**Literary analysis: Theme**

In works of fiction, a theme is the central idea or ideas explored in the story.

If a book’s ‘plot’ is said to be the events that happen within it, then by comparison the ‘theme’ is what the book is ‘about’.

Another common mistake is to limit the definition of theme to ‘the moral of the story’. The difference is that while a moral must be a specific lesson or point that the author is said to be making, a theme can be more general – an idea or topic that reappears throughout a story. A moral can be a theme, but a theme doesn’t have to be a moral.

Read the list of the most common themes in literature and choose the ones present in *The Outsiders*.

* Crime doesn’t pay
* Money corrupts people
* Individual and group identities are equally important
* Love conquers all
* Natural world is superior to human achievements
* Being a loyal friend is a moral obligation
* Wars can be avoided
* Coming of age (maturing and learning life lessons)
* Appearances can be deceptive

List the examples (events? symbolism?) which illustrate each theme you chose.