Water for Everyone

Trace how a character's choices develop a theme.

8.RC.2 "Analyze the development of a theme or central idea over the course of a work of literature, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide a detailed summary that supports the analysis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one choice Mira makes in each paragraph, circle two details about the rooftop conditions, and number the choices 1 to 3 to track how they change.

The Rooftop Garden

1 By noon, the roof of the Maple Street apartments felt like a skillet. The garden tap had stopped working, and the rain barrel held only a few inches of water. Mira dipped a pail into the barrel, then paused beside her tomato plant. She had promised her grandfather a homegrown tomato before his birthday on Saturday. Across the roof, Jo's trays of bean seedlings sagged in the heat. Jo asked if anyone could spare water. Mira looked at the nearly empty barrel and said she needed the water for her tomato.

2 That afternoon, Mira found Jo cutting strips from an old bedsheet to shade the beans. A gust lifted the sheet, and Mira caught one corner before it blew away. Under the cloth, the smallest leaves looked thin as paper. Jo explained that the beans were for the building's fall dinners, where Mira's grandfather always told stories. Mira imagined the fall table without Jo's beans, then glanced at her own nearly ripe tomato. She poured half her pail over the trays and the rest by her tomato plant, then tied the sheet to the railing.

3 By evening, the neighbors had noticed the shade cloth. Someone carried up a bucket from the working tap six flights below; another brought a second sheet for the tomatoes. Mira showed them how to knot the corners so the wind would not tear them loose. The next morning, the beans stood straighter, though some leaves were still brown. Mira's tomato plant had survived too. At Saturday's dinner, her grandfather sliced the first tomato into small pieces, one for each neighbor, while Jo passed around a list of names for watering duty.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does Mira's first response to Jo suggest about what matters most to her at the start? Use a detail from the passage.

2. How do two conditions on the roof make Mira's choice about water difficult?

3. What does Mira learn while helping Jo with the sheet, and how does her next action show a change?

4. How do the neighbors' actions and the final dinner develop a theme about sharing responsibility? Use one detail from each scene.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word paragraph that summarizes the beginning, middle, and end in order and explains a theme about sharing responsibility. Include at least three specific events, and explain how the rooftop setting and Mira's change support the theme.

ANSWER KEY

Water for Everyone

GRADE 8 · 8.RC.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one choice Mira makes in each paragraph, circle two details about the rooftop conditions, and number the choices 1 to 3 to track how they change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Mira's first response to Jo suggest about what matters most to her at the start? Use a detail from the passage.	**Mira puts her own tomato first. She tells Jo she needs the water for it instead of sharing with Jo's wilting beans.**
2	How do two conditions on the roof make Mira's choice about water difficult?	**The garden tap is broken and the rain barrel is nearly empty. In the heat, Jo's seedlings are wilting while Mira's tomato also needs water.**
3	What does Mira learn while helping Jo with the sheet, and how does her next action show a change?	**Mira learns that Jo's beans are meant for the building's fall dinners, which her grandfather enjoys. She changes from refusing Jo to giving the beans half her water.**
4	How do the neighbors' actions and the final dinner develop a theme about sharing responsibility? Use one detail from each scene.	**Neighbors carry water and bring another shade cloth, so caring for the garden becomes a shared task. At dinner, Mira's grandfather divides the tomato among them, showing that the harvest is shared too.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On the hot apartment roof, the garden tap breaks and the rain barrel runs low, so Mira refuses to share water with Jo's wilting bean seedlings. Mira wants to save a tomato for her grandfather. When she helps Jo secure a shade cloth, she learns that the beans matter to their neighbors and divides her water between the plants. Other neighbors then carry water upstairs and help shade the garden. At dinner, her grandfather shares the first tomato. Mira's shift from guarding water to working with others shows that shared effort can protect more than one person's harvest.

Accept themes about cooperation or shared responsibility if students connect them to Mira's changing choices and the neighbors' actions. Summaries should follow the plot in order rather than list unrelated details.