



Romeo and Juliet Finding Purpose in Poetic Devices, Motifs, and Themes

What is a motif? A motif is a recurring device that helps to develop a text's themes. Some examples from *Romeo and Juliet* are:

stars/fortune

light/darkness (presented through imagery, metaphor, simile, personification, etc.)

opposites/dichotomy (presented through irony, paradox, and oxymoron)

What is a theme? A theme is a universal idea or insight conveyed through a written work. Some examples are:

love (the many different faces of love)

the individual versus society

fate

For each passage below, you should:

identify and explain the use of one poetic device found in the passage.

write a brief explanation that demonstrates how the motif/theme is being presented through the passage.

write a sentence that demonstrates Shakespeare's purpose by creating a connection between the device and the theme or motif, for example, *Shakespeare presents (literary term with brief description) in order to demonstrate (explain connection to theme).*

Sample:

Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit.

(No Fear: 1.1.199–200)

Poetic Device: The line contains an allusion to Cupid and Dian, who are characters from Greek mythology.

Theme/Motif: Love—this shows unrequited love. Romeo is in love with Rosaline, but she does not love him back.

Purpose: Shakespeare presents an allusion to the Greek gods Cupid and Dian in order to demonstrate that Romeo is chasing Rosaline, but his love is unrequited.

Passage 1:

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel!

(No Fear: 1.1.71–72)

Poetic Device:

Theme/Motif:

Purpose:

Passage 2:

But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the farthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
Away from light steals home my heavy son
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night.

(No Fear: 1.1.124–130)

Poetic Device:

Theme/Motif:

Purpose:

Passage 3:

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
O anything of nothing first created!
O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!

(No Fear: 1.1.166–169)

Poetic Device:

Theme/Motif:

Purpose:

Passage 4:

She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
To merit bliss by making me despair.
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

(No Fear: 1.1.212–215)

Poetic Device:

Theme/Motif:

Purpose:

Passage 5:

I'll pay that doctrine or else die in debt.

(No Fear: 1.1.229)

Poetic Device:

Theme/Motif:

Purpose:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.