Dates Yet to Come

Trace how a theme changes through a character's choices.

9-10.RL.2 "Determine a theme or central idea of a text. Analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it is introduced, built, and refined by specific details. Provide an objective summary of the text to support thematic analysis."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how Mara's view of protecting the guide changes. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to track the theme's development.

The Field Guide

1. When the town library reopened after the flood, Mara carried in a book she had kept dry at home: her father's battered field guide to birds. He had penciled dates beside the drawings of birds they had seen together. At the return desk, a volunteer asked if she would lend it for a display of books rescued by neighbors. Mara pulled it closer. The guide still smelled faintly of the closet where she had hidden it during the storm. If strangers handled it, its loose pages might fall out. She thanked the volunteer and slipped it back into her bag.

2. Outside, the empty lot where the library garden had been was crowded with children watching birds in the puddles. A boy held up a sketch: a gray bird with a pointed crest and a yellow tip on its tail. Mara recognized it from a page her father had marked with the words, "First one together." She showed the boy the drawing, keeping one hand beneath the guide's cracked spine. He read the note, then asked whether she remembered the day. Mara had expected to feel protective of the memory. Instead, telling him about it made the afternoon seem close again.

3. Back inside, Mara returned to the volunteer and offered to bring the guide to the library's new birdwatching table each Saturday. She would not leave it on an open shelf; the binding still needed repair. That weekend, she set out blank cards so visitors could record their own sightings without writing in her father's book. The boy added the first card, a sighting from the flooded lot. Mara placed it beside the guide, not inside it. The pages still held her father's careful dates, but the table was filling with dates that had not happened yet.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What possible theme does Mara's first decision introduce? Use a detail from the first paragraph.

2. How does Mara's conversation with the boy develop that theme? Cite a detail that shows a change in her thinking.

3. How do the blank cards and Mara's decision not to leave the guide on an open shelf refine the theme?

4. In two sentences, objectively summarize Mara's actions from beginning to end. Choose events that show how her treatment of the guide changes.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Add one new event that could happen at the birdwatching table next Saturday. Write four sentences: two narrating the event and two explaining how it would refine the story's theme, while keeping Mara's choices and the guide's condition consistent.

ANSWER KEY

Dates Yet to Come

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.RL.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how Mara's view of protecting the guide changes. Number the details 1, 2, and 3 to track the theme's development. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What possible theme does Mara's first decision introduce? Use a detail from the first paragraph.	**Mara's refusal to lend the guide suggests that protecting a treasured memory may require keeping it private. She pulls the book closer because its loose pages might fall out.**
2	How does Mara's conversation with the boy develop that theme? Cite a detail that shows a change in her thinking.	**Sharing her father's note and telling the boy about their day makes the memory feel close again, rather than less precious.**
3	How do the blank cards and Mara's decision not to leave the guide on an open shelf refine the theme?	**The cards let others add their experiences without damaging the guide. Mara's choice shows that she can share her memories while still caring for the book.**
4	In two sentences, objectively summarize Mara's actions from beginning to end. Choose events that show how her treatment of the guide changes.	**Mara initially refuses to lend her father's fragile field guide to the library. After showing it to a boy and telling him about a memory, she brings it to a birdwatching table where visitors record their sightings on separate cards.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next Saturday, a visitor brought a notebook filled with bird sightings recorded by her grandmother. She and Mara compared their notes while Mara supported the guide's cracked spine. Their exchange shows that sharing one memory can invite someone else to share another. Mara's care for the book shows that sharing a memory does not require giving up what protects it.

Accept themes about sharing memories while caring for objects that hold them, if students trace the change with accurate details. Objective summaries should report events without judging Mara or stating a lesson.