

# The 12 Key Pillars of Novel Construction

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## Inspection Checklist #4

### Theme with a Heart

	QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
QUESTION #1	Ask yourself, "What is my novel about?" Now <i>really</i> ask, "What is my novel <i>really</i> about?" Answer it here, centering on the theme, not the plot.	
QUESTION #2	List (or create) 10 places your theme is explored in your novel—by whom, how, and in what situation. Can you bring the theme out stronger?	
QUESTION #3	What iconic scene in your novel showcases (or will showcase) the heart of your theme? Blow it up as big as you can so it's the key scene.	
QUESTION #4	What are your main character's (MC) passionate views on this theme, and how do they tie in with her core need and goal for the story?	
QUESTION #5	Who challenges the views, actions, and beliefs of your MC in a way that involves your thematic elements? Make their opinions even stronger with higher stakes and greater conflict.	
QUESTION #6	How is your theme showcased in the climactic scenes of your book? Can you make the stakes higher and the choices harder for your MC?	

	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>YOUR ANSWER</b>
<b>QUESTION #7</b>	If you can't identify any themes, can you come up with three thematic topics to tie in with key decisions your MC makes? Make the issues more important and work that into the scenes.	
<b>QUESTION #8</b>	What wounds/past hurts have formed your characters? Can you find ways to tweak them to link thematically together?	
<b>QUESTION #9</b>	Is your theme strongly emphasized in your final chapter? Yes? Bring it out even more. No? Find a way to hone in on it so it brings depth to your novel.	
<b>QUESTION #10</b>	Find (or think of) 5 key scenes that showcase your theme. Print them out or compile in a new document. Can you blow the theme up bigger in each one? Give it a try!	
<b>QUESTION #11</b>	Go back to your opening scene and ask: Does this scene introduce the key themes of my story? Is it really the best scene to open with that will do so?	
<b>QUESTION #12</b>	Can you come up with a line your protagonist can repeat at least three times in the novel (best if that includes the first and last scenes) that will voice his feelings about the theme?	

**Write a one-paragraph summary of your novel highlighting your theme with a heart:**