

Finding the Theme of a Story

Grade 4 • ELA • Determining the theme (moral/lesson) of a story • Standards: RL.4.2

Read each short story carefully. Then write the theme (lesson or moral) that best fits the story, and give one detail from the story that supports your answer.

1. Maya wanted to learn how to ride a bike. She fell down many times and got scrapes on her knees. Her older brother told her to give up, but she kept trying. After two weeks of practice, Maya could finally ride all by herself. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

2. Ryan found a wallet on the playground with twenty dollars inside. He really wanted to buy a new video game. Ryan looked inside the wallet and found a student ID card. He brought the wallet to the school office so they could return it to its owner. The owner thanked Ryan and said he was very honest. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

3. Lily always rushed through her homework so she could play outside. She never checked her work before turning it in. One day, her teacher asked her to stay after class. Her teacher showed her that she had made many careless mistakes. Lily started spending more time on her homework and checking it carefully. Her grades improved, and she felt proud of her work. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

4. Emma was the fastest runner in her class and always won every race. A new student named Sofia joined the class and beat Emma in the relay race. Emma felt angry and jealous. She refused to talk to Sofia for a week. Finally, Emma realized that Sofia had been trying to be friendly. Emma apologized, and they became running partners who helped each other get faster. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

5. Marcus bragged to everyone that he was the best artist in fourth grade. When the art teacher announced a contest, Marcus was sure he would win. He drew a quick

picture the night before it was due. His classmate Jenny had worked on her painting for three weeks, trying different ideas and asking for feedback. When Jenny won first place, Marcus felt embarrassed. He realized that talent alone wasn't enough. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

6. Aisha noticed that her friend Carlos seemed sad and quiet all week. She asked him what was wrong, but he said nothing. Aisha decided to leave him alone. The next week, Aisha found out that Carlos's grandmother had been very sick, and he had felt alone with his worries. Aisha wished she had tried harder to help. She learned that sometimes friends need you to keep asking and showing you care, even when they say everything is fine. What is the theme of this story, and what detail supports it?

Answer Key — Finding the Theme of a Story

For the teacher / parent. Do not distribute with the worksheet.

1. Theme: Keep trying and you can succeed (or Don't give up). Supporting detail: Maya fell many times but kept practicing, and after two weeks she learned to ride. *(The story shows persistence leading to success despite obstacles and discouragement.)*
2. Theme: Honesty is important (or Do the right thing even when it's hard). Supporting detail: Ryan returned the wallet even though he wanted to use the money for himself. *(The story demonstrates choosing honesty over personal gain.)*
3. Theme: Taking your time and being careful leads to better results (or Quality is more important than speed). Supporting detail: When Lily stopped rushing and started checking her work, her grades improved. *(The story shows the consequences of rushing and the benefits of careful work.)*
4. Theme: Jealousy can hurt friendships, but kindness can fix problems (or Working together is better than competing). Supporting detail: Emma was jealous and unfriendly at first, but when she apologized and worked with Sofia, they both benefited. *(The story illustrates how negative emotions can be overcome and turned into positive relationships.)*
5. Theme: Hard work and effort are more important than natural talent (or Pride comes before a fall). Supporting detail: Marcus was talented but didn't work hard, while Jenny worked for three weeks and won the contest. *(The story contrasts overconfidence and minimal effort with dedication and hard work.)*
6. Theme: Be persistent in helping friends, even when they push you away (or Sometimes people need support even when they don't ask for it). Supporting detail: Carlos said nothing was wrong, but he actually needed someone to talk to about his grandmother, and Aisha regretted not trying harder. *(The story teaches about the importance of being perceptive and persistent in offering support to friends.)*