**Tips for Identifying Themes**

1. Pay attention to the title—some titles suggest a central topic or topics or a clue to theme. Probe to see what, if any, insights about that topic it ultimately seems to offer.
2. List any recurring phrases or words, especially those for abstract concepts (love, honor, etc.). Certain concrete terms (especially if noted in the title) may likewise provide clues; objects of value or potency might attract significant attention in a text. Probe to see how and where else it might implicitly deal with that concept or entity and what, if any, it proposes.
3. Identify statements that the characters or narrator make about a general concept, issue, or topic. Look, too, for statements that potentially have a general meaning or application beyond the story, even if they refer to a specific situation in it. Then consider how the story as a whole corroborates, overturns or complicates any such view or statement.
4. If a character changes (or not) over the course of a story, articulate the truth or insight that he or she seems to discover. Then consider whether and how the story as a whole corroborates or complicates that insight.
5. Identify a conflict in the work and state it in general terms or turn it into a general question. Then think about the insight or theme that might be implied by the way the conflict is resolved.