

Gatsby plugins are Node.js packages that implement Gatsby APIs and are commonly installed through a registry like npm. Common use cases for Gatsby plugins include data sourcing and hooking into lifecycle methods.

Gatsby themes are a type of plugin that includes a `gatsby-config.js` file and adds pre-configured functionality, data sourcing, and/or UI code to Gatsby sites. Themes might pre-bundle plugins and configure them so users don't have to, providing a nice abstraction that can be installed and updated as a package.

To learn more about plugins and themes in general, you may be interested to check out the docs guides on [plugins](#) and [themes](#).

For a deeper understanding of the differences between plugins, themes, and starters, you can also refer to the related [conceptual guide](#).