Theme and character response

Follow a Change in Strategy

Name _____ Date _____

Quick review A theme is a message, not just a topic word. Connect the character's challenge, response and outcome to a message the story supports.

Example Jo's model collapsed. She asked for advice, revised it and built a model that stayed upright. This supports a theme: learning from setbacks can help us improve.

Read the kite story. Trace the response to a challenge and develop a theme with evidence. More than one message is acceptable if the details support it.

The Kite That Would Not Rise

[1] On the open field, Sela pulled her homemade kite through the grass for the sixth time. It bounced, twisted, and settled flat. 'I just need to run faster,' she told her brother Micah. She took a longer start, but the frame folded at one corner before the kite rose.

[2] Micah sat beside the kite instead of chasing it. Sela started to protest, then noticed him turning the bent corner in his hands. She knelt and compared it with the opposite side. Together they added a small brace from the spare frame pieces. Sela tested the corner gently before standing again.

[3] On the next attempt, the kite lifted briefly and dipped. Sela lowered it and adjusted the string attachment rather than rushing back across the field. By late afternoon, it stayed above them for several moments. She tucked the unused pieces into her bag. 'For the next adjustment,' she said.

1. Describe Sela's first response to failure and the different response she tries later.

2. Turn the topic 'persistence' into a theme that fits the change in Sela's approach.

3. Quote one detail from before the change and one from after it. Explain how they support your theme.

4. Revise this overstatement: 'If you never stop running, every kite will fly perfectly.' Use the ending to keep the message reasonable.

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Responses and feedback: Follow a Change in Strategy

These are sample responses and reasoning. Accept other answers that fit the task and are supported by the text or language rule.

1. At first Sela repeats the attempt with more speed. Later she inspects the frame, adds a brace with Micah, and adjusts the string attachment.

Reasoning: First identify her stated plan to run faster. Then contrast repetition with the later actions that examine and change the kite itself.

2. Persistence can include studying a problem and changing a strategy, not just repeating the same attempt.

Reasoning: First make the topic into a complete message. Then include the shift from running faster to inspecting and adjusting, which distinguishes this story's lesson from a general claim about effort.

3. Sela's words 'I just need to run faster' contrast with the detail that she later 'adjusted the string attachment' instead of repeating the same attempt. Her persistence becomes more thoughtful and flexible.

Reasoning: First choose evidence from both stages of her response. Then explain the relationship between the details so they demonstrate learning rather than merely listing two kite actions.

4. Trying again with thoughtful adjustments can bring progress, even when more work remains; Sela's kite stays up briefly, and she saves parts for another adjustment.

Reasoning: First remove the guarantee of perfection and the focus on running. Then use the brief flight and saved parts to show progress without pretending the challenge is completely finished.