**Sample Patterns for Theses on Literary Works**

1. In (*title of work), (author), (illustrates, shows) (aspect) (adjective).*

Example: In “Barn Burning,” William Faulkner shows the characters Sardie and Abner Snopes struggling to determine their identity.

2. In (*title of work), (author)* uses *(one aspect)* to *(define, strengthen, illustrate)* the *(element of work).*

Example: In “Youth,” Joseph Conrad uses foreshadowing to strengthen the plot.

3. In *(title of work), (author)* uses *(literary device)*  to *(accomplish, develop, illustrate, strengthen…) (element of work).*

Example: In “The Masque of the Red Death,” Poe uses the symbolism of color to illustrate the various stages of man’s life.

4. *(Author) (shows, develops, illustrates)* the them of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the *(play, poem, story).*

Example: Flannery O’Connor illustrates the theme of the effect of selfishness of the grandmother upon the family in “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

5. *(Author)* develops his character(s) in *(title of work)*  through his/her use of (*language, setting, point of view).*

Example: John Updike develops his characters in “A & P” through the use of figurative language.

Other Noteworthy Thesis Statements

By describing the Box Man as “dignified” and “at ease”, Ascher paints a vivid picture of a man who chooses a life of comfort and solitude and defeats loneliness by becoming his own friend.

Through the use of imagery and diction, Steinbeck reveals Tom’s noble conscience and characterizes him as a rebellious – albeit rash – young man.

Marlowe uses ambivalent descriptions in order to humanize these otherwise grand and epic characters.

Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American ideals, one must leave ‘civilized’ society and go back to nature.

The use of “whiteness” in *Moby-Dick* illustrates the uncertainty about the meaning of life that Ishmael expresses throughout the novel.