The Garden Stand

Trace how a character's choices reveal a theme.

4.LF.21.a "Determine the central idea or theme of a text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that helps you understand the story's theme. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to show how the theme develops.

A Better Way for the Beans

1 Every Friday, Mina helped set up the school garden stand. One morning, she found the bean plants leaning across the narrow path. "We should tie them to the fence," she told her friend Ravi. Ravi pointed out that the fence belonged to the neighbor and might be painted soon. Mina had already gathered string, so she frowned and started tying anyway.

2 Ravi watched a wheelbarrow squeeze past the plants. "What if we give the vines their own supports?" he asked. Mina said there was no wood left in the shed. Ravi showed her a bundle of smooth, fallen branches behind the compost bin. She almost said they were too crooked, but stopped to ask how he would use them. Together they pushed the branches into the soil and gently guided the vines onto them.

3 By lunchtime, the vines rested on the branches, and the path was clear. The neighbor arrived with a paintbrush and thanked them for keeping the fence free. Mina untied the one piece of string she had fastened earlier. "I'm glad I listened before I finished," she said. The next Friday, she asked Ravi for his thoughts before moving a single pot.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What lesson does Mina learn? State it as a theme, not just a story event.

2. How does Mina's first response to Ravi help develop the theme?

3. How does the moment with the fallen branches support the theme?

4. Why does the last sentence strengthen the theme?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a new problem at the garden stand that happens the next Friday. In three sentences, show Mina using what she learned and explain how your event supports the story's theme.

ANSWER KEY # The Garden Stand

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that helps you understand the story's theme. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to show how the theme develops. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What lesson does Mina learn? State it as a theme, not just a story event.	**Listening to others can help you find a better solution.**
2	How does Mina's first response to Ravi help develop the theme?	**She starts tying the plants to the fence despite Ravi's concern, showing that she does not listen at first.**
3	How does the moment with the fallen branches support the theme?	**Mina asks Ravi how he would use the branches, then they work together to support the vines.**
4	Why does the last sentence strengthen the theme?	**Mina asks for Ravi's thoughts before acting again, showing that she has learned to listen.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next Friday, Mina noticed that seed packets kept blowing off the table. Instead of moving the table at once, she asked Ravi for ideas, and they held the packets down with clean stones. Their solution shows that listening to someone else can help solve a problem.

Accept themes about listening to others or considering their ideas before acting. For Part 3, the new event should show Mina using that lesson and explain its connection to the theme.