**THEME**

Theme is the central, unifying idea of a work, stated either directly or indirectly. *It is generally an observation or insight about life of human nature*. It should not be confused with a moral.

**Golding’s description of the theme:**

"The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island. The officer, having interrupted a man-hunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?"

--William Golding

**FINDING THEME IN LITERATURE:**

1. Remember that one word is not the theme – it is probably the subject.
2. Remember that “man versus nature” is not the theme – that is conflict.
3. The theme is stated in a **complete sentence** and reveals what the reader has learned about a particular subject. It is a **universal truth**, which means it should apply across the boundaries of time and culture.

Example: If you ran into your house and told your mom that you had just read a story about… And she said, “Why, that *is* a great story!” You would have just told her the plot. However, if she said, “Ahh, that’s true”, you probably told her the theme. The theme is the “Ahhh” that we know to be true.

**DIRECTIONS:** In your assigned groups, develop a theme statement for EACH of the following topics. You must support your statement with evidence (quotes if you can remember where they are or examples) from the novel.

1. **Adult authority**
2. **Capacity to reason**
3. **Capacity for good and evil**
4. **The end or loss of innocence**
5. **Civilization and savagery**