The Silver Cape

Trace how story details build a theme.

6.3.R.5 "Students will identify literary elements and devices that impact a text's theme."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Lena's words or actions before and after she accepts help, and circle the river and bridge images to track how the story builds its theme.

One Seam at a Time

1 An hour before the school play, Lena wanted every costume to look perfect. She had promised to fix the silver cape herself, even though its seam had split from collar to hem. Behind the curtain, the cape lay across her knees like a river she could not cross. Each time she pushed the needle through the cloth, the thread tangled. From the stage came the sound of actors practicing their first lines. Lena tucked the cape under her chair when Amir, the stage manager, walked by.

2 Amir stopped when Lena pulled at a knot and the thread snapped. "I can hold the cloth," he said. "I said I'd do it," Lena answered. He did not argue. Instead, he picked up the fallen spool and set it beside her. Through the curtain, Lena saw the actor waiting with an empty hanger. The silver cape still lay across her knees, but now it looked less like a river and more like a bridge with one plank missing. She handed Amir the far edge.

3 Amir held the fabric flat while Lena made slow, even stitches. When she lost the needle, he found it shining beside a chair leg. Soon, another classmate arrived with a flashlight, and the three worked under its small circle of light. The seam was not perfectly straight, but it held when the actor swung the cape around his shoulders. As the curtain rose, Lena saw Amir smiling from the wings. She had kept her promise to fix the cape, though she had not kept it to herself.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What do Lena's words “I said I’d do it” show about her at first? How does this help build the story's theme?

2. Why does the cape first seem like a river Lena cannot cross, then like a bridge with a plank missing? What change do these images show?

3. How does the approaching play affect Lena's choice to accept help? How does this setting detail support the theme?

4. The finished seam is not perfectly straight, but it holds. How does this detail add to the story's theme?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new three-sentence scene set after the play in which Lena faces a different problem and accepts help. Include one simile, then explain in your third sentence how that simile supports the story's theme.

ANSWER KEY

The Silver Cape

GRADE 6 · 6.3.R.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Lena's words or actions before and after she accepts help, and circle the river and bridge images to track how the story builds its theme. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What do Lena's words "I said I'd do it" show about her at first? How does this help build the story's theme?	**Lena thinks she must do the work alone. Her later choice to accept help shows that keeping a promise does not mean refusing help.**
2	Why does the cape first seem like a river Lena cannot cross, then like a bridge with a plank missing? What change do these images show?	**The river makes the task seem impossible alone. The bridge suggests Lena can finish it if she lets someone help.**
3	How does the approaching play affect Lena's choice to accept help? How does this setting detail support the theme?	**The actor is waiting, and the play will start soon. The time pressure helps Lena see that accepting help matters more than finishing alone.**
4	The finished seam is not perfectly straight, but it holds. How does this detail add to the story's theme?	**The cape works even though the repair is imperfect. Working together matters more than Lena making a perfect repair by herself.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next week, Lena found the painted backdrop dragging on the floor and asked Amir to hold its far edge. Together they raised it like a sail catching wind. The simile shows how accepting help turns a heavy problem into something they can move.

Accept supported interpretations that connect a specific character choice, image, setting detail, or outcome to the theme of accepting help. For Part 3, look for a new problem, Lena accepting help, a simile, and an explanation of its connection to the theme.