

## **Cross-Genre Lesson: Exploring a Thematic Idea in Informational and Literary Texts Foundation Lesson**

### **About this Lesson**

Tracing an idea across multiple texts, synthesizing information presented in different formats, and evaluating themes and patterns from numerous sources are college readiness skills that represent increased rigor for the Pre-AP\* classroom. As current state and national education standards make clear, students must be able to analyze and assess information from a variety of sources, skills that will require much teacher modeling and independent practice to acquire.

This lesson shows students how to follow and analyze a single thematic idea through visual, informational, and literary texts. Students will identify elements and devices used in the texts to support the theme and consider how those elements create meaning.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 8: Style Analysis: Determining the Underlying Meaning.

### **Objectives**

Students will

- trace a thematic idea through multiple, diverse texts.
- analyze how an artist's purpose, an artwork's structure, and the artwork's point of view affect thematic meaning.
- compare and contrast thematic meaning in diverse texts.
- write an analytical or argumentative essay involving comparison, synthesis, and evaluation skills.

### **Levels**

Grades Six through Ten

### **Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts**

LTF Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	Understand	III
R.2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	Analyze	III
R.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	Analyze	III
R.4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	Analyze	III
R.5	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	Analyze	III
R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	Analyze	III
R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	Evaluate	III
R.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	Evaluate	III
R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	Analyze	III
R.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Understand	II
L.6	Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	Understand	II
W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Create	III
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Create	III

**Teacher Overview—Cross-Genre Lesson**  
**Exploring a Thematic Idea in Informational and Literary Texts**

W.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.	Evaluate	III
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Analyze	III
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Apply	III
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Understand	II
SL.2	Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	Evaluate	III

Implicitly addressed in this lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Understand	I
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Understand	I
L.3	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	Understand	II
W.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach	Evaluate	III
W.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.	Apply	II
W.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	Create	IV

**Connection to Common Core Literacy Standards for History/Social Studies Grades 6-8**

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
RH.6-8.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.	Understand	III

RH.6-8.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	Understand	II
RH.6-8.5	Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).	Understand	I
RH.6-8.6	Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).	Analyze	III
RH.6-8.7	Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.	Apply	II
RH.6-8.8	Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.	Understand	II
RH.6-8.9	Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.	Analyze	III
RH.6-8.10	By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	Understand	II

**Connection to Common Core Literacy Standards for History/Social Studies Grades 9-10**

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
RH.9-10.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.	Understand	III
RH.6-8.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.	Understand	II
RH.6-8.3	Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.	Analyze	II
RH.6-8.5	Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.	Analyze	III
RH.6-8.6	Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.	Analyze	III
RH.6-8.8	Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.	Evaluate	III
RH.6-8.9	Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.	Analyze	III
RH.6-8.10	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	Understand	II

## LTF Skill Focus

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Close Reading		Grammar		Composition	
<i>written, spoken, and visual texts</i>		<i>purposeful use of language for effect</i>		<i>written, spoken, and visual products</i>	
<b>Reading Strategies</b> Annotation Determining Audience Determining Author's Purpose Determining Main Idea Inference Summary <b>Literary Elements</b> Character <i>persona</i> Detail Diction Imagery Point of View person perspective shift Theme <b>Literary Techniques</b> Allusion mythological literary Argumentation comparison/contrast <b>Literary Forms</b> Nonfiction Verse		<b>Parts of Speech</b>		<b>Types (modes)</b> Expository analytical research-based Persuasion (argumentation) challenge defend <b>The Process of Composition</b> Prewriting consideration of audience determination of purpose generation of ideas Drafting extended time <b>Structural Elements</b> Body use of commentary	

## Connections to AP\*

The ability to compare and contrast a thematic idea between works is an important skill assessed by the AP English Literature and Language exams. Synthesizing material from a variety of sources is an essential component of the AP English Language exam.

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## Materials and Resources

- copies of Student Activity
- copies of the image “Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’” and the photograph documenting the destruction of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein’s statue. The images may be found on the following websites:
  - “Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’”: (This image is available on the British Museum’s website for educational use and may be copied for students.)  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aes/c/colossal\\_bust\\_of\\_ramesses\\_ii.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/c/colossal_bust_of_ramesses_ii.aspx)
  - Saddam Hussein’s statue: (This image is in the public domain and may be copied for student use.)  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SaddamStatue.jpg>

## Assessments

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- guided questions
- frame statements
- graphic organizers
- writing assignments

The following additional assessments are located on the LTF website

- 2006 Posttest, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade—Comparison/Contrast Using “Moon” and “Dover Beach”
- 2006 Posttest, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade—Comparison/Contrast Using “The Possessive” and “Ex-Basketball Player”
- 2006 Posttest, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade—Comparison/Contrast Using “The Blue Heron” and “A Poem for the Blue Heron”

## Teaching Suggestions

*Note:* This lesson uses images and texts concerning the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ramses the Great. There are several accepted spellings of the pharaoh’s name, including *Ramesses*, *Rameses*, and *Ramses*. For sake of consistency, this lesson will use the spelling *Ramses* in all references to the pharaoh. The different spellings are also noted on the Student Activity.

Teachers may find it beneficial to include the companion lesson “Theme and Point of View Using ‘Ozymandias’” as part of a larger unit. The lesson is located on the LTF website and in *Module 8: Style Analysis: Determining the Underlying Meaning*. An extended version of the lesson, titled “Putting It All Together: Theme and Point of View Using ‘Ozymandias,’” also is available on the website and includes additional close reading, grammar and composition activities. Which lesson to use first is a matter of teacher preference. If teachers wish to consider the issue of bias in documents, they might introduce this lesson first so that Shelley’s poem does not influence greatly the students’ understanding of Ramses II. However, if teachers wish to emphasize theme, introducing the PAT lesson or the abbreviated lesson first is recommended.

Teachers should make available for students the images noted under “Materials and Resources.” The image of “Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’” is available on the British Museum’s website for educational use. If teachers decide to make copies of the image for students rather than project it, they should note the copyright information © Trustees of the British Museum on any hand outs. Teachers should review the British Museum’s “Terms of Use” before using the image

in any other manner. The photograph of Saddam Hussein’s statue is property of the United States Department of Defence and is available in the public domain.

As the activities in this lesson target complex thinking and writing skills, teachers should model exercises in whole-class settings or should have students complete activities in small groups, followed by whole class review. If teachers have not completed the PAT lesson over “Ozymandias” before beginning this lesson, they should prepare to spend time discussing the poem in Activity Three. Teachers should focus specifically on how structure, point of view, and diction lead to thematic understanding.

The writing activities are designed to be extended, out-of-class assignments. Teachers may wish to provide additional historical context surrounding the Saddam Hussein picture with so that students can more easily connect the photograph to a text like “Ozymandias.” Teachers also will want to provide some class time to model how organizational and development strategies for the essays.

### Answers

Answers for this lesson are subjective and will vary; however, typical responses to some questions are provided below. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

### Activity One

- | 1. | Nouns        | Adjectives    |
|----|--------------|---------------|
|    | <u>king</u>  | <u>regal</u>  |
|    | <u>ruler</u> | <u>mythic</u> |
|    | <u>giant</u> | <u>proud</u>  |
- 
2. 7.2 tons  
royal headgear  
cobra on headdress is missing  
Memnon—allusion to a Greek warrior
  3. *The statue is massive. It would have loomed over the viewer, making Ramses II seem like a giant.*
  4. *He wants to make his people and his enemies think he is a force that is semi-divine and larger than life.*
  5. *The ruler is all-powerful and mighty. Rebellion or resistance to the pharaoh would be futile and probably dangerous.*
  6. *In Greek mythology, Memnon is a heroic warrior from the African continent. The Museum wants people who see the statue to associate Ramses II with heroism, mythology, and supernatural achievement.*
  7. *Frame statement: Ramses II’s statue reveals that the pharaoh wanted to project a persona that is powerful, larger-than-life, and god-like. He builds this colossal statue to create awe, respect, and fear in both his people and his enemies.*



### Activity Two

2. Look at the list of character traits below. Using the information you gained from the passage above, circle the traits you think **best** fit Ramses II's persona:

frail	weak	courageous
proud	honest	ruthless
envious	cruel	sympathetic
calculating	strong	cautious
arrogant	merciful	ignorant
pompous	humble	vain

5. *While the facial expression on the statue may suggest peacefulness or kindness, the statue's sheer size and the royal headdress were designed to be awe-inspiring and perhaps even frightening. By making his statue so imposing, Ramses II wants to signal to his people and his enemies that they should fear and respect him.*

### Activity Three

- Ozymandias considers himself all-powerful and invincible.*
- The statue is broken into many pieces, most of which are missing. The head is half-buried in the sand, suggesting the statue had been fragmented for a long time.*
- Ozymandias believes that his works would stand as a testament to his power, wealth, and prestige. His excessive pride in his achievements is shown to be misplaced, as his works have long disappeared from the world.*

**Thematic statement:** Excessive pride can lead to a person's downfall because it prevents him from seeing that worldly riches and power are not permanent.

### Activity Four

Answers will vary. Suggested responses are below.

Questions	Answer	Evidence from the text
What is the writer's purpose? What does he/she hope to accomplish?	<i>The author would like to challenge the way his audience understands Ramses II's persona.</i>	<i>"Shelley imagined Ramses as a symbol of tyranny and unbridled egotism. But there must have been another side" (lines 30-33).</i>
Who is the audience?	<i>National Geographic subscribers; an educated audience</i>	<i>"As this scholarship enriches our knowledge of ancient Egypt, it is rounding out a more human portrait of this towering figure" (lines 50-53).</i>
What assumptions about the audience does the writer/speaker make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The audience is familiar with the poet Shelley.</i></li> <li><i>They know the Biblical story of the Exodus.</i></li> <li><i>His audience is curious and will want to know more information about Ramses.</i></li> </ul>	<i>"Our perception of Ramses has long been colored by the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley" (lines 23-25).</i>
What authority does the	<i>He is a reporter for National</i>	<i>"Kitchen has spent the past 22</i>



writer/speaker have that makes him/her credible?	Geographic, a well-respected journal.  <i>He consults experts in the field of Egyptology.</i>	<i>years translating and studying the 2,000 pages of hieroglyphs that relate to Ramses” (lines 37-39).</i>
What claims does the writer make?	<i>Our understanding of Ramses may not be correct or fair.</i>	<i>“As this scholarship enriches our knowledge of ancient Egypt, it is rounding out a more human portrait of this towering figure” (lines 50-53).</i>
What issues are addressed or ignored?	<p><i>1. Addressed: Ramses was a man of grand vision and large appetites.</i></p> <p><i>2. Ignored: Ramses’ use of slave labor.</i></p>	<i>1. “He will reign more than 60 years, sire at least 90 children, bring his empire prosperity and peace, build more colossal structures and have his name carved on more stone surfaces than any other pharaoh” (lines 16-20)</i>

### Activity Five

*As the students generate details to place in the appropriate circles, teachers may want to guide their work by focusing on the intersections of “pride,” “arrogance,” and “power” between all the works.*

### Activity Six

*Answers will vary. Teachers should help students draw conclusions about the human desire for immortality and the ephemeral nature of material goods or political power.*

## Cross-Genre Lesson: Exploring a Thematic Idea in Informational and Literary Texts Foundation Lesson

This lesson uses images and texts concerning the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ramses the Great. There are several accepted spellings of the pharaoh's name, including *Ramesses*, *Rameses*, and *Ramses*. For the sake of consistency, this lesson will use the spelling *Ramses* in all references to the pharaoh.

### Activity One: Examining a Visual Image

Below is a picture of "Ramses II, the 'Younger Memnon,'" a 7.25 ton granite bust that stood by the entrance to one of Ramses II's temples. In this sculpture, Ramses II is wearing his royal headgear. The cobra on his crown, now missing, is a symbol of protection as well as a sign of the pharaoh's royal status. Today, the statue is located in the British Museum, which obtained it after archeologist Giovanni Belzoni removed it from Egypt in 1816. The title "Younger Memnon," given to the statue by the Museum, is an allusion to an Ethiopian warrior in Greek mythology who was considered second only to the Greek hero Achilles. The bust's arrival in London in 1818 inspired Percy Bysshe Shelley to write "Ozymandias," a poem that reflects upon Ramses the Great's legacy.



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1. Examine the statue fragment. Below, list nouns and adjectives that describe the statue's appearance.

#### Nouns

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#### Adjectives

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2. Reread the background information about the statue. Below, list specific historical details or descriptive facts you learned about the statue.

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3. The statue fragment weighs 7.25 tons. To give you a sense of perspective, an adult African Elephant weighs about 7 tons. Given that you only see a piece of the statue, what might you assume about the entire sculpture before it was broken?

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4. What would motivate a ruler to have a statue of himself created? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What would an individual looking at the entire statue think or believe about such a ruler?

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6. Explain what might have motivated the British Museum to use an allusion to Memnon in the statue's title.

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The term **persona** literally means “a mask.” In literature, the term is used to refer to the “second self” created by an author and is the voice through which the author speaks. **Persona** can also describe the public self or personal image a person presents to the world as opposed to his or her inner personality.

7. Based upon your answers above, fill in the frame statement below to discuss what you assume to be true about the **persona** of Ramses II.

<p>Ramses II's statue _____ that the pharaoh wanted to _____ <i>(reveals/communicates/advertises)</i></p> <p>_____ a <b>persona</b> that _____ <i>(create/suggest/project)</i></p> <p>_____ <i>(Write a sentence or two that describes the image Ramses II wanted to project to his people.)</i></p> <p>_____</p>
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### Activity Two: Examining an Informational Text

The following paragraph is information about Ramses II similar to what you might find in an encyclopedia. As you read, mark the passage for information which reveals these things:

- who Ramses II was
- where and when he ruled
- what his accomplishments were
- how others viewed him

Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great, is viewed by historians as one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs. While the exact dates of his reign are unclear, Ramses II ruled during Egypt's 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, sometime between the years 1279 -1212 B.C.E. Ramses II presided over an era known as the New Kingdom, a golden age of great wealth and prosperity for the Egyptians. Ramses II used architecture, literature, and sculpture to document his military triumphs over neighboring countries and to encourage his people to see him as a heroic, larger-than-life figure. Ramses II is considered one of Egypt's finest builders, and many of ancient Egypt's surviving monuments bear his image and are products of his promotional campaign. Ramses II even brought back the ancient practice of elevating the pharaoh into a god, a gesture that made him seem even more magnificent to his people. While Ramses II's reign reflected the glory and might of Egypt, the golden age did not last long. Only 150 years after his death, Egypt fell to invaders, and almost all of its institutions collapsed. Egypt would never again enjoy such world prominence as it did during Ramses II's reign.

1. In two or three sentences, summarize the most important points in the passage above:

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2. Look at the list of character traits below. Using the information you gained from the passage above, circle the traits you think **best** fit Ramses II's persona:

frail	weak	courageous
proud	honest	ruthless
envious	cruel	sympathetic
calculating	strong	cautious
arrogant	merciful	ignorant
pompous	humble	vain

3. Complete the chart below by gathering evidence to describe Ramses II and explaining what you can infer about his persona based on the evidence. Use the words in the trait list above to help guide your inferences.

<b>Evidence</b> <i>(details, facts, descriptions)</i>	<b>Inference—Commentary</b> <i>(What do you learn about Ramses II's persona?)</i>
<p>“Ramses II used architecture, literature, and sculpture to document his military triumphs over neighboring countries. . .” (lines 5-6).</p>	<p><b><u>ruthless, proud</u></b>—Ramses II wanted his people to regard him as a ruler they must obey and respect. By documenting his military victories on huge monuments, in reports, and in poems, Ramses II tried to intimidate his enemies by presenting himself as a victorious, strong warrior who always destroyed his opposition.</p>
<p>“Ramses II even brought back the ancient practice of elevating the pharaoh into a god. . .” (lines 9-10).</p>	<p>_____</p>
	<p>_____</p>
	<p>_____</p>



4. Based on your important points and the evidence in the chart, explain why history has given Ramses II the title “Ramses the Great.”

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5. Now, look back at the picture of “Ramses II, ‘the Younger Memnon.’” Does the background information about Ramses II change or strengthen your understanding of the statue fragment? Explain your answer.

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### **Activity Three: Thematic Ideas and Thematic Statements**

Read the sonnet “Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

#### **Ozymandias**

I met a traveler from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert...Near them, on the sand,  
Half-sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!”  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

After reading the poem and discussing it with your teacher and classmates, go back to the character trait list in Activity Two and circle any additional traits that seem appropriate. Then, answer the following questions:

1. What does Ozymandias think of himself? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What happened to Ozymandias’ statue? \_\_\_\_\_

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The word **hubris** means “excessive pride.” **Hubris** is used in literature to describe characters whose pride in their own talents, actions, or worldly goods leads to their ultimate downfall.

3. Explain how readers might consider Ozymandias guilty of **hubris**: \_\_\_\_\_

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A **thematic idea** is an abstract noun that describes some dimension of the human condition examined by a text. A **thematic statement** is a declarative statement that reveals universal meaning, and it addresses questions like “What does the literature say about. . .? What is the life lesson being taught about. . .? or What are the author’s ideas about. . .?”

Here is an example of a thematic statement on the thematic idea of *courage*:

Courage                      allows people to attempt difficult tasks in their lives  
(thematic idea)                      (assertion about the thematic idea)

even when the possibility of failure is very high.  
(qualifying clause: when, because, unless, even, so that, whether, if, etc.)

Consider the **thematic idea** of *pride* (hubris) and create a **thematic statement** that targets how Shelley’s vision of the human experience is revealed.

<b>Thematic idea:</b> <u>Pride</u>	
<b>Thematic statement</b> ( <i>What are the author’s ideas about the thematic idea?</i> ):	
(thematic idea)	(assertion about the thematic idea)
(qualifying clause: when, because, unless, even, so that, whether, if, etc.)	

### Activity Four: Analyzing an Argument

The following passage describes *National Geographic* reporter Rick Gore’s investigation of the life of Ramses the Great. Read the passage, focusing on Gore’s description of Ramses and how his attitude toward Ramses differs from Shelley’s.

In the year 1279 B.C. the Sphinx, that great man-animal monument that stands near the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis, was already more than a thousand  
5 years old. A young warrior strides between its paws. He is dressed in regal<sup>1</sup> garb, a ceremonial wig concealing his close-cropped hair.

On a colossal statue that scholars now  
10 suspect stood between the paws, he orders workers to chisel in his throne name, User-maat-re—Strong in the truth is Re. And beside that inscription he commands them to carve his personal name, Ramesses—or to  
15 us, Ramses the Great.

He will reign more than 60 years, sire at least 90 children, bring his empire prosperity and peace, build more colossal structures and have his name carved on more stone  
20 surfaces than any other pharaoh. He will be linked also with the Exodus of the Hebrews<sup>2</sup>.

Our perception of Ramses has long been colored by the English poet Percy Bysshe  
25 Shelley. He wrote this famous sonnet “Ozymandias” after a magnificent bust of Ramses, found near a shattered colossus at the pharaoh’s funerary temple in Thebes, was shipped with great fanfare to the British  
30 Museum in 1817. Shelley imagined Ramses as a symbol of tyranny and unbridled egotism<sup>3</sup>.

But there must have been another side. At the British Museum, I had visited the  
35 Ramses bust with Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen of the University of Liverpool. Kitchen has spent the past 22 years translating and studying the 2,000 pages of hieroglyphs that relate to Ramses. He is the  
40 world’s leading authority on the man.

We looked up at the bust.

“See, Shelley got it wrong,” said Kitchen. “Our man never sneers. Look at his

lips. He smiles. Gently. It’s a lovely poem, but I’m afraid it’s pure Shelley.”

Kitchen’s work and new archaeological interpretations are indeed helping us to see beyond the cruel and romantic vision of Ramses. As this scholarship enriches our  
50 knowledge of ancient Egypt, it is rounding out a more human portrait of this towering figure. Who was the man behind the great stone mask? That is the question that pulled me to Egypt.

<sup>1</sup>**regal:** of notable excellence or magnificence; suitable for a king

<sup>2</sup>**Exodus...Hebrews:** a story in the Hebrew Bible describing the departure of the Hebrews from ancient Egypt. Ramses the Great often is associated with the pharaoh in the story.

<sup>3</sup>**egotism:** excessive reference to oneself in conversation or writing; conceit, boastfulness

**Student Activity—Cross-Genre Lesson**  
**Exploring a Thematic Idea in Informational and Literary Texts**

In order for speakers or writers to be effective in capturing the attention of their audiences and influencing opinions, they must first be aware of many issues. Many of these issues appear in the left-hand column below as questions. Considering these questions, carefully review the *National Geographic* magazine article above, looking for answers and supporting evidence from the text. Write your responses in the chart below.

Questions	Answer	Evidence from the text
What is the writer’s purpose? What does he/she hope to accomplish?		
Who is the audience?		
What assumptions about the audience does the writer/speaker make?		
What authority does the writer/speaker have that makes him/her credible?		
What claims does the writer make?		
What issues are addressed or ignored?		

Does this article support or challenge your understanding of the statue “Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’”? Explain your answer:\_\_\_\_\_

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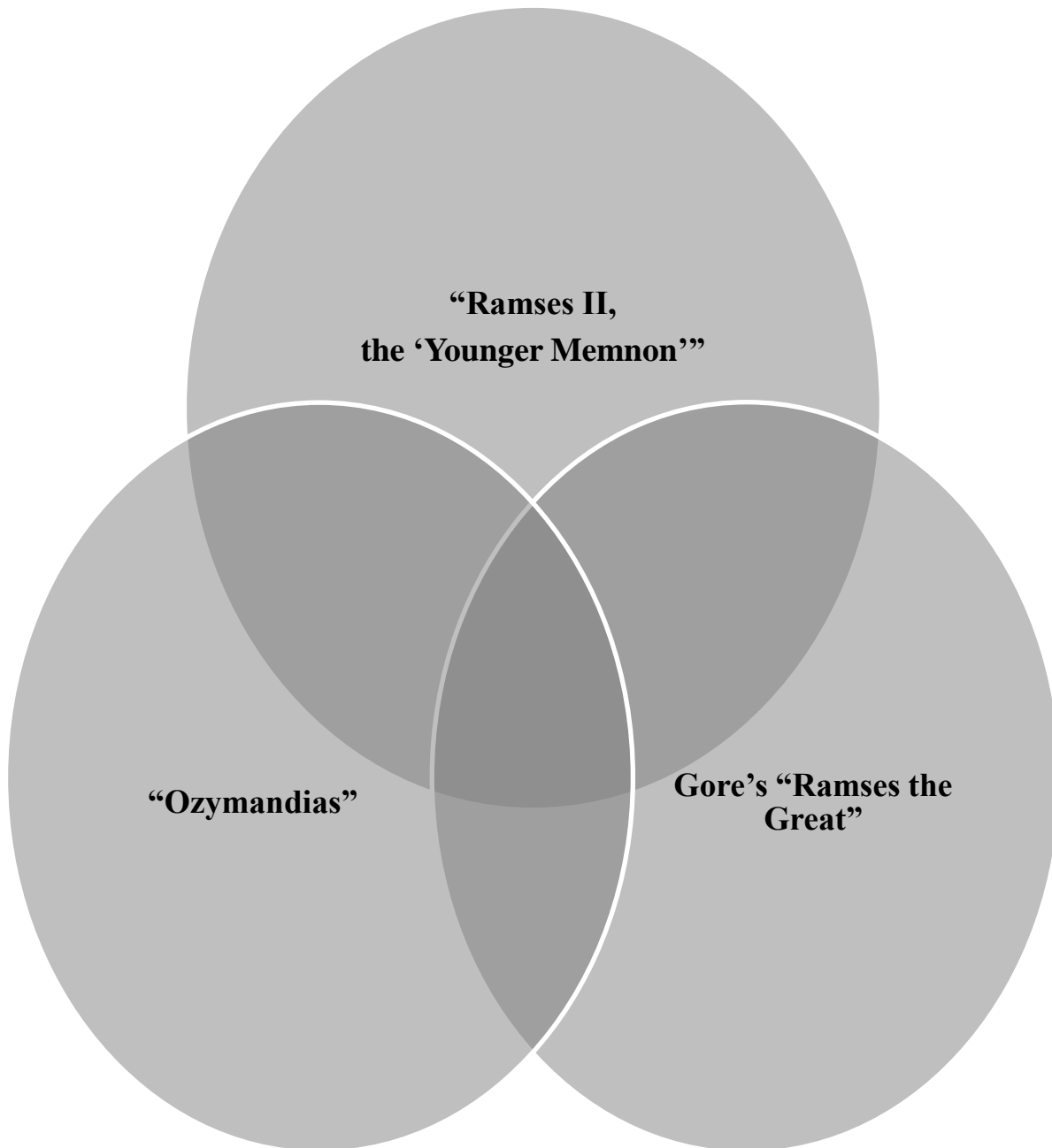
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**Activity Five: Comparing an Idea Across Texts**

After analyzing the statue “Ramses II, the Younger Memnon,” Shelley’s poem “Ozymandias” and Rick Gore’s *National Geographic* article “Ramses the Great,” complete the diagram below by placing specific words and phrases that describe the **persona** of Ramses II as he is presented in each text or artifact. If a detail or character trait is found in more than one artwork or text, place those similar words and details in the overlapping section(s) of the circles.



**Activity Six: Tracing a Theme through Different Texts**

Consider the thematic idea of hubris as it is portrayed in the three texts or artwork in your Venn Diagram. In the chart below, list the assertions you have gathered in the Venn Diagram that relate specifically to the idea of **hubris**, then provide evidence to support your assertions. You may use quotations or details as your evidence. An example in italics has been done for each text.

**“Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’”**

*The statue’s size is designed to generate awe, which suggests Ramses wanted to appear like a god.*

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**Shelley’s “Ozymandias”**

*The statue’s pedestal says “Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!”*

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**Rick Gore’s “Ramses the Great”**

*“Our man never sneers.”*

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How do these three texts present a similar vision of Ramses II’s pride? \_\_\_\_\_

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Explain any differences in the three texts’ discussion of pride: \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you think Ramses II is guilty of hubris? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Activity Seven: Thematic Connections**

This picture shows the toppling of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's statue by United States soldiers and Iraqi citizens on April 9, 2003. The destruction of the statue occurred when Iraqi citizens gathered in a Baghdad city square to celebrate the downfall of Hussein's government.



1. Consider the picture above. What does this image suggest about the thematic idea of pride?

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2. Think of people in history, in art, or in your own experience who have taken great, perhaps excessive, pride in their accomplishments. List them below:

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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

3. How did these individuals or characters exhibit their great pride in their accomplishments?

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4. Was the pride these individuals or characters showed in their accomplishments justified or misplaced? Explain your answers: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Writing assignments

#### **Argument essay**

Shelley’s poem “Ozymandias” suggests that mankind’s achievements are temporary and that a leader’s hubris, or excessive pride in his successes, is misplaced. Write an essay in which you defend, challenge, or qualify this idea using your reading, experience, and observation to develop your argument.

#### **Synthesis essay:**

In the 3200 years since Ramses II ruled Egypt, historians, artists, and reporters have tried to understand and describe the pharaoh’s character traits, motivations, and values. In a well-written, well supported essay, defend or challenge the idea that Ramses II was guilty of hubris, or having excessive pride. Use details, descriptions, diction, or images from two of the following texts or artworks to support your opinion:

- “Ramses II, the ‘Younger Memnon’” (source A)
- Shelley’s “Ozymandias” (source B)
- the sample encyclopedia entry found in Activity Two (source C)
- the *National Geographic* article “Ramses the Great” (source D)