Theme and character response

Test a Theme Against Two Viewpoints

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 planning story. Compare a first judgment with later evidence, then test how the ending develops a message. Other supported themes are welcome.

The Map on the Back

[1] Reina passed out jobs for the block party while Tomas drew on the back of the planning sheet. She repeated the list of stations, but his pencil kept moving. 'If you're not listening, I'll ask someone else to help,' she said. Tomas covered the page with his hand and went quiet.

[2] During setup, two volunteers carried game boxes to the wrong corner. Tomas unfolded his sheet. It showed the entrance, the tables, and arrows connecting the stations Reina had named. 'I was trying to see where people would go,' he said. Reina compared the map with her list, then asked him to explain the arrows.

[3] They moved one station and copied the map onto a larger sheet. Before assigning the last jobs, Reina asked Tomas what else he had noticed. He pointed to a narrow gap between tables. This time, she put down her list and looked where he was pointing.

1. Compare Reina's first interpretation of Tomas's drawing with what she learns later.

2. Which theme fits better: 'Listening before judging can reveal another person's contribution,' or 'Good helpers always work in the same way'? Explain.

3. Quote an ending detail showing Reina has changed and explain its connection to the theme.

4. If Reina used the map but still refused to hear Tomas's ideas, how would that change the evidence for her growth?

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Responses and feedback: Test a Theme Against Two Viewpoints

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

1. Reina first treats the drawing as a sign that Tomas is not listening. Later she learns that he has mapped the stations she named to understand how people will move.

Reasoning: First use her warning to identify the initial judgment. Then use the map's matching stations and Tomas's explanation to show why the judgment needs revision.

2. The first theme fits because Tomas contributes through drawing, which Reina initially misunderstands. His map becomes useful once she asks him to explain it.

Reasoning: First compare the themes with the difference between a written list and a drawn map. Then choose the message that accounts for the useful contribution Reina almost dismisses.

3. Reina 'asked Tomas what else he had noticed.' She now seeks his thinking instead of assuming his different way of working means he is not helping.

Reasoning: First select an action that contrasts with her earlier warning. Then connect her invitation to the message about understanding a contribution before judging it.

4. It would weaken the evidence that she learned to listen. Using one useful map would not show the new willingness to seek Tomas's observations that the actual ending shows.

Reasoning: First distinguish accepting a product from changing a habit. Then compare the imagined refusal with the actual invitation to explain why the real ending develops the theme more strongly.