

# Complex Question Help

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If you are having a hard time writing a complex question, ask yourself, What does the author want me to ‘learn’ about...

- **myself (how I do/should think, feel, behave)**
- **people in general (how everyone does/should think, feel, behave)**

Then look for things that happen in the piece that seem to focus on the **character’s attitudes, thoughts, actions,** and **motives** that specifically relate to what you have identified as something that you think the author wants you to learn.

## List of big issues compared to small issues

Issues are “big” when they become focused on the world around you and small issues focus just on you. The piece you are reading probably has “small” issues in it, your job is to look to see how a small issue can be turned into a big issue.

Big Issues	Small Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty</li><li>• Hunger</li><li>• Greed</li><li>• Gun laws</li><li>• Car safety</li><li>• War</li><li>• How we treat others</li><li>• Friendship</li><li>• The good things we can do with our money</li><li>• Who you allow to have “authority” over you</li><li>• Happiness</li><li>• What is right</li><li>• Law</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best food</li><li>• Coolest sport</li><li>• Size of your house</li><li>• How much more money you have than others</li><li>• Cleanliness of your yard</li><li>• Doing your job when your mom asks you to</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>

Maybe the piece you’ve read has something about a mom asking her daughter to do a household chore, but the daughter refuses. If it just happens once, no big deal. But if there are continual instances of characters dealing with people who have authority, then maybe a big issue in the piece is about who we allow to have authority over us (or something like that).

It’s a real issue when it is a major part of the piece—when it is mentioned or happens multiple times or is part of the piece’s major goal, problem, solution, climax or resolution.