Storm at the Pier

Trace two themes as a character's choices and a community's actions change.

ELA.8.R.1.2 "Analyze two or more themes and their development throughout a literary text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show Lena facing responsibility, and circle details that show people sharing the work. Use your marks to trace how two themes develop from the beginning to the end.

The Blocked Pier

1 At dawn, Lena found the town pier buried under driftwood from the night storm. The ferry would arrive at noon, carrying medicine for the clinic, but its crew could not dock at a blocked pier. Lena had promised her grandfather, the harbormaster, that she would keep the signal lantern filled while he recovered from a broken leg. She stared at the heavy logs and wished an adult would appear. Then she carried one loose plank away, though her arms shook.

2 By midmorning, Lena had cleared only a narrow path. Mr. Ortiz, who ran the bakery, stopped beside her with a cart. "I cannot move those logs," Lena said, embarrassed by how small the path looked. Mr. Ortiz did not laugh. He handed her a coil of rope and asked where it should be tied. Soon, Lena directed him, then called to two fishers mending nets nearby. Each person brought a tool or idea, and the work changed from Lena's private worry into a shared plan.

3 When the ferry horn sounded beyond the harbor, the last log still rested across the edge of the pier. Lena wanted to step back and let someone stronger decide what to do. Instead, she noticed the lantern pole, remembered the rope, and suggested using the cart as a lever. The group moved the log before the ferry reached shore. Afterward, her grandfather praised the whole town, not Lena alone. Lena refilled the lantern that evening, understanding that keeping a promise sometimes meant asking others to help carry it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is one theme about courage or responsibility? Explain how it develops from the first paragraph to the last paragraph using two details.

2. What is a second theme about community? Explain how it develops across the passage using two details.

3. How does Mr. Ortiz's response to Lena help develop both themes? Use details from the second paragraph.

4. Why is the final sentence important to the development of the two themes?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly five sentences analyzing two themes in "The Blocked Pier." Trace each theme from the beginning to the ending with at least three total details, then explain how the themes connect.

ANSWER KEY

Storm at the Pier

GRADE 8 · ELA.8.R.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that show Lena facing responsibility, and circle details that show people sharing the work. Use your marks to trace how two themes develop from the beginning to the end. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is one theme about courage or responsibility? Explain how it develops from the first paragraph to the last paragraph using two details.	**One theme is that courage grows when a person acts despite fear. Lena first wishes an adult would appear and shakes while moving a plank, but later she directs others and suggests using the cart as a lever.**
2	What is a second theme about community? Explain how it develops across the passage using two details.	**A second theme is that a community becomes stronger when people share responsibility. Mr. Ortiz first offers a cart and rope, then the fishers join, and the group moves the final log together.**
3	How does Mr. Ortiz's response to Lena help develop both themes? Use details from the second paragraph.	**Mr. Ortiz treats Lena's problem seriously and asks for her direction instead of laughing. His response helps Lena become more confident and begins the shared effort.**
4	Why is the final sentence important to the development of the two themes?	**The final sentence shows that Lena keeps her promise, but she learns that responsibility does not mean working alone. It connects her personal courage with the community's shared help.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

One theme is that courage can grow through taking practical action. At first, Lena wishes an adult would appear, but she begins by carrying away one plank and later proposes using the cart as a lever. A second theme is that a community becomes stronger when people share responsibility. Mr. Ortiz brings a cart, the fishers join, and the group clears the pier together. These themes connect because Lena's growing courage lets her invite help, while the group's help allows her to keep her promise.

Accept equivalent theme statements supported by accurate details from across the passage. Students should identify two distinct themes, explain each theme's development, and describe a meaningful connection between them.