

A Garden Reopens

Trace how key details build a theme across a literary text.

6R2 "Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is developed by key supporting details over the course of a text; summarize a text. (RI&RL)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how people respond to the garden's problem. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to trace how the theme develops.

The Shared Key

- ① On a gray Saturday, Mara found the community garden locked and empty. Last summer, neighbors had grown tomatoes there, but weeds now covered the beds. A notice on the gate said the garden would close unless volunteers cared for it. Mara had never planted anything. Still, she copied the phone number and spent the afternoon calling people from the neighborhood association list. Most said they were busy, and Mara began to wonder whether anyone would come.
- ② The next morning, only Mr. Chen arrived, carrying a rusty shovel. Mara felt embarrassed, but he showed her how to pull weeds by their roots. They worked quietly until a girl named Inez stopped with her father. Inez asked if she could water the dry soil. By noon, four more neighbors had joined them. Mara wrote each helper's name on a cardboard sign and planned another workday. She no longer saw the garden as a problem she faced alone.
- ③ Over the next three weeks, the sign filled with names. Some people brought tools, while others carried water or shared seeds from home. Mara learned to label rows and listen when experienced gardeners gave advice. On the day the gate reopened, children planted bean seeds in a cleared bed. Mr. Chen handed Mara the key. She placed it on a hook beside the sign, where any volunteer could reach it. The garden belonged to everyone who chose to help.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What theme does the story develop? State it as a complete idea, not just one word.

2 How does Mara's view of the garden change from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2? Use details from both paragraphs.

3 How does Inez's action in paragraph 2 help develop the theme?

4 Write a two-sentence summary of the story. Include the problem, the important actions, and the outcome.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence paragraph that states a theme of the story and explains how one detail from each paragraph develops that theme. Focus on how the details connect instead of retelling every event.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how people respond to the garden's problem. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to trace how the theme develops. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What theme does the story develop? State it as a complete idea, not just one word.	When people each contribute what they can, a shared problem can become a community success.
2	How does Mara's view of the garden change from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2? Use details from both paragraphs.	At first, Mara worries that no one will come and sees the garden as a problem. After Inez and other neighbors join, she no longer sees it as a problem she faces alone.
3	How does Inez's action in paragraph 2 help develop the theme?	Inez offers to water the dry soil, showing that even one person's small contribution can help others join the shared work.
4	Write a two-sentence summary of the story. Include the problem, the important actions, and the outcome.	Mara learns that the community garden may close, so she calls neighbors and begins working with Mr. Chen. More people contribute time and supplies, and the garden reopens as a shared space.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The theme is that shared effort can turn a problem into a success. First, Mara calls neighbors even though she has no gardening experience. Next, Inez and other neighbors join the work, showing that Mara is not alone. Finally, the reopened garden and shared key show that many people now care for the space.

Accept equivalent theme statements about cooperation, community responsibility, or small contributions creating change. For the open response, accept varied details if the student uses one accurate detail from each paragraph and clearly explains how the details develop the stated theme.