving:** *to have no belief in; refuse or reject belief in*
92. **Disdainful:** *expressing extreme contempt*
93. **Disgusted:** *To excite nausea or loathing in; sicken/ To offend the taste or moral sense of; repel*
94. **Disrespectful:** *Having or exhibiting a lack of respect; rude and discourteous*
95. **Disturbed:** *marked by symptoms of mental illness:/ agitated or distressed; disrupted*
96. **Dogmatic:** *asserting opinions in a doctrinaire or arrogant manner; opinionated*
97. **Domineering:** *overbearing; tyrannical*
98. **Doubtful:** *of uncertain outcome or result*
99. **Dramatic:** *of or pertaining to the drama/ Arresting or forceful in appearance or effect*
100. **Dreary:** *causing sadness or gloom./ dull; boring*
101. **Dubious:** *wavering or hesitating in opinion; inclined to doubt*
102. **Earnest:** *serious in intention, purpose, or effort; sincerely zealous*
103. **Ebullient:** *overflowing with fervor, enthusiasm, or excitement; high-spirited*
104. **Ecstatic:** *subject to or in a state of ecstasy; rapturous*
105. **Effusive:** *unduly demonstrative; lacking reserve*
106. **Egotistical:** *given to talking about oneself; vain; boastful; opinionated; indifferent to the well-being of others; selfish*
107. **Elated:** *very happy or proud; jubilant; in high spirits*
108. **Elegiac:** *expressing sorrow or lamentation*
109. **Elevated:** *exalted or noble; lofty/ exalted or noble; lofty*
110. **Eloquent:** *having or exercising the power of fluent, forceful, and appropriate speech*
111. **Embarrassed:** *To cause to feel self-conscious or ill at ease; disconcert*
112. **Emotionless**
113. **Empathetic:** *showing empathy or ready comprehension of others' states*
114. **Encouraging:** *to inspire with courage, spirit, or confidence/ to stimulate by assistance, approval, etc/ to promote, advance, or foster*
115. **Energetic**

116. **Enraged:** *to make extremely angry; put into a rage; infuriate*
117. **Enthusiastic:** *having or showing great excitement and interest*
118. **Erudite:** *characterized by great knowledge; learned or scholarly*
119. **Eulogistic:** *To praise highly in speech or writing, especially in a formal eulogy*
120. **Euphoric:** *a feeling of happiness, confidence, or well-being sometimes exaggerated in pathological states as mania*
121. **Evasive:** *deliberately vague or ambiguous/ tending or seeking to evade; characterized by evasion*
122. **Excited**
123. **Exhilarated:** *to enliven; invigorate; stimulate/ to make cheerful or merry*
124. **Exhortatory:** *advising, urging, or cautioning earnestly; urgently admonishing*
125. **Expectant:** *marked by eager anticipation*
126. **Exuberant:** *effusively and almost uninhibitedly enthusiastic; lavishly abundant*
127. **Facetious:** *not meant to be taken seriously or literally/ amusing; humorous*
128. **Factual:** *of or pertaining to facts; concerning facts*
129. **Familiar:** *commonly or generally known or seen/ informal; easygoing; unceremonious; unconstrained*
130. **Fanciful:** *characterized by or showing fancy; capricious or whimsical in appearance*
131. **Farcical:** *ludicrous; absurd; mocking; humorous and highly improbable*
132. **Fatalistic:** *the acceptance of all things and events as inevitable; submission to fate*
133. **Fearful:** *feeling fear, dread, apprehension, or solicitude/ full of awe or reverence/ extreme in size, intensity, or badness*
134. **Fervent:** *having or showing great warmth or intensity of spirit, feeling, enthusiasm, etc.; ardent*
135. **Flippant:** *frivolously disrespectful, shallow, or lacking in seriousness; characterized by levity*
136. **Forceful:** *powerful*
137. **Foreboding:** *a strong inner feeling or notion of a future misfortune, evil, etc.; presentiment*
138. **Formal:** *stiff; using textbook style; following accepted styles, rules or ceremonies*
139. **Forthright:** *going straight to the point; frank; direct; outspoken*
140. **Frantic:** *desperate or wild with excitement, passion, fear, pain, etc.; frenzied*
141. **Frightened:** *To fill with fear; alarm*
142. **Frivolous:** *characterized by lack of seriousness or sense/ self-indulgently carefree; unconcerned about or lacking any serious purpose/ of little or no weight, worth, or importance; not worthy of serious notice*
143. **Frustrated:** *disappointed; thwarted*
144. **Furious:** *full of fury, violent passion, or rage; extremely angry; enraged*
145. **Gentle:** *kind; considerate; mild; soft*
146. **Ghoulish:** *strangely diabolical or cruel; monstrous; delighting in the revolting or loathsome*
147. **Giddy:** *frivolous and lighthearted; impulsive; flighty/ attended with or causing dizziness*

148. **Gleeful:** *full of exultant joy; merry; delighted.*
149. **Gloomy:** *dark or dim; deeply shaded/ hopeless or despairing; pessimistic*
150. **Grand:** *impressive in size, appearance, or general effect/ stately, majestic, or dignified/ of great importance, distinction, or pretension*
151. **Grave:** *serious or solemn; sober/ weighty, momentous, or important/ threatening a seriously bad outcome or involving serious issues; critical*
152. **Grim:** *stern and admitting of no appeasement or compromise/ having a harsh, surly, forbidding, or morbid air*
153. **Happy**
154. **Harsh:** *ungentle and unpleasant in action or effect/ physically uncomfortable; desolate; stark/ unpleasantly rough, ragged, or coarse to the touch*
155. **Haughty:** *disdainfully proud; snobbish; scornfully arrogant; supercilious*
156. **Hilarious:** *arousing great merriment; extremely funny*
157. **Histrionic:** *Over the top dramatic*
158. **Holier-than-thou:** *obnoxiously pious; sanctimonious; self-righteous*
159. **Hollow:** *; not solid; empty; without real or significant worth; meaningless; insincere or false*
160. **Hopeful:** *full of hope; expressing*
161. **Hopeless:** *providing no hope; beyond optimism or hope; desperate*
162. **Horrified:** *showing or indicating great shock or horror*
163. **Hostile:** *characteristic of an enemy/ opposed in feeling, action, or character;*
- antagonistic/ not friendly, warm, or generous; not hospitable*
164. **Humorous:** *characterized by humor; funny; comical*
165. **Impartial:** *not partial or biased; fair; just*
166. **Impassioned:** *filled with emotion; ardent*
167. **Impassive:** *without emotion; apathetic; unmoved; calm; serene*
168. **Impatient:** *not patient; not accepting delay, opposition, pain, etc., with calm or patience*
169. **Impertinent:** *insolently rude; uncivil*
170. **Impudent:** *characterized by impertinence or effrontery*
171. **Incisive:** *penetrating; cutting; biting; trenchant/ remarkably clear and direct; sharp; keen; acute*
172. **Incredulous:** *not credulous; disinclined or indisposed to believe; skeptical*
173. **Indifferent:** *without interest or concern; not caring; apathetic/ having no bias, prejudice, or preference; impartial; disinterested*
174. **Indignant:** *feeling, characterized by, or expressing strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or base*
175. **Indirect:** *not in a direct course or path; deviating from a straight line; roundabout/ not straightforward; devious; deceitful*
176. **Inflammatory:** *tending to arouse anger, hostility, passion, etc.:*
177. **Informal:** *without formality or ceremony; casual/ suitable to or characteristic of casual and familiar, but educated, speech or writing/ not according to the prescribed, official, or customary way or manner; irregular; unofficial*

178. **Informative:** *giving information; instructive/ tending to increase knowledge or dissipate ignorance*
179. **Insecure:** *subject to fears, doubts, etc.; not self-confident or assured*
180. **Insipid:** *without distinctive, interesting, or stimulating qualities; vapid*
181. **Insistent:** *earnest or emphatic in dwelling upon, maintaining, or demanding something; persistent; pertinacious*
182. **Insolent:** *boldly rude or disrespectful; contemptuously impertinent; insulting*
183. **Instructive:** *servicing to instruct or inform; conveying instruction, knowledge, or information; enlightening*
184. **Interested:** *having the attention or curiosity engaged/ characterized by a feeling of interest*
185. **Intimate:** *associated in close personal relations/ very private; closely personal/ detailed; deep*
186. **Introspective:** *given to examining own sensory and perceptual experiences*
187. **Ironic:** *containing or exemplifying irony/ coincidental; unexpected*
188. **Irascible:** *easily provoked to anger; very irritable*
189. **Irreverent:** *showing lack of due respect or veneration*
190. **Irritated:** *angered, provoked, or annoyed*
191. **Jocund:** *cheerful; merry; gay; blithe; glad*
192. **Joking**
193. **Jovial:** *endowed with or characterized by a hearty, joyous humor or a spirit of good-fellowship*
194. **Joyful:** *full of joy, as a person or one's heart; glad; delighted/ causing or bringing joy, as an event, a sight, or news; delightful*
195. **Joyous:** *joyful; happy; jubilant*
196. **Laudatory:** *containing or expressing praise*
197. **Learned:** *having much knowledge; scholarly; erudite/ connected or involved with the pursuit of knowledge, esp. of a scholarly nature*
198. **Lighthearted:** *carefree; cheerful; gay*
199. **Lively:** *full or suggestive of life or vital energy; active, vigorous, or brisk/ animated, spirited, vivacious, or sprightly*
200. **Lofty:** *exalted in rank, dignity, or character; eminent/ elevated in style, tone, or sentiment, as writings or speech*
201. **Loving:** *affectionate; showing intense, deep concern for someone or something*
202. **Ludicrous:** *causing laughter because of absurdity; provoking or deserving derision; ridiculous; laughable*
203. **Lugubrious:** *mournful, dismal, or gloomy, esp. in an affected, exaggerated, or unrelieved manner*
204. **Lyrical:** *Expressing deep personal emotion or observations; Highly enthusiastic; rhapsodic*
205. **Malicious** - *desiring to harm others or to see others suffer; ill-willed; spiteful*
206. **Matter-of-fact** - *adhering strictly to fact; not imaginative; direct or unemotional; straightforward; down-to-earth*
207. **Meditative:** *deeply or seriously thoughtful*
208. **Melancholic:** *characterized by or causing or expressing sadness*

209. **Melodramatic:** *exaggerated and emotional or sentimental; overdramatic*
210. **Mirthful:** *joyous; gay; jolly; arousing or provoking laughter*
211. **Mischievous:** *maliciously or playfully annoying; causing annoyance, harm, or trouble; roguishly or slyly teasing, as a glance; harmful or injurious*
212. **Mock – serious:** *pretending to be serious or in earnest*
213. **Mock-heroic:** *imitating or burlesquing that which is heroic, as in manner, character, or action*
214. **Mocking:** *To treat with ridicule or contempt; deride; To mimic, as in sport or derision*
215. **Modest:** *having or showing a moderate or humble estimate of one's merits, importance, etc.; free from vanity, egotism, boastfulness, or great pretensions; free from ostentation or showy extravagance*
216. **Moralistic:** *Characterized by or displaying a concern with morality; narrowly and conventionally moral*
217. **Mournful:** *feeling or expressing sorrow or grief; sorrowful; sad*
218. **Mysterious:** *of obscure nature, meaning, origin, etc.; puzzling; inexplicable*
219. **Nervous:** *highly excitable; unnaturally or acutely uneasy or apprehensive*
220. **Nonchalant:** *coolly unconcerned, indifferent, or unexcited; casual*
221. **Nonplussed:** *totally puzzled, perplexed, or confused*
222. **Nostalgic:** *unhappy about being away and longing for familiar things or persons*
223. **Obdurate:** *unmoved by persuasion, pity, or tender feelings; stubborn; unyielding; stubbornly resistant to moral influence*
224. **Objective:** *not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased*
225. **Obsequious -** *overly obedient and/or submissive*
226. **Ominous:** *portending evil or harm; foreboding; threatening; inauspicious*
227. **Optimistic:** *disposed to take a favorable view of events or conditions and to expect the most favorable outcome*
228. **Oratorical:** *characteristic of an orator or oratory; given to making speeches*
229. **Outraged:** *angered and resentful; furious; extremely angered*
230. **Outspoken:** *frank; candid; uttered or expressed with frankness or without reserve*
231. **Overbearing:** *domineering; dictatorial; haughtily or rudely arrogant*
232. **Panicked**
233. **Paranoid:** *Exhibiting or characterized by extreme and irrational fear or distrust of others*
234. **Passionate:** *having, compelled by, or ruled by intense emotion or strong feeling; easily aroused to or influenced by sexual desire; ardently sensual; easily moved to anger; quick-tempered; irascible*
235. **Pathetic:** *causing or evoking pity, sympathetic sadness, sorrow, etc.; pitiful; pitiable*
236. **Patronizing:** *displaying or indicative of an offensively condescending manner*
237. **Peaceful:** *not disturbed by strife or turmoil or war; quiet; calm; without worry or disturbance*

238. **Pedantic:** *ostentatious in one's learning; overly concerned with minute details or formalisms, esp. in teaching*
239. **Penitent:** *feeling or expressing sorrow for sin or wrongdoing and disposed to atonement and amendment; repentant; contrite*
240. **Pensive:** *dreamily or wistfully thoughtful; expressing or revealing thoughtfulness, usually marked by some sadness*
241. **Pessimistic:** *expecting the worst possible outcome*
242. **Petty:** *of little or no importance or consequence*
243. **Pitiful**
244. **Placid:** *pleasantly calm or peaceful; unruffled; tranquil; serenely quiet or undisturbed*
245. **Playful:** *pleasantly humorous or jesting*
246. **Poignant:** *keenly distressing to the feelings; keen or strong in mental appeal*
247. **Pompous:** *characterized by an ostentatious display of dignity or importance*
248. **Powerful:** *having or exerting great power or force; potent; efficacious*
249. **Pretentious:** *characterized by assumption of dignity or importance*
250. **Proud:** *feeling pleasure or satisfaction over something regarded as highly honorable or creditable to oneself; having or showing self-respect or self-esteem*
251. **Provocative:** *serving or tending to provoke, excite, or stimulate; tending or serving to provoke; inciting, stimulating, irritating, or vexing*
252. **Psychotic:** *affected by psychosis; characterized by a loss of contact with reality and an inability to think rationally. A psychotic person often behaves inappropriately and is incapable of normal social functioning*
253. **Quiet**
254. **Questioning:** *characterized by or indicating intellectual curiosity; inquiring*
255. **Reassuring:** *to restore to assurance or confidence*
256. **Rebellious**
257. **Recalcitrant:** *resisting authority or control; not obedient or compliant; refractory*
258. **Reflective:** *given to, marked by, or concerned with meditation or deliberation*
259. **Relaxed:** *being free of or relieved from tension or anxiety*
260. **Reminiscent:** *awakening memories of something similar; suggestive*
261. **Resigned:** *submissive or acquiescent*
262. **Respectful:** *full of, characterized by, or showing politeness or deference*
263. **Restrained:** *To hold back or keep in check; control*
264. **Reticent:** *disposed to be silent or not to speak freely; reserved; restrained*
265. **Reverent:** *deeply respectful; showing great esteem*
266. **Ridiculous:** *causing or worthy of ridicule or derision; absurd; preposterous; laughable*
267. **Righteous:** *believing ones-self to be morally right and just; guiltless*
268. **Risible:** *causing or capable of causing laughter; laughable; ludicrous*
269. **Romantic:** *characterized by a preoccupation with love or by the idealizing of love or one's beloved; imbued with or dominated by idealism, a desire for adventure, chivalry, etc*

270. **Sad**
271. **Sanguine:** *cheerfully optimistic, hopeful, or confident*
272. **Sarcastic:** *expressing or expressive of ridicule that wounds*
273. **Sardonic:** *characterized by bitter or scornful derision; mocking; cynical; sneering*
274. **Satiric (satirical):** *exposing human folly to ridicule*
275. **Scholarly:** *concerned with academic learning and research*
276. **Scornful:** *expressing extreme contempt*
277. **Seductive:** *tending to entice into a desired action or state*
278. **Self-assured:** *Having or showing confidence and poise*
279. **Self-deprecating:** *belittling or undervaluing oneself; excessively modest*
280. **Selfish:** *devoted to or caring only for oneself; concerned primarily with one's own interests, benefits, welfare, etc., regardless of others*
281. **Sentimental:** *weakly emotional; mawkishly susceptible or tender*
282. **Serene:** *calm, peaceful, or tranquil; unruffled*
283. **Serious:** *not funny; in earnest*
284. **Severe:** *harsh; unnecessarily extreme; serious or stern in manner or appearance*
285. **Sharp:** *clearly defined; distinct; keen or eager; fierce or violent*
286. **Shocked:** *struck with fear, dread, or consternation*
287. **Shocking:** *causing intense surprise, disgust, horror, etc*
288. **Silly**
289. **Sinister:** *threatening or portending evil, harm, or trouble; ominous*
290. **Skeptical:** *Marked by or given to doubt; questioning*
291. **Sly:** *cunning or wily; stealthy, insidious, or secret*
292. **Solemn:** *grave, sober, or mirthless, as a person, the face, speech, tone, or mood*
293. **Somber:** *gloomy, depressing, or dismal; extremely serious; grave*
294. **Sophomoric:** *suggestive of or resembling the traditional sophomore; intellectually pretentious, overconfident, conceited, etc., but immature*
295. **Speculative:** *theoretical, rather than practical*
296. **Sprightly:** *animated, vivacious, or gay; lively*
297. **Stable:** *not likely to fall or give way, as a structure, support, foundation, etc.; firm; steady*
298. **Stately:** *majestic; imposing in magnificence, elegance, etc*
299. **Stern:** *firm, strict, or uncompromising; hard, harsh, or severe*
300. **Stolid:** *not easily stirred or moved mentally; unemotional; impassive*
301. **Straightforward:** *direct; not roundabout; free from crookedness or deceit; honest*
302. **Strident:** *making or having a harsh sound; grating; creaking*
303. **Stubborn**
304. **Subdued:** *quiet; inhibited; repressed; controlled*

305. **Supercilious:** *haughtily disdainful or contemptuous*
306. **Suspenseful:** *characterized by or causing suspense*
307. **Suspicious:** *openly distrustful and unwilling to confide*
308. **Sympathetic:** *characterized by, proceeding from, exhibiting, or feeling sympathy; sympathizing; compassionate*
309. **Taunting:** *To reproach in a mocking, insulting, or contemptuous manner*
310. **Tender:** *soft or delicate in substance; not hard or tough*
311. **Tense:** *stretched tight, as a cord, fiber, etc.; drawn taut; rigid; characterized by a strain upon the nerves or feelings*
312. **Terrified**
313. **Terse:** *neatly or effectively concise; brief and pithy, as language*
314. **Thoughtful:** *showing consideration for others; considerate; occupied with or given to thought; contemplative; meditative; reflective*
315. **Threatening:** *tending or intended to menace; causing alarm, as by being imminent; ominous; sinister*
316. **Timorous:** *full of fear; fearful*
317. **Tragic:** *extremely mournful, melancholy, or pathetic; dreadful, calamitous, disastrous, or fatal*
318. **Tranquil:** *free from commotion or tumult; peaceful; quiet; calm*
319. **Uncertain:** *not confident, assured, or free from hesitancy; not clearly or precisely determined; indefinite; unknown*
320. **Unconcerned:** *not involved or interested; disinterested.; not caring; unworried; free from solicitude or anxiety*
321. **Understated:** *restrained in design, presentation, etc.; low-key*
322. **Uneasy:** *not easy in body or mind; uncomfortable; restless; disturbed; perturbed.*
323. **Uninterested**
324. **Upset**
325. **Urgent:** *compelling or requiring immediate action or attention; imperative; pressing*
326. **Vexed:** *irritated; annoyed*
327. **Vibrant:** *moving to and fro rapidly; vibrating*
328. **Vindictive:** *revengeful; spiteful; bitter; unforgiving*
329. **Violent:** *acting with or characterized by uncontrolled, strong, rough force; furious in impetuosity, energy, etc.*
330. **Vitriolic:** *very caustic; scathing*
331. **Whimsical:** *given to whimsy or fanciful notions; capricious*
332. **Wistful:** *characterized by melancholy; longing; yearning; pensive*
333. **Worshipful:** *showing adoration; showing great reverence*
334. **Wrathful:** *vehemently incensed and condemnatory; very angry; ireful*
335. **Wry:** *devious in course or purpose; misdirected; distorted or perverted, as in meaning; bitterly or disdainfully ironic or amusing*
336. **Zealous:** *ardently active, devoted, or diligent*

Some TONE WORDS: Grouped with SYNONYMS

- simple, straightforward, direct, unambiguous, candid
- indirect, understated, evasive, allusive
- complicated, complex, difficult
- admiring, worshiping, approving
- complimentary, proud, effusive
- disliking, abhorring, contemptuous
- strident, harsh, acerbic, angry, outraged, violent, choleric, indignant, irascible
- forceful, powerful, confident
- energetic, vibrant
- ironic, sardonic, sarcastic, mocking, sly, wry
- satirical, critical
- sharp, biting
- bitter, grim, cynical
- interested, sympathetic, pitiful
- hollow, detached, cold, obdurate
- tired, bored, uninterested
- indifferent, unconcerned, disinterested, apathetic, impassive, emotionless, nonchalant
- impartial, objective
- humorous, playful, joking, frivolous, comical
- flippant, irreverent, facetious
- impish, silly, sophomoric, childish
- resigned, calm, tranquil, quiet, peaceful, reticent
- subdued, restrained, low-key
- sad, upset, depressed, melancholy, despairing
- afraid, fearful, horrific, terrified, panicked
- wistful, nostalgic, sentimental, tender, reminiscent
- solemn, serious, somber
- apologetic, penitent, ignominious
- recalcitrant, stubborn, rebellious
- apprehensive, anxious, pensive
- thoughtful, dreamy, fanciful
- vexed, uncertain, confused, ambivalent, nonplussed
- excited, exhilarated, exuberant
- ardent, fervent, zealous
- happy, contented, ecstatic, joyful, giddy
- incredulous, questioning, skeptical, dubious
- insistent, urgent, pressing
- pertinent, pointed, incisive
- commanding, demanding
- exhortatory, admonishing, censorious, damning
- condescending, arrogant, haughty
- elevated, grand, lofty, bombastic, pretentious, pompous
- oratorical, dramatic, melodramatic
- scornful, disdainful, supercilious, contemptuous
- audacious, bold, impudent, insolent
- alluring, provocative, seductive
- shocking, offensive, reprehensible, lurid
- didactic, instructive
- authoritarian, domineering, egotistical, overbearing, dogmatic
- erudite, learned, scholarly
- practical, pragmatic

EXPLORING AND IDENTIFYING THEME

Theme: the meaning of the story; a central or dominating idea
a “meaning of the work as a whole”

What a theme is not:

- It is not the “moral” of the story. A *moral* is a piece of practical advice gained from a work to apply to our own lives. Works with morals are said to be “didactic”.
 - A *theme* is more complex than a moral and may have no direct advice or philosophical guidance for a reader.
 - It is not the **subject or topic** of the story and *not* a one-word label.
 - It is not a “hidden meaning” that needs to be pulled out of the story.

What theme is:

Theme is a meaning released by the work when we take all aspects of the work in its entirety into account.

It is a comment on an aspect of human experience that the author expresses.

A theme is expressed in a full sentence that tells in some detail what the work says about the topic.

Great works of literature have multiple themes.

Discovering theme

We discover theme only by becoming aware of the relations among the parts of a story and of the relations of the parts to a whole:

Characters

What kind of people does the writer create?

Plot

What does the writer have the characters do?

Are they in control of their lives, or are they controlled by fate or something else?

Motivation

Why do the characters behave as they do; what motives dominate them?

Tone

What is the author’s attitude towards the subject?

What is the narrator’s attitude?
Are the two different?

Values

What values does the writer have the characters hold?
What values does the writer promote?

Style

How does the author express reality?

The importance of theme in literature can be overestimated; the work of fiction is more than just the theme. However, the theme allows writers to control or give order to their perceptions about life.

32 MASTER TOPICS

- Alienation***—creating emotional isolation
- Betrayal***—fading bonds of love
- Birth***—life after loss, life sustains tragedy
- Coming of age***—child becomes adult
- Conformity***—industrialization and the conformity of people
- Death***—death as mystery, death as a new beginning
- Deception***—appearance versus reality
- Discovery***—conquering unknown, discovering strength
- Duty***—the ethics of killing for duty
- Escape***—escape from family pressures, escaping social constraints
- Family***—destruction of family
- Fortune***—a fall from grace and fortune
- Generation gap***—experience versus youthful strength
- God and spirituality***—inner struggle of faith
- Good and evil***—the coexistence of good and evil on earth
- Heroism***—false heroism, heroism and conflicting values
- Home***—security of a homestead
- Hope***—hope rebounds
- Hopelessness***—finding hope after tragedy
- Individualism***—choosing between security and individualism
- Isolation***—the isolation of a soul
- Journey***—most journeys lead back to home
- Judgment***—balance between justice and judgment
- Loss***—loss of innocence, loss of individualism
- Love***—love sustains/fades with a challenge
- Patriotism***—inner conflicts stemming from patriotism
- Peace and war***—war is tragic, peace is fleeting
- Power***—lust for power
- Race relations***—learned racism
- Sense of self***—finding strength from within
- Suffering***—suffering as a natural part of human experience
- Survival***—humans against nature

The Great Questions

Great literature of all cultures deals with one or more of the following questions:

I. What is the nature of the universe—the cosmos?

Is the universe hostile / beneficent / indifferent to humanity?
What is the nature of evil? What is the source of evil?
Why, if God is good, does He allow evil to exist? (The Problem of Evil)
Why, if God is just, does He allow the good to suffer? (The Problem of Pain)

II. What is God's relationship to humans?

Does God exist?
Is God the Creator?
Is God concerned about humanity?
Is God indifferent toward humanity?
Should humans fear / obey / love /
sacrifice to / praise / propitiate /
pray to God?

What is the nature of God?

Is God (gods) basically:
an angry God? a proud God?
a jealous God? a kind God?
Is God all good?
Does God Himself bring evil to
humanity and cause suffering?

III. What is the nature of human beings?

Are humans basically good or evil?
Are people determined or do we have free will?
Are people noble—more divine than animal? or
Are people degraded, corrupt—more animal than spirit?
Are people a balance? If so, how is the balance preserved?
What is the human being's greatest faculty? reason? imagination?
Do humans have a soul? Can they achieve immortality? How?
Are humans in the universe by design or by chance? If by design, why?
What is a human's basic purpose in life? Is there a purpose?
To save the human soul?
To find happiness? If so, what is happiness and how are we to achieve it?
What is the "good" life for humans? How can life gain significance?
How can people give value to their lives?
How can people find their greatest satisfaction, completeness, fulfillment?
How do people establish values, ethics, morals? What are their bases?

IV. What is the relationship of one human to another?

How are we to treat people? Are all people to be treated as equals?
On what basis should we / do we evaluate our fellow humans?
Are we basically social animals or anti-social ones?
How are we to establish an orderly existence with other humans?
What is the "ideal" or "good" society? How can it be established?
Under what social system can people best flourish?
On what base should we regulate our association with other people?

