

THREAD FOR PEARLS

Set during another politically divisive eras in American history, *Thread for Pearls* is a coming-of-age tale that takes readers on a young heroine's journey to find faith and freedom amid a turbulent family dynamic. A story built on the theme of resilient hope, it provides an opportunity for readers to draw parallels between the angst and issues of the 1960s and '70s, and 2020, the premise asks whether it's the events of our lives (pearls) that define us, or the life trajectory (thread) on which we string them that gives us continuity. You decide.

Dr. Lauren Speeth, in portraying her protagonist's growing-up years, explores many of life's themes or issues, listed below. **Select 10 themes and write 50-75 words each**, explaining what each theme means to main character, **Fiona, and to you. Then, write a 250-word, expanded discussion**, critically thinking through **one theme** among your choices in terms of what issues, attachments or ideas came up **for Fiona and for you.**

Themes:

- “Resilient hope” and how it influences perspective
- The concept of “home” and sending down roots
- The impact of tradition
- Solitude vs. Loneliness
- Friendship
- Family
- Coming of Age
- The relationships between daughters and fathers/mothers
- Conformity vs. Rebellion
- Attacking what you see in the mirror and realizing it is yourself
- Motivation vs. Pressure
- Having Faith
- Holding people accountable for their actions—and their shortcomings
- Overcoming Obstacles
- Learning to let go. . .or never learning to let go
- Embracing Diversity
- The culture of poverty; buying into one's circumstances
- The meaning of achievement, satisfaction
- A life well lived

Spend some time critically thinking about the themes you chose, their context to the novel, and your own experiences and interpretations. Then, write.