Bench Lessons

Use story details to separate a topic from a lesson.

3.8.A "infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle words that name what the story is mostly about. Then underline three details that show a lesson the story teaches.

A Bench for All

1. On Monday, Nia found the playground bench covered with wet leaves. The bench was where students waited for rides, traded jokes, and tied shoes. Nia wanted to sit there at recess, but she did not want to touch the soggy pile alone. She walked past it and joined her friends near the swings instead that day.

2. Later, Nia saw Mr. Cruz, the custodian, carrying a rake and a trash bag. She remembered that the bench helped many people, not only her. Nia asked two friends to help. Together, they piled the leaves, filled the bag, and swept the bench dry. Mr. Cruz thanked them and brought a small bucket for the last bits.

3. At recess the next day, a kindergartner sat on the clean bench while waiting for his sister. Nia and her friends used the bench to share a comic book. Nia noticed that cleaning had taken only a few minutes when people worked together. When she saw a wrapper by the slide, she picked it up before running to play.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the topic of the story? Write a short phrase, not a full lesson.

2. Which detail helps show that cooperation matters in the story? Explain how it is a clue.

3. What theme does the story suggest? Write one complete sentence.

4. How are the topic and theme different in this story? Use the bench or playground in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-story about a character who makes a choice. On new lines, write its topic in one to three words and its theme as a complete sentence.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle words that name what the story is mostly about. Then underline three details that show a lesson the story teaches. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the topic of the story? Write a short phrase, not a full lesson.	**Caring for a shared playground bench.**
2	Which detail helps show that cooperation matters in the story? Explain how it is a clue.	**Nia asks two friends to help, and together they clean the bench. This shows that working together made the job easier.**
3	What theme does the story suggest? Write one complete sentence.	**Working together to care for shared places helps everyone.**
4	How are the topic and theme different in this story? Use the bench or playground in your answer.	**The playground bench is the topic, while the theme is the lesson that people can work together to care for a place everyone uses.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tomas fell while practicing on his skateboard. He wanted to quit, but he asked his cousin how to balance. After practicing slowly, Tomas rolled across the driveway.

Topic: Learning to skateboard
Theme: Asking for help and practicing can help you improve.

For the supplied bench story, accept a short topic phrase and a general theme supported by Nia's choices and outcomes. For Part 3, accept a three-sentence original story, a one-to-three-word topic naming that story's subject, and a general theme supported by the learner's own character choices and outcomes.