

THEMATIC (THETA, θ) ROLES

NB: This is not an exhaustive list! Moreover, the line between some of these categories can get pretty fuzzy...

AGENT

- argument who performs the action or brings about the state of affairs
- an agent is conscious, sentient, animate
- volition or purpose involved in the action being done
- the agent is the prototypical subject (but does not need to appear as a subject!)
 - e.g. Napoleon conquered much of Europe.
 - The cake was baked by my mother.
 - The cat peed all over the house.

INSTRUMENT

- argument involved in the action (but not the agent)
- can be used by an agent
- non-purposeful, non-volitional by itself
 - e.g. This key opens the office door.
 - The thieves used a pick-axe to get inside.
 - Robin ate the cereal with a spoon.

CAUSE

- argument involved in the action/in bringing about the state of affairs (but not the agent)
- *cannot* be used by an agent
- non-purposeful, non-volitional by itself
 - e.g. An epidemic killed most of the villagers.
 - London was devastated by the fire of 1666.
 - The Great Depression put thousands of Americans in poverty.

EXPERIENCER

- argument that undergoes a sensory, cognitive, or emotional experience
- must be animate/sentient
 - e.g. Teresa had never seen the ocean before.
 - Many people fear snakes.
 - His singing struck her as singularly terrible.

RECIPIENT

- arguments that receive something (good or bad) in a situation
 - e.g. They gave all the employees a raise.
 - I paid my landlord the rent.
 - He spared me his usual sob story.

THEME

- thing acted upon, moved, or otherwise affected by a situation, OR
- an argument which has a property being referred to
- prototypical direct object (but doesn't have to be a direct object!)
- the "catch-all" (trashcan) of theta-roles
 - e.g. Napoleon conquered much of Europe.
 - Pat is very polite.
 - We put the books on the shelf.
 - London was devastated by the fire of 1666.

SOURCE

- the starting point for a movement
- may also indicate where a change (etc.) starts from
 - e.g. The package arrived from Moscow this morning.
 - I biked from Carrboro to Durham last night.
 - Robin frightened me.

GOAL

- the end point for a physical movement
- may also indicate the end result of a change in possession or identity
 - e.g. Many actors move to New York.
 - The magician changed the rabbit into a penguin.
 - John gave the cake to Mary.

LOCATION

- the place where an action occurred
 - e.g. We put the books on the shelf.
 - Maria sent a package to France.
 - Lots of good bands always come to Cat's Cradle.

PRACTICE

	A.	B.
1. <u>Jenny</u> caught <u>a cold</u> .	_____	_____
2. <u>Terry</u> gave Pam <u>a book</u> .	_____	_____
3. <u>Matt</u> and <u>Ben</u> are so funny!	_____	_____
4. <u>Allison</u> saw U2 in <u>D.C.</u>	_____	_____
5. <u>The boss</u> signs all her papers with <u>purple ink</u> .	_____	_____
6. <u>Grandma</u> died of <u>the flu</u> .	_____	_____