

# Theme and meaning in a separate peace essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Theme is in simplest the moral of the story; it is the lesson readers should receive that is significant to the entire text. Theme also can be what the story mostly focuses on.

Stories often have a few themes, but typically there is central theme that ties the entire work together. Within *A Separate Peace*, friendship, adolescence (youth and growing up), warfare, identity (identifying one's true self), reflection (memories and the past), and a combination of Jealousy and fear are a few words to sum up the major themes within the written work. The one to cost fully take to heart is the sense of Identity.

Identity is such an importance within the novel, especially due to the fact that the two main characters (Gene- the narrator, and Phonies) being two almost opposite characters.

Gene being more of the brains, while Phonies being the athlete feels he needs to up the ante in academics when Phonies displays his athletic ability. Gene feels a constant comparison between himself and his close friend. He also always allows himself to be persuaded by Phonies, and finds difficulty standing up for himself and finding his true identity and place due to the fact he feels he is in a constant competition.

Later on due to events that occur, Gene struggles but tries to create an identity for himself outside of Phonies. Warfare is made obvious within the story.

The setting of the story is set within the early years of World War II. During this time children were forced to grow up, losing their sense of youth and

childhood. Not only was their war in the world around them, but also war occurred in the personal life of Gene. The book asserts that we all identify enemies in the world around us, that we make it our life mission to go against them just to have an object for our hate and fear.

While warfare provides a deeper meaning than just the setting, so does the point of view when it comes to the major premise of memory and reflection within the story. The book is told by the narrator looking back, so the story is meant to be taken as a flashback.

Memory also proves to be undependable within the story. Not only does it fail to remember certain events within the story, but it alters others.

Reflection is important in the sense that it reveals that due to the point of view, there are many things that are forgotten and changed, but people still present these forgotten and changed things as fact and truth.

Jealousy is just one of the negative emotions in *A Separate Peace*, others being fear and bitterness. The story reveals how jealousy drives some to do unthinkable things, and then those people who do it understand it to least due to their drive.

Fear being the last theme to wrap the story up leads readers to see that many teens are afraid of the future. However, fear is also revealed in one character as a fear of himself, and things he was capable of.

While many of the themes weren't the most positive, each gave the story the meaning and the central theme of finding your own identity revealed to readers something crucial- making peace within yourself. Theme and

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