

Beyond the Marquee

Trace how linked themes deepen across a short story.

ELA.12.R.1.2 "Analyze two or more themes and evaluate their development throughout a literary text."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal two possible themes, using one line for one theme and two lines for the other. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show how either theme develops across the paragraphs.

The Rialto's Last Day

- ① By noon, demolition crews would remove the Rialto Theater's cracked facade, and Lila had spent the morning sitting beneath its burned-out marquee. Her father had taken her there every Friday until his death, always buying one peppermint and insisting they stay through the credits. Lila carried the last ticket he had saved, soft at the folds, and planned to tape it to the front door before the crews arrived. When the city engineer approached with blueprints for a public library, Lila turned away. A library, she thought, could not hold her father's laugh.
- ② While waiting, Lila slipped through a side entrance and found Mr. Chen, the retired projectionist, packing reels for donation. He showed her a photograph of the theater's lobby crowded with neighbors during a flood, when its balcony had served as a shelter. Another showed schoolchildren reading there after the roof collapsed at their school. "Your father handed out blankets that night," Mr. Chen said. Lila studied the images and saw that the building had mattered not only because her father loved it, but because people had used it for one another.
- ③ When the engineer returned, Lila did not tape the ticket to the door. Instead, she asked whether the library plan could preserve the marquee and reserve a room for neighborhood meetings. The engineer explained that the facade was unsafe but agreed to reuse its letters above the library entrance. Lila gathered former patrons, who lent photographs and recorded memories for an opening exhibit. On opening day, Lila placed her father's ticket beside a photograph of him distributing blankets. The new building could not return his voice, yet it gave his generosity a future audience.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 What theme about memory is introduced in paragraph 1? Use one detail from the paragraph to support your answer.

- 2 How does paragraph 2 deepen or revise Lila's understanding of the theater's importance?

- 3 Trace the development of a theme about community across all three paragraphs. Explain what changes from the beginning to the ending.

- 4 How do the themes of memory and change work together in the ending? Evaluate what the story suggests about preserving the past.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-sentence analytical paragraph that states two themes, traces how each develops from the beginning to the ending, and explains how the themes work together. Use at least three specific details from the story.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal two possible themes, using one line for one theme and two lines for the other. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show how either theme develops across the paragraphs. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What theme about memory is introduced in paragraph 1? Use one detail from the paragraph to support your answer.	At first, Lila sees memory as tied to a physical place and private grief. She thinks a library cannot hold her father's laugh.
2	How does paragraph 2 deepen or revise Lila's understanding of the theater's importance?	The photographs show that the theater was also a place of community care. Lila learns that her father's generosity, and the theater's value, reached beyond her own memories.
3	Trace the development of a theme about community across all three paragraphs. Explain what changes from the beginning to the ending.	The story moves from Lila's isolated grief to shared community memory. She begins alone at the theater, learns about neighbors helping one another there, and helps create a library exhibit and meeting space.
4	How do the themes of memory and change work together in the ending? Evaluate what the story suggests about preserving the past.	The story suggests that preserving the past does not require saving every structure. Although the unsafe facade is removed, the marquee, photographs, and stories carry the theater's history and Lila's father's values forward.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The passage develops the theme that memory becomes more meaningful when it leads to action. Lila begins by treating the ticket as a private link to her father, but Mr. Chen's photographs show that her father's kindness mattered to many people. It also develops the theme that a community can preserve its history without preserving every physical structure, since the unsafe facade is removed while its letters and stories enter the library. Together, the themes show Lila changing grief into a public project that carries her father's values forward.

Accept equivalent theme statements if students explain how each theme changes across the story with accurate evidence. Strong responses distinguish between preserving a building unchanged and preserving the values, stories, and community purpose connected to it.