An excellent theme is characterized by...

Content: has substance; development in depth; generalizations supported by specifics; logical reasoning; accurate information; originality and imagination.  
Style: clear, succinct, interesting, forceful; appropriate to audience and purpose.  
Organization: tight, coherent.  
Paragraphs: well developed; well organized; clear, smooth transition between paragraphs and within the paragraph.  
Diction: generally precise word choice.  
Sentence structure: varied; smooth; ideas appropriately subordinated and coordinated.  
Grammar: (near-) perfect.  
Mechanics: (near-) perfect.  
Spelling: (near-) perfect.

A passable theme is characterized by...

Content: not fully developed; generalizations supported by some specifics; mostly logical reasoning; generally accurate information.  
Style: generally clear; reasonably succinct.  
Organization: loose, but still coherent; has at least some unity.  
Paragraphs: adequately developed; adequately organized; some transition between and within paragraphs.  
Diction: generally adequate word choice.  
Sentence structure: a bit choppy, stringy, monotonous, or awkward; occasional faulty syntax.  
Grammar: no pattern of serious errors.  
Mechanics: no run-on sentences; no pattern of serious errors, e.g., common splices or unnecessary fragments.  
Spelling: occasional misspelling.

An unpassable theme is characterized by one or more flaws...

Content: obvious or trite ideas; undeveloped ideas; generalizations not supported by specifics; illogical reasoning; inaccurate information; plagiarism.  
Organization: disorganized; lacks unity.  
Paragraphs: undeveloped; lacking transition between paragraphs and/or within paragraphs.  
Diction: imprecise, vague, or wrong words; reliance on cliches; noticeably unidiomatic phrasing.  
Sentence structure: invariably choppy or stingy sentences; pattern of faulty syntax.  
Grammar: pattern of serious errors.  
Mechanics: pattern of serious errors, e.g., run-on sentences, comma splices, unnecessary fragments.  
Spelling: pattern of misspelled words.