Garden Grows Together

Trace how details reveal a theme and support an objective summary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2 "Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show people working together. Circle one detail that shows how the garden changes, then use your marks to identify a theme.

The Empty Lot

1 On Saturday, Elena carried a box of tomato seedlings to the empty lot beside her apartment. The neighborhood garden had lost its fence during a winter storm, and most families had stopped visiting. Elena wanted to plant anyway, but the ground was hard and full of stones. Her neighbor Mr. Chen watched from his porch. "That patch will take more than one pair of hands," he called. Elena kept digging until her arms ached by sunset.

2 The next morning, Elena found two pairs of gloves hanging on the gatepost. Mr. Chen had brought a shovel, and twins Asha and Luis arrived with a wagon for rocks. Elena showed them the rows she had planned, but Asha suggested leaving space for sunflowers. Soon, other neighbors carried water jugs, boards, and packets of seeds. By noon, the lot held straight beds and a small pile of stones. Elena noticed that people who had barely spoken before were sharing tools and stories.

3 Three weeks later, green shoots filled the beds. A new fence stood around the garden, built from donated boards. Elena placed a handwritten schedule near the gate so each family could take a watering turn. When a heavy rain bent several tomato plants, the gardeners returned together to tie the stems upright. Elena looked at the busy lot and remembered digging alone. The garden was not finished, but it no longer felt like her project. It belonged to everyone who had helped it grow.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is one theme of the passage? State it as a complete message, not as one word.

2. Explain how two details from the passage convey the theme.

3. How does Elena's view of the garden change from the beginning to the end? How does this change support the theme?

4. Write an objective summary of the passage in 40 to 60 words. Include the main events, but do not include your opinion.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-scene that shows a theme different from the passage's theme. Then write one sentence that states your theme and names two details from your scene that convey it.

ANSWER KEY # Garden Grows Together

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show people working together. Circle one detail that shows how the garden changes, then use your marks to identify a theme. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is one theme of the passage? State it as a complete message, not as one word.	**Working together can turn a difficult task into something that benefits a whole community. Accept equivalent supported statements, such as shared work strengthens a community.**
2	Explain how two details from the passage convey the theme.	**Mr. Chen, Asha, Luis, and other neighbors bring tools, seeds, water, and boards to help Elena. Later, families share watering turns and return together after the rain to support the plants.**
3	How does Elena's view of the garden change from the beginning to the end? How does this change support the theme?	**At first, Elena works alone and sees the garden as her project. By the end, she sees that it belongs to everyone who helped, showing that shared effort builds community.**
4	Write an objective summary of the passage in 40 to 60 words. Include the main events, but do not include your opinion.	**Elena begins planting in a damaged neighborhood garden alone. Mr. Chen, children, and other neighbors join her by bringing tools, seeds, water, and boards. They build garden beds and a fence, share tasks, and return after rain to protect plants. The garden becomes a project cared for by many families. Accept objective summaries of the main events without judgments about whether the garden or characters are good, admirable or successful.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Niko's first paper airplane landed at his shoes. He changed one fold, tested it again, and watched it glide to the far wall. After two more adjustments, he gave his brother the instructions he had learned.

Theme: Learning from mistakes leads to improvement, shown when Niko changes the fold after the first flight and adjusts the plane two more times.

For Your Turn, accept a three-sentence mini-scene showing a theme different from the garden passage, followed by one sentence stating that theme and two matching details. Check that the details support the chosen message; do not require a garden, community theme or source summary. The Niko example shows learning from mistakes through his changed fold and further adjustments.