A Different Route

Trace how a character's choices develop a theme.

7.RL.2 "Determine a theme or central idea(s) of a text. Analyze its development over the course of the text. Identify key textual details to support the analysis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how Mei's idea of the lantern walk develops, then number those details 1, 2, and 3 to trace the change.

The Lantern Route

1. Every November, the neighbors walked the block with paper lanterns. Mei had carried one since she was little, and this year she was in charge of the route. She wrote the usual stops on a scrap of paper and put a star beside the bakery, where the walk always ended. When new neighbor Tomas asked if they could stop at the apartment building across the street, Mei shook her head. “The route is the route,” she said. She wanted her grandmother, who had started the walk, to recognize every turn.

2. When the evening arrived, a hard rain swept over the block. The bakery owner locked up early because water was leaking through the ceiling. Mei stood under the awning, holding the list of stops as the ink began to run. Tomas pointed to his building's wide lobby. “We could walk through there,” he said. “Some people upstairs can't come outside, but they could see the lights.” Mei imagined her grandmother asking why the bakery had disappeared. Then she saw three neighbors waiting in the rain, protecting their lanterns with their coats.

3. Mei led the group across the street. In the lobby, Tomas's neighbors waved from the stair landings, and someone brought down a box of spare paper for lantern repairs. Mei's grandmother arrived in a raincoat just as the walkers were turning back. She looked around the crowded lobby and smiled. “I never thought to bring the walk inside,” she said. On the wet list, Mei crossed out “bakery” and wrote “lobby,” leaving room beneath it for next year's stops.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does Mei's reply to Tomas reveal about her idea of honoring her grandmother's tradition? Use one other detail from paragraph 1.

2. How does the storm put Mei's original idea to the test? Use two details from paragraph 2.

3. What theme emerges by the end? Support it with one detail from the beginning and one from the end.

4. How does Mei's grandmother's reaction deepen the theme? Compare what Mei expected with what her grandmother says.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4- to 6-sentence scene set at next year's lantern walk. Show Mei making a new choice that develops the story's theme, and include two specific details from the original walk.

ANSWER KEY

A Different Route

GRADE 7 · 7.RL.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how Mei's idea of the lantern walk develops, then number those details 1, 2, and 3 to trace the change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Mei's reply to Tomas reveal about her idea of honoring her grandmother's tradition? Use one other detail from paragraph 1.	**Mei thinks honoring the tradition means keeping the route unchanged. She lists the usual stops and marks the bakery, where the walk always ended.**
2	How does the storm put Mei's original idea to the test? Use two details from paragraph 2.	**The bakery closes because its ceiling is leaking, so the usual ending is unavailable. Neighbors are waiting in the rain, while Tomas offers a dry lobby where more people could see the lanterns.**
3	What theme emerges by the end? Support it with one detail from the beginning and one from the end.	**A tradition can stay meaningful even when people change how they take part. Mei first refuses to change the route, but she later adds the lobby and leaves room for future stops.**
4	How does Mei's grandmother's reaction deepen the theme? Compare what Mei expected with what her grandmother says.	**Mei expects her grandmother to question a route without the bakery. Instead, her grandmother smiles and welcomes the new indoor stop, showing that keeping the walk matters more to her than keeping every turn.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next November, Mei found the bakery open again, its windows bright above trays of rolls. She wrote it on the list, then paused when Tomas suggested visiting the apartment lobby too. A new neighbor asked if the walkers could stop by the bus stop so her father could see their lanterns after work. Mei handed her the pencil and asked her to add the stop. By the time they set out, the list had more turns than before, and Mei was eager to see who would be waiting.

Accept themes about adapting a tradition to include others when students support them with details from different parts of the passage. For the final scene, look for a new choice that develops the theme rather than simply repeating the lobby decision.