

Themes in Motion

Trace how linked themes deepen across a short story.

ELA.12.R.1.2 "Analyze two or more themes and evaluate their development throughout a literary text."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline one detail about Lila's connection to her father and label it M. Circle one detail about the theater's changing role and label it C. A detail may support both ideas; mark only these six selections.

The Rialto's Last Day

- ① By noon, demolition crews would remove the Rialto Theater's cracked facade, and Lila had spent the morning sitting beneath its burned-out marquee. Her father had taken her there every Friday until his death, always buying one peppermint and insisting they stay through the credits. Lila carried the last ticket he had saved, soft at the folds, and planned to tape it to the front door before the crews arrived. When the city engineer approached with blueprints for a public library, Lila turned away. A library, she thought, could not hold her father's laugh.
- ② While waiting, Lila slipped through a side entrance and found Mr. Chen, the retired projectionist, packing reels for donation. He showed her a photograph of the theater's lobby crowded with neighbors during a flood, when its balcony had served as a shelter. Another showed schoolchildren reading there after the roof collapsed at their school. "Your father handed out blankets that night," Mr. Chen said. Lila studied the images and saw that the building had mattered not only because her father loved it, but because people had used it for one another.
- ③ When the engineer returned, Lila did not tape the ticket to the door. Instead, she asked whether the library plan could preserve the marquee and reserve a room for neighborhood meetings. The engineer explained that the facade was unsafe but agreed to reuse its letters above the library entrance. Lila gathered former patrons, who lent photographs and recorded memories for an opening exhibit. On opening day, Lila placed her father's ticket beside a photograph of him distributing blankets. The new building could not return his voice, yet it gave his generosity a future audience.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** State a theme about memory in a complete sentence. Explain how the beginning sets up an idea that later events revise.

- 2** Evaluate the author's choice to reveal the shelter photographs through Mr. Chen. How does this turn Lila's private memory toward community action?

- 3** State a second theme about change and preservation. Trace its development through the initial demolition conflict, the photographs, and the library ending.

- 4** Evaluate how the final placement of the ticket beside the blanket photograph brings the two themes together. Why is that ending more meaningful than saving the ticket alone?

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an analytical paragraph of 120-160 words. State two related themes, trace each across the beginning, middle, and ending, and evaluate how an authorial choice develops their relationship. Use at least three precise details. Describe only what the story confirms.

Analyze the linked themes

Develop a connected argument rather than two separate summaries. Explain why the photographs, reused letters, or final ticket placement matter. End by evaluating what the story gains by developing the themes together.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline one detail about Lila's connection to her father and label it M. Circle one detail about the theater's changing role and label it C. A detail may support both ideas; mark only these six selections. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State a theme about memory in a complete sentence. Explain how the beginning sets up an idea that later events revise.	Memory can carry a person's values into new actions rather than remain tied to one place. Initially Lila ties memory to the theater and rejects the library. The shelter photographs reveal her father's public generosity, and her later exhibit turns that discovery into shared remembrance.
2	Evaluate the author's choice to reveal the shelter photographs through Mr. Chen. How does this turn Lila's private memory toward community action?	The photographs provide specific evidence of communal use and her father's help. Mr. Chen reveals a history beyond Lila's Friday visits, making her change arise from discovery rather than an unexplained decision.
3	State a second theme about change and preservation. Trace its development through the initial demolition conflict, the photographs, and the library ending.	A community can preserve meaningful history while accepting physical change. Demolition first seems to erase what matters; the photographs locate value in care for neighbors; reused letters and the exhibit carry that history into the new library.
4	Evaluate how the final placement of the ticket beside the blanket photograph brings the two themes together. Why is that ending more meaningful than saving the ticket alone?	The private keepsake is placed beside public evidence of generosity. The exhibit gives her father's generosity a new audience in the library. A ticket alone would not connect her private memory so clearly to his help for neighbors.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The story suggests that memory can become an act of generosity and that meaningful preservation can survive physical change. At first, Lila holds her father's ticket and rejects the library because it cannot preserve his laugh; memory and the old building seem inseparable. Mr. Chen's shelter photographs revise both assumptions: her father mattered through his care for others, and the theater mattered through its uses. By revealing this history through concrete photographs, the author gives Lila a reason to change rather than simply announcing a lesson. The unsafe facade is lost, but its letters and the patrons' exhibit enter the library. When Lila places the ticket beside the blanket photograph, private affection becomes public remembrance. The linked themes make the ending more complex than a victory over demolition: loss remains, yet a shared purpose continues.

Accept other defensible theme statements with development across all three paragraphs and evaluation of the author's choices. The engineer agrees to reuse marquee letters; the text does not confirm an intact marquee or a meeting room. Lila requests a room, but no agreement is stated. Strong answers explain the interaction of themes and continuing loss, not merely identify topics.