Theme Signal Sort

Decide whether a text states its theme or lets you infer it.

9.RL "The student will use textual evidence to demonstrate comprehension and build knowledge from a variety of grade-level complex literary texts read to include narratives, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

STATED THEME

A stated theme is directly told in the text. Look for a clear message or lesson about life, people, or choices.

The fable ends, "Careless words can break trust."

IMPLIED THEME

An implied theme is shown through details, actions, conflicts, or images. You infer the message by thinking about what those details suggest.

Each night, Sol records the stars in a notebook. Years later, she discovers a new comet.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle STATED or IMPLIED for each text; for Part 2, choose two items and explain which words or details helped you decide.

1.	A memoirist writes, "Listening first prevents many needless conflicts."	STATED IMPLIED
2.	After losing the election, Niko congratulates the winner and volunteers on her campaign.	STATED IMPLIED
3.	A poem describes a river cutting through stone, year after year, until it reaches the sea.	STATED IMPLIED
4.	In a speech, the speaker declares, "Real courage means protecting others when it costs you something."	STATED IMPLIED
5.	In a play, Ana hides her award so her partner will not feel embarrassed, then shares the credit in public.	STATED IMPLIED
6.	A novel's narrator says, "No treasure is worth betraying a friend."	STATED IMPLIED
7.	At the end of an essay, the writer states, "Communities grow stronger when every voice is heard."	STATED IMPLIED
8.	A traveler ignores a map, gets lost, and later stops to ask a local for directions.	STATED IMPLIED

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new STATED theme example and one new IMPLIED theme example.

STATED _____

IMPLIED _____

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence mini-story that implies a theme without directly stating it. Then name the theme and give two details that support it.

ANSWER KEY

Theme Signal Sort

GRADE 9 · 9.RL

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A memoirist writes, "Listening first prevents many needless conflicts."	**STATED**	The writer directly gives a general message about listening and conflict.
2	After losing the election, Niko congratulates the winner and volunteers on her campaign.	**IMPLIED**	The theme about maturity or supporting others is shown through Niko's actions.
3	A poem describes a river cutting through stone, year after year, until it reaches the sea.	**IMPLIED**	The image suggests a message about persistence without directly stating one.
4	In a speech, the speaker declares, "Real courage means protecting others when it costs you something."	**STATED**	The speaker directly states a message about courage.
5	In a play, Ana hides her award so her partner will not feel embarrassed, then shares the credit in public.	**IMPLIED**	Ana's choices show a possible message about humility or generosity.
6	A novel's narrator says, "No treasure is worth betraying a friend."	**STATED**	The narrator directly gives a message about friendship and loyalty.
7	At the end of an essay, the writer states, "Communities grow stronger when every voice is heard."	**STATED**	The writer clearly states the central message.
8	A traveler ignores a map, gets lost, and later stops to ask a local for directions.	**IMPLIED**	The events suggest a message about accepting help or learning from mistakes.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **STATED**: The narrator says, "Hope can survive even the longest winter."
- **IMPLIED**: On the coldest morning, Jada leaves her only spare gloves beside a shivering child at the bus stop.

Challenge: After Amir misses the bus, he runs to school and arrives late. The next morning, he leaves home ten minutes early. Theme: Mistakes can teach people to prepare better. Details: Amir misses the bus, and he leaves earlier the next day.

Items 1, 4, 6, and 7 are STATED. Items 2, 3, 5, and 8 are IMPLIED. Accept evidence explanations that identify a direct general message or explain how details require the reader to infer the message.