Bridge Builders

Find an implied theme and trace how it grows through a story.

ELA.4.R.1.2 "Explain a stated or implied theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show Nia's problem or change. Circle two details that help you figure out the story's theme.

Nia's Bridge

1 On Saturday, Nia planned to enter the library's cardboard bridge contest. She spread cereal boxes, tape, and string across the kitchen table. Her little brother, Leo, offered to hold the pieces while she worked. "I can do it alone," Nia said. She built quickly, but each tall tower leaned sideways. When Leo reached for a fallen tube, Nia slid it away.

2 At the library, Nia set her bridge between two chairs for the first test. A stack of books made the middle sag, and the bridge dropped to the floor. Nia wanted to hide it under the table. Then she noticed Leo quietly gathering the loose pieces. "Could you hold this side?" she asked. Together, they made short, wide supports and tested each change.

3 Their bridge held six books without bending. During judging, Nia explained that the first design had been too narrow. Leo stood beside her and pointed to the supports they had added. The librarian gave them a blue ribbon for careful testing. On the walk home, Nia carried the ribbon, but she let Leo carry the bridge. She knew both belonged to them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is an implied theme of the story? Use two details from the story to explain your answer.

2. How does Nia's choice in the first paragraph help develop the theme?

3. What happens in the second paragraph that begins to change Nia's thinking? Explain how this event develops the theme.

4. How does the ending support the story's theme?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-scene about a character who learns a lesson. Add a fourth sentence that states an implied theme and names two details from your scene that support it.

ANSWER KEY

Bridge Builders

GRADE 4 · ELA.4.R.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show Nia's problem or change. Circle two details that help you figure out the story's theme. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is an implied theme of the story? Use two details from the story to explain your answer.	**One implied theme is that working with others can help solve a problem. Nia first refuses Leo's help, but they build stronger supports together and the bridge holds six books.**
2	How does Nia's choice in the first paragraph help develop the theme?	**Nia chooses to work alone and pushes Leo's help away. Her bridge leans sideways, showing that her choice creates a problem.**
3	What happens in the second paragraph that begins to change Nia's thinking? Explain how this event develops the theme.	**After the bridge falls, Nia sees Leo gathering the pieces and asks him to help. They test changes together, showing that cooperation can improve their work.**
4	How does the ending support the story's theme?	**Nia lets Leo carry the bridge and knows that both the ribbon and bridge belong to them. This shows that she now values Leo's part in their success.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sam rushed through his poster and forgot to check the glue. When rain blew through an open window, one corner peeled loose. He used a dry cloth and tape to fix it, then checked every edge before hanging it. The theme is that careful work prevents problems, shown by the loose corner and Sam's final edge check.

Accept reasonable theme statements supported by accurate details from the passage. Students may phrase the theme as cooperation, valuing help from others, or sharing success.