

THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story, poem, or play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the text teaches, in a full sentence.

A strong theme fits the whole story and can be true beyond it.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

This week we study **Topic vs. theme**. The topic is what a story is about. The theme is a global life lesson that fits the whole story. STAAR asks: **Is the word in the title the topic or the theme of the story?** Watch for **Topic word, not theme**. A strong theme is: **listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice the difference between topic and theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the topic and lesson.

Read the line. Name the topic, then circle words that hint at a bigger lesson.

“‘Sometimes recess gives us time to get to know someone new,’ she said.”

I CAN | I can notice a lesson that fits the whole story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that fits the whole story.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme.

STAAR asks: **Is the word in the title the topic or the theme of the story?** Choose a lesson, not a topic word.

“‘Because a good decision should not be based only on what we want,’ Mrs. Green replied.”

A Recess and playground games • **B** Students should always get their way • **C** Listening helps groups make thoughtful choices together

I CAN | I can choose a full life lesson and reject a topic trap.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme with evidence.

Use the story to show why listening and considering reasons lead to thoughtful choices.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

I CAN | I can connect details from the beginning and end to one lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Do not write only the title topic.

“Now it had become a question about choices, communities, and how people make decisions together.”

I CAN | I can write a global lesson that fits the whole story.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend my theme and explain why a trap is wrong."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student writes: **Recess** is the theme. Explain the trap and replace it with a lesson.

"People in a community do not always agree," she explained."

I CAN | I can prove why a topic word is not a theme.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the reading.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support the theme with a line from the story.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The topic is recess and friendship. The words get to know someone new hint that including others can build a stronger community.

CHOOSE C. Listening helps groups make thoughtful choices together.

SHOW Beth includes Lily at recess, and later the class listens to several perspectives before voting. Those details support the lesson about listening before making choices.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together.

DEFEND Topic word, not theme. Recess is what much of the story is about, but it is not a lesson. The story teaches that listening helps groups make thoughtful choices.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: community choices. Theme: Listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together. Line: We considered different solutions.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully. ... We looked at a problem. We gathered information. We considered different solutions. We listened to one another.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

A Recess is the topic of the story.

B Listening to different ideas helps groups make thoughtful choices together.

C Students should always get their way.

D The playground is a place where students play.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A Recess is the topic of the story.**
Topic word, not theme. Recess names the subject, but it does not state a life lesson.
- B Listening to different ideas helps groups make thoughtful choices together. Correct.**
Correct. The class listens to different views, considers reasons, and makes a group choice.
- C Students should always get their way.**
Life lesson not supported by this text. The story shows students considering different needs, not always getting their way.
- D The playground is a place where students play.**
Setting or event, not theme. This is a setting fact, not a life lesson.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story, poem, or play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the text teaches, in a full sentence.

A character's learning can help us infer the theme, but the theme must fit the whole story.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

This week we study **What the main character learns**. The theme is the lesson a story teaches beyond its events. STAAR asks: **What lesson does the main character learn by the end of the story?** Watch for **Setting or event, not theme**. A strong theme is: **listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together**.

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice what the main character learns.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the character's change.

Read the line. Ask what Beth is beginning to understand, not just what happens.

“At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer.”

I CAN | I can connect a character's change to a life lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the lesson a character learns.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the lesson Beth learns.

STAAR asks: **What lesson does the main character learn by the end of the story?** Choose the lesson, not the setting or event.

“Now she was not so sure.”

A Listening helps people make thoughtful choices together • **B** The playground is a place where students play • **C** Beth votes for a solution at school

I CAN | I can reject a setting or event when I look for theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how Beth learns.

Use two details to explain how Beth moves from one answer to considering several choices.

“She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day.”

I CAN | I can use a character's thoughts and actions as evidence.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write the theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the lesson.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Make it a life lesson, not a sentence about Beth or recess.

“She thought about running and jumping.”

I CAN | I can state a lesson that grows from a character's change.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against an event trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student writes: **The lesson is that students vote in class.** Explain why this is a trap.

"People in a community do not always agree," she explained."

I CAN | I can prove why a setting or event is not the lesson.



Find the lesson on your own.

Write what Beth learns in a full sentence. Then copy one line that shows her thinking changed.

Go back to the reading.
Write the lesson Beth learns in a full sentence.
Copy one line that shows her thinking changed.

I CAN | I can infer a theme from a character's change and support it with a line from the story.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Beth begins with one certain answer. This hints that listening to other views may help her think more carefully.

CHOOSE A. Listening helps people make thoughtful choices together.

SHOW Beth first wants longer recess, but she thinks about Lily's smile and the class's learning needs. Her thoughts show that she considers more than her first choice.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together.

DEFEND Setting or event, not theme. Voting happens in the story, but the lesson is about listening to different ideas and considering reasons before choosing.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Theme: Listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together.
Line: Now she was not so sure.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer. ... She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day. Then Beth made her choice.”

What lesson does the main character learn by the end of the story?

- A** Beth learns that recess takes place on a playground.
- B** Beth learns that students vote on a class question.
- C** Beth learns that school days include many subjects.
- D** Beth learns that listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A Beth learns that recess takes place on a playground.**
Setting or event, not theme. The playground is a setting, not the lesson Beth learns.
- B Beth learns that students vote on a class question.**
Setting or event, not theme. Voting is an event; it does not state the larger lesson.
- C Beth learns that school days include many subjects.**
Setting or event, not theme. The story mentions subjects, but this fact does not state Beth's larger lesson.
- D Beth learns that listening to different ideas helps people make thoughtful choices together. Correct.**
Correct. Beth considers several perspectives and needs before making a choice.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story, poem, or play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the text teaches, in a full sentence.

A theme should grow from the whole story, not from one interesting object.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

This week we study **Theme as a full sentence**. A topic names what a story is about, while a theme gives a lesson that reaches beyond the story. STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Watch for **Topic word, not theme**. A strong theme is: **careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how evidence points to a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the lesson in the clues.

Read the line. Name the topic, then notice how it points toward a bigger lesson.

“People did not always have every resource they wanted or needed where they lived.”

I CAN | I can notice a life lesson in a mystery story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme written as a full sentence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme sentence.

STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Choose the full life lesson.

“Mystery number one: How did this shell travel so far?”

A Seashells and copper • **B** Questions and evidence solve past mysteries. • **C** Emsy visits a museum to study a shell

I CAN | I can choose a life lesson instead of a topic word.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme with clues.

Explain how Emsy's questions and the river map support the theme about evidence.

“People at Poverty Point traveled along rivers, which could have helped them move from place to place.”

I CAN | I can connect separate clues to one lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Write the theme in your own words.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Keep it broader than the shell or Emsy.

“The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade.”

I CAN | I can turn a mystery's evidence into a life lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend a theme against a topic trap.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Defend the theme against a topic trap.

A student writes: **Seashells** is the theme. Explain why it is a trap and repair it.

“The answer was scarcity. People did not always have every resource they wanted or needed where they lived.”

I CAN | I can explain why an object is not a life lesson.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one clue that supports it.

Go back to the reading.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Copy one clue that supports it.

I CAN | I can distinguish the topic from the theme and support the theme with a clue.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The topic is solving a mystery with evidence.

The line about resources hints that people solve needs through reasoning and exchange.

CHOOSE B. Questions and evidence solve past mysteries.

SHOW Emsy asks how the shell traveled, and the river clue gives a possible answer. Her question and evidence work together to solve the mystery.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past.

DEFEND Topic word, not theme. Seashells is one object in the story. The theme is that careful questions and evidence can help solve mysteries about the past.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: evidence and mysteries. Theme: Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past. Line: Her first clue was the shell itself.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Her third clue was even more interesting. The map showed large rivers, including the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. ... ‘One traveling object could be an accident,’ Emsy thought. ... ‘But several objects from distant places make a pattern.’”

Which sentence best states a theme of the story?

- A** A museum has a display case.
- B** Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past.
- C** Emsy writes clues in a notebook.
- D** Seashells can be found near the ocean.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A A museum has a display case.**
Setting or event, not theme. This is a place detail, not a lesson from the whole story.
- B Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy's questions and several clues help her explain the shell's journey.
- C Emsy writes clues in a notebook.**
Topic word, not theme. This describes one action instead of a lesson that reaches beyond the story.
- D Seashells can be found near the ocean.**
Topic word, not theme. This is a fact about the object, not the story's message.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story, poem, or play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the text teaches, in a full sentence.

The best supporting detail is specific to the story's lesson, not a moral that could fit every story.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

This week we study **Evidence for a basic theme**. A theme is a global life lesson, and details should support that lesson in this story. STAAR asks: **Which detail best supports the theme of the story?** Watch for **Generic moral that fits many stories**. A strong theme is: **careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a detail that supports a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the strongest kind of evidence.

Read the line. Notice how Emsy's actions turn a surprising object into evidence for a conclusion.

"A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically."

I CAN | I can notice evidence that belongs to this story's lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a detail that supports a specific theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the detail that supports the theme.

STAAR asks: **Which detail best supports the theme of the story?** Look for a detail about questions, evidence, and solving this mystery.

“The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways.”

A People should always try their best. • **B** Emsy likes mysteries. • **C** The map showed rivers that could have helped people move the shell.

I CAN | I can reject a generic moral and choose story evidence.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can explain how one detail supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show why the detail fits.

Explain how the river detail supports the theme that careful evidence can solve mysteries about the past.

“Rivers were transportation routes long before highways or airplanes existed.”

I CAN | I can connect a specific detail to the story's larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and connect it to evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the evidence-based theme.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Then name the kind of detail that supports it.

“Suddenly, the mysterious shell did not seem misplaced at all.”

I CAN | I can write a lesson that is supported by this story's clues.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a specific theme against a generic moral."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a generic moral.

A student chooses: **People should always try their best.** Explain why it is a trap for this story.

"Perhaps people at Poverty Point had traveled enormous distances themselves, or perhaps objects had moved from community to community through repeated exchanges."

I CAN | I can prove why a broad moral is not the best support.



Find the best evidence on your own.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Copy one detail that specifically supports it and explain the connection.

Go back to the reading.

Write the *theme* in a full sentence.

Copy one *specific detail* and explain how it supports the theme.

I CAN | I can choose story-specific evidence for a theme and explain the connection.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The topic is solving a mystery. The words evidence that fit together logically point to the theme about using clues and careful questions.

CHOOSE C. The map showed rivers that could have helped people move the shell.

SHOW The river detail gives a real way the shell could travel from the coast to Poverty Point. It is evidence that helps solve the mystery.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. Trying your best is not the specific lesson supported by this mystery. The details support using questions and evidence to solve a problem about the past.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Theme: Careful questions and evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past. Detail: Rivers were transportation routes long before highways or airplanes existed. Connection: Rivers explain how the shell could travel.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“The label explained that the shell came from a coastal environment. Poverty Point, however, was located inland. ... Rivers were transportation routes long before highways or airplanes existed.”

Which detail best supports the theme that careful evidence can help people solve mysteries about the past?

A Emsy studied several clues before making her conclusion.

B People should always try their best.

C The shell was displayed behind glass.

D Emsy moved to the next display.



THEME

The answer is A.

- A Emsy studied several clues before making her conclusion. Correct.**
Correct. Studying several clues shows how careful evidence helps solve this mystery.
- B People should always try their best.**
Generic moral that fits many stories. It sounds positive but is not supported by this story's specific evidence.
- C The shell was displayed behind glass.**
Setting or event, not theme. The display case is a setting detail and does not help explain the shell's journey.
- D Emsy moved to the next display.**
Setting or event, not theme. This action does not show how evidence supports the story's lesson.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches, in a full sentence.

A good theme fits the whole story, not just one event or place.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** is what a story is about, such as recess or friendship. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, such as **listening to others can help a group make a good choice**. STAAR may ask: **What problem does the main character face, and what does it teach?** Trap this week: **Setting or event, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a character's problem and its lesson.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the problem and lesson.

Read the line. Beth notices a problem when she sees Lily alone. What bigger lesson might grow from this moment?

“‘I think Lily might need someone to play with,’ Beth said.”

I CAN | I can move from what happens in a story to what it teaches.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme connected to the character's problem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme from the problem.

STAAR asks: **What problem does the main character face, and what does it teach?** Which choice gives a lesson, not just an event?

“‘Sometimes recess gives us time to get to know someone new,’ she said.”

A Listening to others can help a group make a good choice • **B** Beth played jump rope at recess • **C** The playground has a fence

I CAN | I can choose the life lesson and avoid a setting or event trap.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can use details to show how a problem teaches a lesson.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the group problem teaches.

Explain how the class problem and the students' discussion support a theme about listening before making a group choice.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

I CAN | I can connect a character's actions and words to a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme that fits the character's whole problem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Write the lesson in your own words.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Do not name Beth, recess, or the playground.

“She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day.”

I CAN | I can turn story events into a lesson that applies beyond this story.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme by naming a story-detail trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **The class voted on a recess plan.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"People in a community do not always agree," she explained."

I CAN | I can explain why an event is not the lesson of the whole story.



Find the theme on your own.

Go back to the story. Write the character's problem in a few words. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

Go back to the reading.
Write the *problem* in a few words.
Write the *theme* in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can connect a character's problem to a theme and prove it with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Beth notices that Lily is alone and may need a friend. This event hints that including others can help a group feel connected.

CHOOSE A. Listening to others can help a group make a good choice. B is an event, and C is a setting detail.

SHOW Beth first wants longer recess, but she listens to reasons about learning time and another movement break. The class hears different views before voting, showing that listening helps groups decide.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Listening to different reasons can help people make fair group decisions.

DEFEND Setting or event, not theme. Voting on recess is one event in the story. The lesson is about listening, considering reasons, and making decisions respectfully.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Problem: the class must decide how to use its time. Theme: Listening to different reasons can help people make fair group decisions. Line: Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Beth looked at Lily. ... Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully. ... We looked at a problem. We gathered information. We considered different solutions.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Beth invited Lily to play jump rope at recess.
- B** The playground is a place where children can play.
- C** The story shows that listening to different reasons can help groups make good decisions.
- D** A class should always choose a longer recess.



THEME

The answer is C.

- A** **Beth invited Lily to play jump rope at recess.**
Setting or event, not theme. This is one kind action, not the full lesson about group decisions.
- B** **The playground is a place where children can play.**
Setting or event, not theme. The playground is a setting, not a life lesson.
- C** **The story shows that listening to different reasons can help groups make good decisions. Correct.**
Correct. The story shows students consider several choices, listen to reasons, and decide respectfully.
- D** **A class should always choose a longer recess.**
Life lesson not supported by this text. The story considers several solutions and never teaches that longer recess is always best.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic tells what a story is about.

The theme is a lesson that fits the whole story.

A character's actions can reveal a lesson that reaches beyond one character.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

A **topic** is the subject, such as a shell or trade. A **theme** is a full lesson, such as **careful questions and evidence can reveal connections**. STAAR may ask: **What theme do the actions of the main character express?** Trap this week: **One character's view, too narrow.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how a character's actions hint at theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice what the main character does.

Read the line. Emsy chooses observation instead of guessing. What lesson might her action show?

“She loved mysteries, especially those that required observation instead of guessing.”

I CAN | I can use what a character does to infer a lesson for many people.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme from a character's repeated actions.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the lesson in Emsy's actions.

STAAR asks: **What theme do the actions of the main character express?** Choose the lesson that fits Emsy's whole investigation.

“Still, one shell was not enough evidence.”

A Emsy likes visiting museums • **B** The shell was found far from the ocean • **C** Careful evidence can help people understand the past

I CAN | I can skip narrow details and select a lesson that reaches beyond one character.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can connect several actions to one theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how actions build the theme.

Explain how Emsy's actions across the story support the idea that careful evidence helps people understand the past.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

I CAN | I can explain how a character's choices build a lesson over time.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme that reaches beyond one character.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Write the lesson in your own words.

Write a theme for the whole story. Do not make it only about Emsy, the shell, or the museum.

“She drew a box around her final claim.”

I CAN | I can turn a character's actions into a lesson for many readers.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a one-character trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the narrow view.

A student wrote this theme: **Emsy should always visit museums.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Artifacts were clues. Maps were clues. Rivers were clues."



I can explain why a character's personal preference is too narrow.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the reading.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support the theme with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Emsy studies clues instead of guessing. Her action hints that careful observation can lead to a strong understanding.

CHOOSE C. Careful evidence can help people understand the past. A and B name a preference or detail, not a global lesson.

SHOW Emsy studies the map, compares the shell with copper, organizes clues, and checks that they fit. Her actions show that evidence can support a careful conclusion.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful questions and evidence can help people understand connections from the past.

DEFEND One character's view, too narrow. The story does not teach everyone to visit museums. It shows that people can use careful evidence to understand the past.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: evidence and trade. Theme: Careful evidence can help people understand connections from the past. Line: A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“She studied the coastline, located Poverty Point, and traced the distance between them with one finger. ... Emsy returned to her notebook and organized her clues. ... A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Emsy wrote the mystery in a notebook.
- B** The shell traveled along rivers.
- C** Everyone should visit a museum to learn history.
- D** Careful questions and evidence can help people understand the past.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A Emsy wrote the mystery in a notebook.**
One character's view, too narrow. This is one action Emsy takes, not a lesson for all readers.
- B The shell traveled along rivers.**
Too narrow. This is one possible story detail, not the lesson supported by Emsy's whole investigation.
- C Everyone should visit a museum to learn history.**
One character's view, too narrow. The story does not tell everyone to visit museums.
- D Careful questions and evidence can help people understand the past. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy studies several clues and uses them to understand how the shell traveled long ago.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is the subject of a story, such as community choices.

The theme is the message about life that the whole story supports.

A true life lesson must be supported by the text, not just sound nice.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** might be voting or recess. A **theme** is a full message, such as **people should listen to different views before making a group decision**. STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Trap this week: **Life lesson not supported by this text.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a possible theme and look for support.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the lesson in the discussion.

Read the line. Ask what this statement teaches about people in a community, then check the rest of the story for support.

“‘People in a community do not always agree,’ she explained.”

I CAN | I can tell a true-sounding life lesson from one the story actually teaches.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that the text truly supports.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the supported theme.

STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Pick the lesson the whole story supports.

“At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer.”

A Recess is the best part of every school day. • **B** Listening to different views helps groups decide respectfully. • **C** Everyone should always agree with the teacher.

I CAN | I can reject a nice-sounding lesson when the story does not prove it.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how several details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme with evidence.

The story supports the theme that people should listen to different views before deciding. Name two details that prove it.

“No one shouted. No one laughed at another person’s answer.”

I CAN | I can prove that a life lesson is supported by the whole story.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and support it with story details.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Write a supported theme.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Then name two details that support it.

“Now she was not so sure.”

I CAN | I can make sure my life lesson is truly taught by the text.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme by checking whether the text supports it."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against an unsupported lesson.

A student wrote this theme: **Everyone should spend all afternoon playing outside.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Because a school community has many needs,"

I CAN | I can explain why a nice-sounding life lesson is unsupported.



Find and support the theme.

Write the topic in one or two words. Write a theme in a full sentence. Then copy two lines that support it.

Go back to the reading.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme in a full sentence and copy two lines that support it.

I CAN | I can write a supported theme and prove it with two lines.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line introduces the idea that people have **different views**. The story supports a lesson about listening and making group decisions respectfully.

CHOOSE **B.** Listening to different views helps groups decide respectfully. A is an opinion, and C is a life lesson the story does not support.

SHOW **Mrs.** Green asks the students to consider advantages and disadvantages, and the class listens without shouting or laughing. These details support respectful group decisions.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Listening to different views can help people make respectful group decisions. Beth considers several reasons, and the class listens before voting.

DEFEND **Life lesson not supported by this text.** The story values recess, but it also explains that students need time for many subjects and activities.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: community decisions. Theme: Listening to different views can help people make respectful group decisions. Lines: Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully. / No one shouted. No one laughed at another person's answer.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully. ... No one shouted. No one laughed at another person’s answer. They asked questions and listened.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

A The class discusses recess and voting.

B People should listen to different views before making a group decision.

C Everyone should spend all afternoon playing outside.

D Beth likes playing with her friends.



THEME

The answer is B.

A The class discusses recess and voting.

Topic, not theme. These are subjects in the story, not the message about how people should act.

B People should listen to different views before making a group decision. Correct.

Correct. The class hears perspectives, considers reasons, and listens respectfully before voting.

C Everyone should spend all afternoon playing outside.

Life lesson not supported by this text. The story says a school community has many needs, including learning.

D Beth likes playing with her friends.

One character's view, too narrow. Beth's preference is one detail, not the lesson for the whole story.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, such as clues or trade.

The theme is a message in a full sentence that fits the whole story.

A strong theme can be supported by more than one detail.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

A **topic** might be mysteries, maps, or trade. A **theme** is a global life lesson, such as **careful investigation can help people understand the world**. STAAR may ask: **What is a theme of the story? Support it with evidence**. Trap this week: **Generic moral that fits many stories**.

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a theme and the evidence that points to it.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the evidence behind the lesson.

Read the line. Emsy learns that even a small object can reveal a large story. What specific lesson does the investigation support?

“Finally, scarcity gave people a reason to exchange resources.”

I CAN | I can connect a story's details to a specific lesson, not a generic rule.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a specific theme supported by the whole story.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the evidence-based theme.

STAAR asks: **What is a theme of the story?** Choose the lesson that matches the investigation and its clues.

“The word scarcity appeared in bold letters.”

A Always work hard and never give up. • **B** The museum has a glass display case. • **C** Careful evidence can reveal how communities connect.

I CAN | I can reject a generic moral and a story detail.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can support a theme with several connected clues.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme with clues.

Explain how two or more clues support the theme that evidence can reveal connections between communities.

“The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways.”

I CAN | I can explain how evidence builds a specific lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a specific theme and support it with evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Write a theme with proof.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Add two details that support your idea.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

I CAN | I can avoid a generic moral by naming what this story teaches.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a specific theme against a generic moral."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a generic moral.

A student wrote this theme: **Always do your best.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Either way, the artifacts suggested communication and connection between people who lived far apart."

I CAN

I can explain why a broad good rule does not fit this evidence closely enough.



Find and prove the theme.

Write the topic in one or two words. Write a specific theme in a full sentence. Then copy two lines that support it.

Go back to the reading.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write a specific theme in a full sentence and copy two lines that support it.

I CAN | I can tell a generic moral from a specific theme and prove my choice.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line supports a lesson that careful attention to evidence can reveal important connections about the past. It fits the shell, maps, rivers, and trade clues.

CHOOSE C. Careful evidence can reveal how communities connect. A is a Generic moral that fits many stories, and B is only a detail.

SHOW The rivers show how people traveled, and distant shells and copper show that materials moved between communities. Together, the clues support the theme about connections.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful evidence can help people understand how distant communities connected. The map, rivers, shells, and copper all support this idea.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. Always do your best could fit almost any story. This story specifically teaches that evidence can reveal how distant people connected.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: ancient trade. Theme: Careful evidence can help people understand how distant communities connected. Lines: The artifacts suggested communication and connection between people who lived far apart. / A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways. ... Either way, the artifacts suggested communication and connection between people who lived far apart. ... A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** The story includes a shell, a map, and rivers.
- B** People should always do their best.
- C** Careful evidence can reveal how distant communities connected.
- D** Emsy enjoys solving mysteries at a museum.



THEME

The answer is C.

- A The story includes a shell, a map, and rivers.**
Topic, not theme. These are subjects and details, not a life lesson.
- B People should always do their best.**
Generic moral that fits many stories. It does not explain the particular clues about travel and exchange.
- C Careful evidence can reveal how distant communities connected. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy uses maps, rivers, and artifacts to infer long-distance travel and trade.
- D Emsy enjoys solving mysteries at a museum.**
One character's view, too narrow. This describes Emsy's interest, not a lesson for readers.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches, in a full sentence.

The test may give me a topic trap, so I check that my theme is a lesson that fits the whole story.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** might be recess, choices, or voting. A **theme** is a life lesson, such as **listening and thinking can help a group make a good decision**. STAAR asks: **What does the author want readers to learn from the story?** Trap this week: **Topic word, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice words that hint at a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the bigger lesson.

Read the line. Is **recess** the theme, or does the line hint at a lesson about people?

"For a few minutes, the playground seemed full of nothing but running feet, swinging ropes, bouncing balls, and happy voices."

I CAN | I can look beyond a topic word to find the lesson a story teaches.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme instead of a topic word.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme.

STAAR asks: **What does the author want readers to learn from the story?** Choose the lesson that fits the whole story.

“What if we could have another short movement break instead of making recess a lot longer?”

A Listening and thinking can help groups make good decisions • **B** Recess and voting • **C** Beth likes playing outside

I CAN | I can choose the full lesson and avoid a topic trap.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the story supports the theme.

STAAR asks: **How does the story support the theme** that listening and thinking can help groups make good decisions? Give two details.

“We should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.”

I CAN | I can connect two details to the lesson of the whole story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Make it fit the recess problem and the class decision.

“As the class lined up, Max said, ‘Recess always feels too short.’”

I CAN | I can write a lesson that fits the whole story, not just recess.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme and name the trap in a wrong answer."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Recess and voting**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Finally, Mrs. Green handed each student a small paper ballot."

I CAN | I can prove why a topic word is not a theme.



Find the theme on your own.

Go back to the story. Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the reading.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support the theme with a line from the story.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Recess is a topic.** The words get to know someone new hint at a lesson about including others.

CHOOSE **A.** Listening and thinking can help groups make good decisions. B is Topic word, not theme, and C is one character's preference.

SHOW **Mrs.** Green says the class needs information and should consider different solutions. Later, the students listen to several perspectives before voting. These details support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Listening to different ideas can help people make thoughtful group decisions.

DEFEND **Topic word, not theme.** Recess and voting names subjects in the story, but it does not state what readers should learn.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: group decisions. Theme: Listening to different ideas helps groups make thoughtful choices. Line: We considered different solutions.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“We looked at a problem. We gathered information. ... Then we used voting to help make a group decision.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Listening to different ideas can help groups make good decisions.
- B** The class talks about recess and voting.
- C** Recess is a fun part of the school day.
- D** Every group should choose the same solution.



THEME

The answer is A.

A **Listening to different ideas can help groups make good decisions. Correct.**
Correct. The class gathers information, listens to different views, and then votes.

B **The class talks about recess and voting.**
Topic word, not theme. These are subjects in the story, not a lesson.

C **Recess is a fun part of the school day.**
Too narrow. This describes one part of the story, not the message about making group decisions.

D **Every group should choose the same solution.**
Opposite. The story shows that people can have different views and still listen respectfully.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is a life lesson in a full sentence.

A fact tells something from the text. A theme tells what the whole story teaches.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

A **topic** might be shells, maps, or trade. A **theme** is a life lesson, such as **careful evidence can help people understand the past**. STAAR asks: **How is the theme of the story different from a fact the reader learns?** Trap this week: **Topic-adjacent statement as message.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice the difference between a fact and a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice fact versus lesson.

Read the line. Is it a fact about the story, or does it point to a lesson readers can use?

“The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade.”

I CAN | I can tell a detail from the larger lesson it helps reveal.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme instead of a fact.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the life lesson.

STAAR asks: **How is the theme of the story different from a fact the reader learns?** Choose the statement that is a lesson, not a detail.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

A Seashells and copper came from far away • **B** Careful evidence can help people understand the past • **C** Poverty Point is in Louisiana

I CAN | I can separate the global lesson from details the reader learns.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how facts support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how facts build the theme.

Explain how the facts about the shell, rivers, and other materials support the theme that careful evidence can help people understand the past.

“Artifacts were clues. Maps were clues. Rivers were clues.”

I CAN | I can connect several facts to one larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme that reaches beyond a story fact.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme.

Write a theme for the mystery in a full sentence. Make sure it reaches beyond the shell and the museum.

“No one could ask the original travelers exactly what had happened, but the artifacts could still communicate information.”

I CAN | I can write the lesson that the facts work together to show.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a fact-like trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this message: **Trade happened at Poverty Point.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Suddenly, the mysterious shell did not seem misplaced at all."

I CAN | I can explain why a topic-adjacent statement is not the whole message.



Find the theme on your own.

Write one fact from the story. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the reading.
Write one fact from the story.
Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can separate a fact from the theme and support the theme with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE This is a fact or conclusion about the shell. It helps point toward a broader lesson about using evidence to understand the past.

CHOOSE B. Careful evidence can help people understand the past. A is a fact, and C is a fact too.

SHOW The shell came from far away, rivers carried travelers, and copper also came from a distant place. Emsy connects these facts to infer trade and understand how people were connected long ago.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful evidence can help people understand how people lived and connected long ago.

DEFEND Topic-adjacent statement as message. Trade at Poverty Point is a fact or conclusion from this story, not a lesson that applies beyond the story.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Fact: Rivers were transportation routes. Theme: Evidence from many clues can help people understand the past. Line: A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically. ... The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade. ... the smallest object could reveal an enormous story about how people traveled, traded, solved problems, and connected with one another long ago.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** The shell was found at Poverty Point, Louisiana.
- B** Careful evidence can help people understand the past.
- C** Rivers were used as transportation routes.
- D** Emsy wrote clues in a notebook.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A** **The shell was found at Poverty Point, Louisiana.**
Topic-adjacent statement as message. This is a fact from the text, not a life lesson.
- B** **Careful evidence can help people understand the past. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy connects clues from artifacts, maps, and rivers to understand how people lived and traded long ago.
- C** **Rivers were used as transportation routes.**
Topic-adjacent statement as message. It is a fact that supports the theme, not the broader lesson.
- D** **Emsy wrote clues in a notebook.**
Too narrow. This is one action by one character, not a theme for readers.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is a lesson in a full sentence.

A character's change can reveal a theme, but the theme must reach beyond that one character.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** might be recess, fairness, or choices. A **theme** is a global lesson, such as **listening to others can help people make wiser choices**. STAAR asks: **How does the main character change, and what theme does that show?** Trap this week: **One character's view, too narrow.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice how a character changes."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice Beth's change.

Read the line. What does Beth begin to understand that she did not consider at first?

"At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer."

I CAN | I can use a character's change to infer a lesson for many people.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme from a character's change.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the lesson in Beth's change.

STAAR asks: **How does the main character change, and what theme does that show?** Choose the lesson that fits the whole story.

“Now she was not so sure.”

A Considering other people's ideas can lead to better choices • **B** Beth wants longer recess • **C** Lily joins a jump-rope game

I CAN | I can look past one character's opinion to find the larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a character's change supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how Beth changes.

Explain how Beth's beginning and ending thoughts support the theme that considering other people's ideas can lead to better choices.

“But now there was more to think about.”

I CAN | I can compare a character's first view with the thinking that follows.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme from a character's change.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Make it explain Beth's change and fit the class discussion.

“She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day.”

I CAN | I can turn one character's learning into a lesson for many people.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a narrow character view."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Beth wants longer recess.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Beth listened as her classmates spoke."

I CAN

I can explain why one character's opinion is not the whole lesson.



THEME

Find the theme on your own.

Write how Beth changes. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that shows the change.

Go back to the reading.
Write how Beth changes.
Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy one line that shows the change.

I CAN | I can explain a character's change, infer a theme, and support it with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Beth first wants longer recess only.** Later she thinks about Lily and classroom learning, so she becomes more open to other ideas.

CHOOSE **A.** Considering other people's ideas can lead to better choices. B is One character's view, too narrow, and C is one event.

SHOW **Beth first agrees that recess should be longer.** After hearing about school needs and Lily's idea, she thinks about several perspectives before choosing. Her change supports the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Considering different needs and ideas can help people make thoughtful choices.

DEFEND **One character's view, too narrow.** Beth's first opinion is only one part of the story. The story shows her listening to other ideas and thinking more carefully.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Change: Beth moves from one certain answer to considering many needs. Theme: Listening to different ideas can improve group choices. Line: Now she was not so sure.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer. ... Now she was not so sure. ... She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Beth enjoys recess with her friends.
- B** The class has three choices about recess.
- C** People should always choose what they want first.
- D** Considering different ideas can help people make thoughtful choices.



THEME

The answer is D.

A Beth enjoys recess with her friends.

One character's view, too narrow. This describes Beth's feeling, not the lesson from her change.

B The class has three choices about recess.

Topic word, not theme. It names a story detail instead of stating a life lesson.

C People should always choose what they want first.

Opposite. Beth learns to consider other people and the class's needs before choosing.

D Considering different ideas can help people make thoughtful choices. Correct.

Correct. Beth changes when she listens to other perspectives and thinks about the needs of the whole class.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what each story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is a life lesson in a full sentence.

A shared theme must be supported by both stories, not just one.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question and The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

The two stories have topics such as choices, clues, and connections. A shared **theme** is a lesson both stories teach, such as **listening and evidence can help people solve problems**. STAAR asks: **What theme do both stories share?** Trap this week: **Plausible life lesson, unsupported.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a possible shared theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice a lesson in both stories.

Read the line from the first story. What lesson about group choices might connect to Emsy's careful investigation?

“People in a community do not always agree,”

I CAN | I can look for a lesson that both stories support.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme shared by two stories.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the shared theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme do both stories share?** Choose the lesson supported by the class discussion and the shell investigation.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

A Museums are interesting places to visit • **B** Every problem can be solved quickly • **C** Listening and evidence can help people solve problems

I CAN | I can check that one life lesson fits both texts.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how two stories support one theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the shared theme.

Explain how both stories support the theme that listening and evidence can help people solve problems.

“We looked at a problem. We gathered information.”

I CAN | I can use one detail from each story to prove a shared lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme shared by two stories.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the shared theme.

Write a theme that both stories support. Do not name a character, place, or object from only one text.

“The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways.”

I CAN | I can write one global lesson that fits both texts.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a shared theme with proof from both texts."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this shared theme: **Being curious always makes every problem easy.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Still, one shell was not enough evidence."

I CAN

I can reject a life lesson that sounds good but is not supported by both stories.



Find the shared theme on your own.

Write one detail from each story. Then write a shared theme in a full sentence.

Go back to both readings.
Write one detail from each story.
Write a shared theme in a full sentence.

I CAN | I can compare two texts and support a shared theme with both.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line suggests that people may have different ideas, so they need to listen and think. Emsy also considers several clues before making a conclusion.

CHOOSE C. Listening and evidence can help people solve problems. A is plausible but unsupported by both stories, and B is too broad.

SHOW The class listens and gathers information before voting. Emsy gathers clues and evidence before concluding that trade moved the shell. Both use careful thinking to solve a question.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Gathering information and listening to ideas can help people solve problems wisely.

DEFEND Plausible life lesson, unsupported. The stories show that information, listening, and evidence help, but they do not say curiosity makes every problem easy.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Recess detail: The class listens to several perspectives. Shell detail: Emsy organizes her clues. Shared theme: Careful thinking and information help people solve problems.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“We looked at a problem. We gathered information. We considered different solutions. ... A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically. ... the artifacts could still communicate information.”

Which statement best describes a theme shared by both stories?

- A** People enjoy spending time with friends and visiting museums.
- B** Problems should be solved without asking for help.
- C** Gathering information and considering ideas can help people solve problems.
- D** Every mystery has an easy answer.



THEME

The answer is C.

People enjoy spending time with friends and visiting museums.

- A** Plausible life lesson, unsupported. The texts include friends and a museum, but they do not teach this as a shared lesson.

Problems should be solved without asking for help.

- B** Opposite. The recess class listens to others, and Emsy uses information from displays and clues.

Gathering information and considering ideas can help people solve problems. Correct.

- C** Correct. The class gathers information and hears perspectives, while Emsy gathers clues and evidence to solve questions.

Every mystery has an easy answer.

- D** Plausible life lesson, unsupported. Neither story says that all mysteries or problems are easy.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

A strong theme fits the whole poem, not just one word or line.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “Why We Need Laws”

The topic of this poem includes **laws** and fairness. A **theme** is the bigger lesson, such as **fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly**. STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet express in the poem?** Trap this week: **Topic word, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a topic word and look for the theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the topic and the lesson.

Read the line. Is **rules** the topic or the theme? Notice how the poem points to a bigger lesson.

“Without clear rules to guide what should be done,”

I CAN | I can tell the difference between what a poem is about and what it teaches.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that fits the whole poem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet express in the poem?** Choose the full-sentence lesson.

“To write fair rules that everyone would obey.”

A Laws and fairness • **B** Fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly • **C** People should never disagree

I CAN | I can choose a full-sentence lesson instead of a topic word.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how lines support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the poem supports the theme.

Explain how the poem supports the theme that fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly.

“Communities could grow more safe and true.”

I CAN | I can connect several poem lines to one lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the poem's theme.

Write the lesson of the whole poem in a full sentence. Do not write only the topic word.

“With laws to guide what people say and do,”

I CAN | I can write a life lesson that fits every part of the poem.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme and name a trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Laws and fairness**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Many small problems quickly grew to one."

I CAN | I can explain why a topic word is not a theme.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the poem.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can tell a topic from a theme and support the theme with a poem line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Rules are a topic word.** The line hints that clear rules can guide people and prevent problems.

CHOOSE **B.** Fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly. A is Topic word, not theme. C is Opposite because the poem begins with disagreements.

SHOW **The poem says problems grew when there were no clear rules.** It then says fair rules helped communities grow safer, so the lines support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Fair rules can help people solve disagreements and live together peacefully.

DEFEND **Topic word, not theme.** Laws and fairness names subjects in the poem, but it does not state the lesson the poem teaches about them.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: laws. Theme: Fair rules can help communities solve problems and live peacefully. Line: Communities could grow more safe and true.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

**“So people gathered, searching for a way, To write fair rules that everyone would obey. ...
With laws to guide what people say and do, Communities could grow more safe and true.”**

Which statement best describes a theme of the poem?

A Fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly.

B Laws and fairness are important words.

C People should always agree with one another.

D The poem takes place in a town.



THEME

The answer is A.

- A Fair rules can help communities live safely and fairly. Correct.**
Correct. The poem shows problems without rules and safer communities with fair laws.
- B Laws and fairness are important words.**
Topic word, not theme. It names ideas in the poem but does not state a lesson.
- C People should always agree with one another.**
Opposite. The poem begins with disagreements and explains how rules can guide them.
- D The poem takes place in a town.**
Setting or event, not theme. A place is not the life lesson of the poem.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

Supporting lines must connect to the lesson, not just repeat a word from it.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “Why We Need Laws”

The poem's theme is that **fair rules can help communities solve problems and treat people well**. STAAR asks: **Which lines best support the theme of the poem?** Trap this week: **Word association from the lines**. A line may contain a theme word without proving the theme.

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a line that points toward a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice lines that build a theme.

Read the line. How does it connect to the theme that fair rules can help communities solve problems and treat people well?

“And fairness often seemed to tumble down.”

I CAN | I can connect a poem line to the lesson it helps build.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose lines that strongly support a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose the strongest supporting lines.

STAAR asks: **Which lines best support the theme of the poem?** Choose the lines that show how fair rules help people.

"The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair,"

A Long ago people argued over land and things, • **B** Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings. • **C** The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair,

I CAN | I can use the meaning of a line, not just a matching word.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can explain how lines support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the lines support the theme.

Explain how the poem's lines support the theme that fair rules can help communities solve problems and treat people well.

“People learned how to work and live as one,”

I CAN | I can use the meaning of several lines as evidence.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can choose and explain evidence for a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the evidence.

Write a theme for the poem and copy two lines that support it. Explain the connection.

“They helped bring order year after year.”

I CAN | I can show how lines across the poem build one lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can reject weak evidence and name the trap.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Defend against the trap.

A student chose this line because it contains a theme word: **With laws to guide what people say and do**, Explain why the choice needs more support and name the trap.

“Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle.”

I CAN | I can explain why matching a word is not enough proof.



Find the strongest proof on your own.

Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy two lines that support it and explain how each line helps.

Go back to the poem.
Write the theme in a full sentence.
Copy two supporting lines and explain each one.

I CAN | I can select lines that truly support a theme and explain why.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE This line shows the problem before fair rules. It helps build the theme because the poem will explain how rules can restore fairness.

CHOOSE C. The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, A and B show the problem, but C best supports the theme's solution.

SHOW The line shows that people learned to live and work together. Along with the lines about rights and fair treatment, it supports the theme about helpful rules.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Fair rules can help communities live together peacefully. The lines about settling what is fair and bringing order support this theme.

DEFEND Word association from the lines. The word laws appears, but this line is only a fragment. Strong evidence explains the helpful result of fair rules, such as rights or order.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Theme: Fair rules can help communities live together peacefully. Proof: The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, and They helped bring order year after year.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

**“The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, And gave each person rights that all could share.
... People learned how to work and live as one, And solve their problems before fights had begun.”**

Which lines best support the theme that fair rules help communities live together?

A Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings.

B Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle.

C The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, And gave each person rights that all could share.

D Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down.



THEME

The answer is C.

A Long ago people argued over land and things, Voices grew loud like clashing, noisy rings.

Word association from the lines. These lines mention the conflict but do not show how fair rules help.

B Some took more food while others had too little, Strong voices won while quiet ones stayed brittle.

Word association from the lines. It shows unfairness, not the helpful result of rules.

C The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, And gave each person rights that all could share. Correct.

Correct. These lines directly show rules solving unfairness and helping people share rights.

D Disagreements spread like storms across the town, And fairness often seemed to tumble down.

Word association from the lines. It shows the problem before rules, not the theme's solution.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the play teaches, in a full sentence.

A theme fits the whole play, not just the lunchroom or one event.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Lunchroom Discoveries”

The play's topic includes science, germs, and milk. Its **theme** is a bigger lesson, such as **scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years**. STAAR asks: **What is a theme of the play?**
Trap this week: **Setting or event, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a lesson in a play."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the play's bigger lesson.

Read the line. What does it suggest about the work of scientists beyond this lunchroom conversation?

"One discovery ended up helping millions of people."

I CAN | I can move from a science topic to a life lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that fits the whole play.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme.

STAAR asks: **What is a theme of the play?** Choose the lesson that fits the whole conversation.

“It shows how one person's work can help lots of other people.”

A Scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years. • **B** Milk and germs • **C** Students eat lunch in a cafeteria

I CAN | I can skip a setting or event and choose the play's lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how dialogue supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the play supports the theme.

Explain how the play supports the theme that scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years.

“Scientists continue asking questions and looking for answers.”

I CAN | I can connect different moments in a play to one lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the play's lesson.

Write a theme for the whole play in a full sentence. Do not name only the lunchroom or milk.

“Scientists often build on what other people have learned.”

I CAN | I can write a life lesson that fits the whole play.

THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme and explain a trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Eating lunch in a cafeteria.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The cafeteria becomes louder as students finish their lunches."

I CAN | I can tell a setting or event from a lesson.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the play.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme in a full sentence. Then copy one line that supports it.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support the theme with dialogue.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line suggests that one discovery can help many people, even beyond the person who made it.

CHOOSE A. Scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years. B is a topic, and C is Setting or event, not theme.

SHOW The students explain that discoveries solve problems, make food safer, and help millions. Their discussion shows that science can improve lives over time.

OWN Answers vary. Example: New discoveries can build on earlier work and help people for a long time.

DEFEND Setting or event, not theme. The cafeteria is where the play happens, but eating lunch is not the lesson about discoveries helping people.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: discoveries. Theme: Scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years. Line: One discovery ended up helping millions of people.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“One discovery ended up helping millions of people. ... It shows how one person's work can help lots of other people. ... The students leave the cafeteria thinking about how a discovery made long ago continues to improve lives today.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the play?

A Milk is a drink students have at lunch.

B Scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years.

C Students talk in a school cafeteria.

D Every science question has an easy answer.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A Milk is a drink students have at lunch.**
Topic, not theme. Milk is a detail in the play, not the lesson about discoveries.
- B Scientific discoveries can improve people's lives for many years. Correct.**
Correct. The play shows a discovery helping millions and continuing to improve lives today.
- C Students talk in a school cafeteria.**
Setting or event, not theme. It tells where the play happens, not what it teaches.
- D Every science question has an easy answer.**
Generic moral that fits many stories. The play says discoveries can take work, study, and time.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the play teaches, in a full sentence.

The ending can show what the characters understand and strengthen the theme.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Lunchroom Discoveries”

The play builds a theme that **asking questions and working patiently can lead to discoveries that help people**. STAAR asks: **How does the ending help develop the theme of the play?** Trap this week: **Generic moral that fits many stories.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how an ending points to a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice what the ending adds.

Read the ending line. What does it show the students understand about discoveries and their effects?

“The students leave the cafeteria thinking about Louis Pasteur, scientific discoveries, and how one person's ideas can continue helping people many years later.”

I CAN | I can use the ending to understand the play's lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can explain how an ending develops a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose how the ending develops the theme.

STAAR asks: **How does the ending help develop the theme of the play?** Choose the best explanation.

"I guess every discovery starts with a question."

A It shows that lunch is almost over. • **B** It connects questions to discoveries that help many people. • **C** It teaches that everyone should agree with the teacher.

I CAN | I can connect the final idea to the play's lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how the ending develops a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the ending's theme connection.

Explain how the ending helps develop the theme that asking questions and working patiently can lead to discoveries that help people.

“And one answer can help a lot of people.”

I CAN | I can connect the final advice to the play's earlier details.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and explain the ending.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the ending's lesson.

Write a theme for the play and explain how the ending helps develop it.

“Sometimes we use them so often that we forget someone had to create them.”

I CAN | I can connect the final scene to a global lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme with text evidence."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student says the ending teaches this theme: **People should always try their best.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"I learned more during lunch today than I expected."

I CAN

I can reject a nice lesson that the ending does not specifically support.



Explain the ending on your own.

Write a theme for the play. Then explain how the ending develops that theme, using one ending detail.

Go back to the play.

Write a theme in a full sentence.

Explain how the ending develops the theme with one detail.

I CAN | I can connect the ending to a theme and support my explanation with the text.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The ending shows that the students now understand how one person's ideas can keep helping people. It brings the play's lesson together.

CHOOSE B. It connects questions to discoveries that help many people. A is a setting event, and C is Generic moral that fits many stories.

SHOW Mr. Reyes tells the students to keep asking questions. The ending connects that advice with the idea that one answer can help many people, strengthening the theme about curious, patient work.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Asking questions and working patiently can lead to discoveries that help people for many years. The ending repeats that answers and ideas can help many people.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. Trying your best is a general idea, but the ending specifically develops the lesson that questions and discoveries can keep helping people.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Theme: Asking questions and working patiently can lead to discoveries that help people. The ending tells the students to keep asking questions and shows that one person's ideas can help people many years later.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Keep asking questions. ... And one answer can help a lot of people. ... The students leave the cafeteria thinking about Louis Pasteur, scientific discoveries, and how one person's ideas can continue helping people many years later.”

How does the ending help develop the theme of the play?

- A** It shows that the students are ready to leave lunch.
- B** It teaches that everyone should try their best in every situation.
- C** It connects asking questions and finding answers with discoveries that continue helping people.
- D** It proves that science is the only important school subject.

THEME

The answer is C.

- A** **It shows that the students are ready to leave lunch.**
Setting or event, not theme. Leaving lunch is an event, not the ending's lesson.
- B** **It teaches that everyone should try their best in every situation.**
Generic moral that fits many stories. The ending gives a more specific idea about questions and discoveries.
- C** **It connects asking questions and finding answers with discoveries that continue helping people. Correct.**
Correct. The final advice and thoughts return to the play's lesson about helpful discoveries.
- D** **It proves that science is the only important school subject.**
Too broad. The ending praises questions and discoveries, but it does not dismiss every other subject.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

A theme must fit the whole poem, not just a word or one detail.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “Why We Need Laws”

A **topic** is one or two words, like laws or fairness. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole poem, like **fair rules help communities live and work together**. STAAR asks: **What is the theme, not the topic, of the poem?** Traps this week: **Topic-adjacent statement as message, Too narrow, and Too broad.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a clue that points from the topic to a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the poem's bigger message.

Read the line. Is **rules** the topic or the theme? Notice the words that point toward a lesson.

"The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair,"

I CAN | I can notice how a poem's details point to a lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that fits the whole poem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the poem's theme.

Think about this question: **What is the theme, not the topic, of the poem?**

“When citizens work together and obey,”

A Fair rules and cooperation can help a community grow stronger • **B** Laws and rules • **C** People should never disagree

I CAN | I can reject topic-adjacent statements and choose a full life lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how two details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the poem builds its message.

How do the poem's details support the theme that **fair rules and cooperation can strengthen a community**? Explain.

“People learned how to work and live as one,”

I CAN | I can connect details from different parts of a poem to its lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

"I can write a theme in my own words."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Own the poem's lesson.

Write a theme for the poem in a full sentence. Make it true beyond this poem about laws.

"Communities worked better when people knew,"

I CAN | I can state a global lesson that the whole poem supports.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can explain why a tempting statement is not the best theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a close trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Laws make people vote and serve on juries.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Drivers stop safely when the light turns red,"

I CAN | I can defend a theme by naming the exact trap.



Find the poem's theme on your own.

Return to the poem. Write the topic in one or two words. Then write the theme in a full sentence and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the poem.

Write the **topic in one or two words.**

Write the **theme in a full sentence. Copy one supporting line.**

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support the theme with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Rules is a topic.** Helped neighbors settle what was fair points toward the theme that fair rules help people live together.

CHOOSE **A.** Fair rules and cooperation can help a community grow stronger.

SHOW **The poem says people learned to work and live as one, and later says communities become stronger when citizens work together and obey.** These details support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Communities are stronger when people follow fair rules and work together.

DEFEND **Topic-adjacent statement as message.** The line is one example of following rules, but the whole poem teaches a broader lesson about fair rules helping communities.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: laws. Theme: Fair rules and cooperation help communities grow stronger. Line: When citizens work together and obey,



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“When citizens work together and obey, Communities become stronger every day. ... The lesson people learned long, long ago, Is one that helps our towns and cities grow.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the poem?

A Laws and rules

B Towns have leaders and streets.

C People should never have disagreements.

D Fair rules and cooperation can help communities grow stronger.



THEME

The answer is D.

A **Laws and rules**

Topic-adjacent statement as message. Laws and rules name the subject, not the lesson.

B **Towns have leaders and streets.**

Too narrow. This is one detail about towns, not the poem's message.

C **People should never have disagreements.**

Opposite. The poem explains that laws help people settle disagreements.

D **Fair rules and cooperation can help communities grow stronger. Correct.**

Correct. The poem shows fair rules settling problems and people growing stronger when they work together.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson the play teaches in a full sentence.

A theme can grow from dialogue, but it must fit the whole play.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “**The Lunchroom Discoveries**”

A **topic** is one or two words, like discoveries or science. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole play, like **curiosity and careful work can lead to discoveries that help many people**. STAAR asks: **What theme do the words of the main character in line 18 suggest?** Traps this week: **Word association from the lines, Topic, not theme, and Too narrow.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a character's words that point to a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the message in dialogue.

Read Jordan's words. What bigger lesson do they suggest? Do not stop at the word **scientists**.

"I never thought about how many things scientists have helped improve."

I CAN | I can notice a lesson suggested by dialogue.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose the lesson suggested by a character's words."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose the theme suggested by the dialogue.

STAAR asks: What theme do the words of the main character in line 18 suggest?

"I never realized how many things started with someone trying to solve a problem."

A Milk is safer when it is pasteurized. • **B** The students eat lunch in a cafeteria. • **C** Questions and effort can lead to helpful discoveries.

I CAN | I can avoid word association and select a message supported by the play.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

"I can connect dialogue to a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Show how the characters support the theme.

Explain how the characters' words support the theme that **curiosity and careful work can lead to discoveries that help people.**

"Many scientific discoveries happen because someone asks a question and refuses to give up until they find an answer."

I CAN | I can explain how characters' words build a play's message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

"I can write a theme in my own words."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Own the play's message.

Write a theme for the whole play in a full sentence. Make it a lesson, not a summary of Pasteur's work.

"And one answer can help a lot of people."

I CAN | I can write a global lesson supported by the whole play.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a word association trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against word association.

A student wrote this theme: **Milk helps people stay healthy.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Sometimes we use them so often that we forget someone had to create them."

I CAN | I can explain why a detail from the play is not its full message.



Find the play's theme on your own.

Go back to the play. Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the play.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from the theme and support it with dialogue.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Scientists is part of the topic.** The words how many things they have helped improve suggest that discoveries can improve people's lives.

CHOOSE **C.** Questions and effort can lead to helpful discoveries.

SHOW **Mr.** Reyes says discoveries happen when someone asks a question and keeps working for an answer. The students also notice that one discovery helped millions, so their words support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Asking questions and working for answers can lead to ideas that help many people.

DEFEND **Word association from the lines.** Milk is mentioned, but the play's message is about questions, discoveries, and how ideas help people.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: discoveries. Theme: Asking questions and working for answers can help many people. Line: And one answer can help a lot of people.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“JORDAN: I never thought about how many things scientists have helped improve. ... MR. REYES: You're welcome. Keep asking questions.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the play?

- A** People should keep asking questions and working to solve problems.
- B** Louis Pasteur studied germs in milk.
- C** The students learn during lunch.
- D** Every scientific question has an easy answer.



THEME

The answer is A.

People should keep asking questions and working to solve problems. Correct.

- A** Correct. The characters explain that discoveries begin with questions and that answers can help many people.

Louis Pasteur studied germs in milk.

- B** Topic, not theme. This names one subject and one detail from the play.

The students learn during lunch.

- C** Too narrow. Lunch is the setting and the statement does not give the play's life lesson.

Every scientific question has an easy answer.

- D** Word association from the lines. The play values questions, but it never says answers are always easy.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson the story teaches in a full sentence.

A character's opinion may be part of the story, but a theme reaches beyond one character.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** is one or two words, like recess or decisions. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **good decisions require listening to different points of view**. STAAR asks: **What theme is shown by how the main character changes?** Traps this week: **One character's view, too narrow, Too narrow, and Topic, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice when a character's thinking changes.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice Beth's change.

Read what Beth says after thinking. What lesson does her change point toward?

“Beth looked at the three choices.”

I CAN | I can notice how a character's change points to a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose a theme shown by a character's change."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose the theme shown by Beth's growth.

STAAR asks: **What theme is shown by how the main character changes?**

"At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer."

A Beth wants a longer recess. • **B** Listening to ideas can improve group decisions. • **C** Recess should last all afternoon.

I CAN | I can look beyond one character's opinion to find the story's broader lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a character's change supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how Beth's change supports the theme.

Explain how the story supports the theme that **good decisions require listening to different points of view.**

“She thought about all the things they needed to learn during the school day.”

I CAN | I can connect the beginning, middle, and end of a story to its message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme that reaches beyond one character.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the story's lesson.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Do not make it only about recess.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

I CAN | I can write a global lesson supported by the character's growth.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can explain why one character's view is not the whole theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a narrow view.

A student wrote this theme: **Beth thinks recess is important.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"No one laughed at another person's answer."

I CAN | I can name and repair a too-narrow theme.



Find the story's theme on your own.

Return to the story. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the story.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can distinguish a character's view from a theme and support my answer.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Beth changes from being certain that longer recess is the only answer to considering other needs and solutions. This points to listening and thinking before deciding.

SHOW Beth first wants longer recess, but she then thinks about Lily's idea, classroom learning, and the group's needs. Her change shows that listening and considering reasons leads to a better decision.

DEFEND One character's view, too narrow. Beth's opinion is one detail, while the whole story teaches people to listen and consider reasons before group decisions.

CHOOSE B. Listening to ideas can improve group decisions.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Listening to different ideas and considering reasons can help people make respectful group decisions.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: group decisions. Theme: Listening to different ideas helps people make respectful decisions. Line: Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“At first, she had been certain that longer recess was the only good answer. ... Then Beth made her choice.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Beth enjoys playing with her friends.
- B** Students should always choose another solution.
- C** Listening to different ideas can help people make wiser group decisions.
- D** Recess is an important part of the school day.



THEME

The answer is C.

- A Beth enjoys playing with her friends.**
One character's view, too narrow. This tells a character detail, not the story's larger lesson.
- B Students should always choose another solution.**
Too broad. The story presents another solution as one option, not a rule for every decision.
- C Listening to different ideas can help people make wiser group decisions. Correct.**
Correct. The class listens, considers several choices, and Beth changes her thinking before deciding.
- D Recess is an important part of the school day.**
Topic, not theme. Recess is the subject of the discussion, not the full message.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches in a full sentence.

Evidence must fit the whole story, so a life lesson that is not supported is a trap.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

A **topic** is one or two words, like evidence or trade. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **careful observation and evidence can help people solve mysteries**. STAAR asks: **State a theme of the story and support it with evidence**. Traps this week: **Life lesson not supported by this text, Too narrow, and Topic, not theme**.

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a detail that points toward a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice the lesson in the evidence.

Read the line. What does it teach about solving a mystery? Look for the idea behind **evidence**.

"A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically."

I CAN | I can notice how a story's evidence supports a lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that the whole story supports.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose a supported theme.

STAAR asks: **State a theme of the story and support it with evidence.** First choose the lesson that the whole story supports.

“The shell had been discovered far from the place where it could have formed naturally.”

A Careful observation and evidence can help people solve mysteries. • **B** People should collect pretty objects. • **C** Every mystery can be solved in one minute.

I CAN | I can reject unsupported life lessons and choose a message proven by the text.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

"I can support a theme with evidence."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Show the theme with evidence.

Support the theme **careful observation and evidence can help people solve mysteries** with two details from the story.

"She studied the coastline, located Poverty Point, and traced the distance between them with one finger."

I CAN | I can name details and explain how they prove a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can state a theme and support it with a detail.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own a supported theme.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Then name one detail that supports it.

“No one could ask the original travelers exactly what had happened, but the artifacts could still communicate information.”

I CAN | I can make a claim about theme and prove it from the whole story.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme by checking it against the text."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against an unsupported lesson.

A student wrote this theme: **People should travel to as many places as possible.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways."



I can name a life lesson that the story does not support and explain why.



THEME

Find and support the theme on your own.

Return to the story. Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the story.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can state a supported theme and prove it with evidence.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Evidence is part of the topic.** The line suggests the theme that careful thinking and evidence help people reach strong conclusions.

CHOOSE A. Careful observation and evidence can help people solve mysteries.

SHOW **Emsy studies the map and distance, then connects the shell, copper, rivers, and scarcity.** These details show that careful observation and evidence help her solve the mystery.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Careful observation and evidence can help people solve difficult mysteries. Support: Emsy organizes clues from the shell, map, rivers, and copper.

DEFEND **Life lesson not supported by this text.** The story explains how objects traveled and how Emsy used evidence, but it never teaches everyone to travel widely.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: solving mysteries. Theme: Careful observation and evidence can help people solve difficult mysteries. Line: A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Emsy stared at the list. A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically. ... The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** Careful observation and evidence can help people solve difficult mysteries.
- B** The museum has a glass display case.
- C** People should travel to as many places as possible.
- D** Seashells are prettier than copper.



THEME

The answer is A.

A **Careful observation and evidence can help people solve difficult mysteries. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy studies maps, gathers clues, and connects evidence to solve the mystery.

B **The museum has a glass display case.**
Too narrow. This is one setting detail and not a lesson.

C **People should travel to as many places as possible.**
Life lesson not supported by this text. The story describes travel by objects, but it does not teach everyone to travel.

D **Seashells are prettier than copper.**
Topic, not theme. The story mentions both materials, but it does not compare their beauty.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches in a full sentence.

A setting or event can be part of a poem without being its theme.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “Why We Need Laws”

A **topic** is one or two words, like laws or fairness. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole poem, like **fair rules help communities live and work together**. STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet develop through the details in the poem?** Trap this week: **Setting or event, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a detail that hints at a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the poem's lesson.

Read the line. What does it teach about rules? Look for a lesson bigger than one event.

“People learned how to work and live as one,”

I CAN | I can notice how a poem's details point to a lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme supported by a poem's details.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the poem's theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet develop through the details in the poem?**

“Communities worked better when people knew,”

A Laws and towns • **B** Fair rules help communities work together • **C** People should live in busy cities

I CAN | I can avoid a setting or event and choose the poem's larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how details support the theme.

Explain how the poem supports the theme that **fair rules help communities work together**.

“The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair,”

I CAN | I can connect several poem details to its message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the poem's lesson.

Write a theme for the whole poem in a full sentence. Do not write only a place or event.

“When citizens work together and obey,”

I CAN | I can write a whole-poem lesson instead of naming a setting or event.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a setting or event trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the setting trap.

A student wrote this theme: **The town became a place with busy streets.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The town became a place where trust could grow,"

I CAN | I can explain why a setting or event is not the poem's full lesson.



Find the poem's theme on your own.

Return to the poem. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the poem.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can tell a poem's topic from its theme and support the theme with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line shows that fair rules can help people live and work together. It points beyond one town to a lesson about communities.

CHOOSE B. Fair rules help communities work together. A is Topic, not theme. C is a setting idea, not the poem's lesson.

SHOW The rules help neighbors settle disagreements, share rights, and work together. These details support the theme that fair rules make communities stronger.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Fair rules and cooperation help communities grow stronger.

DEFEND Setting or event, not theme. The town is where the ideas happen, but the poem teaches that fair rules and cooperation help communities grow.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: laws and communities. Theme: Fair rules help communities live and work together. Line: Communities worked better when people knew,



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, ... When citizens work together and obey, Communities become stronger every day.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the poem?

A Laws and towns

B Fair rules help communities live and work together.

C The town has busy streets.

D People should obey every rule without thinking.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A Laws and towns**
Topic, not theme. These words name subjects in the poem, not a life lesson.
- B Fair rules help communities live and work together. Correct.**
Correct. The poem shows rules settling disputes, protecting rights, and helping communities grow.
- C The town has busy streets.**
Setting or event, not theme. Busy streets are a setting detail, not the poem's message.
- D People should obey every rule without thinking.**
Too broad. The poem explains that fair rules should help everyone; it does not praise every rule.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a play is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the play teaches in a full sentence.

A topic word can appear in the title without being the theme.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Lunchroom Discoveries”

A **topic** is one or two words, like discoveries or lunch.

A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole play, like **questions and discoveries can help people for many years**. STAAR asks: **How does the title connect to the theme of the play?** Trap this week: **Topic word, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how a play's title points toward a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice what the title points toward.

Read the line. The title names a place and an idea. What larger lesson grows from the discoveries in the play?

“It sounds like one discovery can lead to many others.”

I CAN | I can use the title and details to look for a larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can connect a title to a theme instead of copying a topic word.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the title's theme.

STAAR asks: **How does the title connect to the theme of the play?** Choose the lesson, not a title word.

“JORDAN: So his work helped more than just people who drank milk?”

A Milk and lunch • **B** The cafeteria is a busy place • **C** Questions and discoveries can help many people for years

I CAN | I can explain how a title's topic connects to the play's larger message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a title and details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the title connects.

Explain how the title **The Lunchroom Discoveries** connects to the theme that questions and discoveries can help people for years.

“ALEX: We are talking about Louis Pasteur and how his discoveries still help people.”

I CAN | I can connect the title's topic to the play's message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and connect it to the title.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the play's message.

Write a theme for the whole play in a full sentence. Explain how the title helps you find it.

“And one answer can help a lot of people.”

I CAN | I can use a title as a clue without mistaking it for the theme.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a topic word trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the topic trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Lunchroom discoveries**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The students leave the cafeteria thinking about Louis Pasteur, scientific discoveries, and how one person's ideas can continue helping people many years later."

I CAN | I can explain why a title word is not the whole message.



Find the play's theme on your own.

Return to the play. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the play.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can use the title and details to distinguish a topic from a theme.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Discoveries are part of the topic, but the line points to the theme that one question or discovery can lead to more help for people.

CHOOSE C. Questions and discoveries can help many people for years.

SHOW The lunchroom is where the students discuss discoveries, and Pasteur's work still protects people. The title names the setting and subject, while the play develops the lesson that discoveries can keep helping others.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Questions can lead to discoveries that help people for many years. The title points to discoveries, and the play shows their lasting effects.

DEFEND Topic word, not theme. Lunchroom discoveries names the setting and subject, but the play teaches that questions and discoveries can keep helping people.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: discoveries. Theme: Questions can lead to discoveries that help people for many years. Line: And one answer can help a lot of people.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“One discovery ended up helping millions of people. ... And one answer can help a lot of people.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the play?

A Lunchroom discoveries

B Students should eat lunch while they study

C Questions and discoveries can help many people for years

D Scientists never need to work with other people



THEME

The answer is C.

- A Lunchroom discoveries**
Topic word, not theme. This repeats the setting and subject from the title.
- B Students should eat lunch while they study**
Not in the text. The play uses lunch as a setting, not as advice for students.
- C Questions and discoveries can help many people for years **Correct.****
Correct. The students explain that Pasteur's work still helps people and that one answer can help many people.
- D Scientists never need to work with other people**
Opposite. The play says scientists build on what other people have learned.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches in a full sentence.

A generic moral may sound wise but still fail if it does not fit this story.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Recess Question”

A **topic** is one or two words, like recess or decisions. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **good decisions require listening to different ideas and considering reasons**. STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Trap this week: **Generic moral that fits many stories.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a theme in a character's thinking.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the lesson in the decision.

Read the line. What does Beth learn about making a group decision? Look for a lesson tied to this story.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

I CAN | I can notice a story-specific lesson instead of a generic moral.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose a theme that fits this whole story."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose the best theme.

STAAR asks: **Which sentence best states a theme of the story?** Choose the lesson that fits the whole story, not any nice saying.

"We should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each choice."

A Listening to ideas can help groups make respectful decisions • **B** People should always be kind to one another • **C** Beth likes recess

I CAN | I can reject a generic moral and choose a lesson supported by the story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how story details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show why the theme fits.

Explain how the story supports the theme that **good decisions require listening to different ideas and considering reasons.**

“No one shouted. No one laughed at another person’s answer.”

I CAN | I can connect the problem, discussion, and ending to the lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

**“I can write a theme that fits this story,
not every story.”**

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the story's lesson.

Write a theme for the whole story in a full sentence. Make it specific to the problem the class solves.

“Because a school community has many needs,”

I CAN | I can write a specific lesson instead of a generic moral.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a specific theme against a generic moral."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the generic moral trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Always be a good person.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

“Because a good decision should not be based only on what we want,”

I CAN | I can explain why a broad good saying does not fit this story best.



Find the story's theme on your own.

Return to the story. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the story.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can reject a generic moral and support a story-specific theme.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line teaches that people should listen, consider reasons, and decide respectfully. It fits the class problem and discussion in the story.

CHOOSE A. Listening to different ideas can help people make respectful group decisions.

SHOW The students listen respectfully while they consider longer recess, the same recess, and another solution. This shows that group decisions improve when people hear different ideas and reasons.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Listening to different ideas and considering reasons helps groups make respectful decisions.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. It sounds positive, but the story specifically teaches people to listen, consider reasons, and make group decisions respectfully.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: group decisions. Theme: Listening to different ideas helps groups make respectful decisions. Line: Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“We should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. ... Then we used voting to help make a group decision.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

A Beth enjoys recess with her friends.

B Listening to different ideas and considering reasons helps groups make respectful decisions.

C People should always be kind to one another.

D Every group problem has one perfect answer.

THEME

The answer is B.

A Beth enjoys recess with her friends.

Too narrow. This is one character's feeling, not the lesson of the whole story.

B Listening to different ideas and considering reasons helps groups make respectful decisions. Correct.

Correct. The class gathers information, listens to perspectives, and uses the discussion to make a group decision.

C People should always be kind to one another.

Generic moral that fits many stories. It does not explain the story's focus on reasons and group choices.

D Every group problem has one perfect answer.

Opposite. The story presents several choices and asks students to consider advantages and disadvantages.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches in a full sentence.

One character's thought can be evidence without being the whole theme.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Mystery of the Traveling Shell”

A **topic** is one or two words, like clues or trade. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **careful evidence can help people understand how communities connected**. STAAR asks: **What theme does the author develop? Use evidence.**
Trap this week: **One character's view, too narrow.**

This deck teaches **finding theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how evidence points to a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the larger lesson.

Read the line. What does Emsy's thinking teach about solving a mystery? Look beyond one person's thought.

“The seashell probably reached Poverty Point through long-distance trade.”

I CAN | I can notice a whole-story lesson instead of one character's view.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme broader than one character's view.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose a whole-story theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme does the author develop? Use evidence.** Choose the lesson that reaches beyond Emsy's single thought.

“Still, one shell was not enough evidence.”

A Emsy enjoys solving mysteries • **B** The shell traveled a long distance • **C** Careful evidence can help people understand how communities connected

I CAN | I can use the whole story to choose a lesson and avoid a narrow answer.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can support a theme with evidence from the whole story.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme with evidence.

Support the theme **careful evidence can help people understand how communities connected** with two details.

“The information panel explained that people connected with Poverty Point traveled along major waterways.”

I CAN | I can explain how several clues develop a theme beyond one character.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can state a theme and support it with evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme with evidence.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Then name one detail that supports it.

“A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

I CAN | I can write a lesson that reaches beyond one character's view.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a whole-story theme against one character's view."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a narrow view.

A student wrote this theme: **Emsy loves solving mysteries.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"And sometimes, Emsy realized, the smallest object could reveal an enormous story about how people traveled, traded, solved problems, and connected with one another long ago."



I can explain why a character detail is too narrow for the theme.



Find the theme on your own.

Return to the story. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state a full theme and copy one line that supports it.

Return to the story.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the theme in a full sentence and copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can distinguish one character's view from a whole-story theme and support my answer.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line teaches that careful thinking needs **evidence**. It points to a lesson that reaches beyond Emsy and this one shell.

CHOOSE C. Careful evidence can help people understand how communities connected.

SHOW The rivers show that people traveled and communicated, and distant shells and copper show that materials moved between communities. Together, the clues support the theme about evidence revealing connections.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Careful evidence can reveal how people traveled, traded, and connected. Support: Emsy uses the shell, map, rivers, and copper to reach her conclusion.

DEFEND One character's view, too narrow. Emsy's interest begins the investigation, but the story teaches how evidence reveals travel, trade, problem solving, and connection.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: artifacts and trade. Theme: Careful evidence can reveal how communities connected. Line: A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Perhaps people at Poverty Point had traveled enormous distances themselves, or perhaps objects had moved from community to community through repeated exchanges. ... A strong conclusion needed more than imagination; it needed evidence that fit together logically.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

A Emsy enjoys solving mysteries.

B The shell is a small, pearly object.

C People should always travel far from home.

D Careful evidence can reveal how communities traveled, traded, and connected.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A Emsy enjoys solving mysteries.**
One character's view, too narrow. Emsy's interest begins the story but is not the whole lesson.
- B The shell is a small, pearly object.**
Topic, not theme. This describes one artifact instead of stating a life lesson.
- C People should always travel far from home.**
Life lesson not supported by this text. The story explains travel as evidence, not as advice for everyone.
- D Careful evidence can reveal how communities traveled, traded, and connected. Correct.**
Correct. Emsy connects the shell, map, rivers, copper, and scarcity to understand how communities were linked.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches, in a full sentence.

A turning point is an important moment that can reveal the story's lesson.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “Crash”

A **topic** is one or two words, like honesty or mistakes.

A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **being honest can help make a mistake right**. A turning point is the moment when a character makes an important choice. STAAR asks: **What theme does the turning point in the story help develop?**
Trap this week: **Setting or event, not theme.**

This deck teaches **finding a turning-point theme the STAAR way** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a turning point that hints at a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the turning point.

Read the line. What important choice does Amina make at the turning point? Notice how the choice hints at a lesson.

“Amina took a deep breath and raised her hand.”

I CAN | I can notice how an important choice can reveal a lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme that grows from an important choice.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the theme from the turning point.

STAAR asks: **What theme does the turning point in the story help develop?**

“Accidents happen, but being honest shows responsibility.”

A The importance of honesty • **B** Being honest and taking responsibility can help make mistakes right • **C** A broken jar on a classroom floor

I CAN | I can choose the lesson, not the event that starts the lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a turning point supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the turning point supports the theme.

Explain how Amina's choice at the turning point supports the theme that honesty and responsibility can help make mistakes right.

“Thank you for telling the truth, Amina.”

I CAN | I can use what happens before and after a choice to prove a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the turning-point theme.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Connect it to Amina's choice at the turning point.

“She had made a mistake, but her honesty helped make things right.”

I CAN | I can write a lesson that fits the choice and the ending.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme by naming an event trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the event trap.

A student wrote this theme: **The glass jar fell and broke.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The glass jar fell to the floor and broke."

I CAN | I can explain why an event is not a life lesson.



Find the turning-point theme on your own.

Go back to the passage. Write the turning point, then write the theme it helps develop and copy one supporting line.

Go back to the reading.

Write the turning point.

Write the theme it helps develop. Then copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can connect a turning point to a theme and support it with a line from the text.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Amina chooses to speak up after she breaks the jar. That choice hints that honesty matters, even when telling the truth feels hard.

CHOOSE B. Being honest and taking responsibility can help make mistakes right. A is Topic, not theme. C is Setting or event, not theme.

SHOW Amina tells the truth even though she is nervous. Then Mrs. Ramirez thanks her, and the class helps clean up. These details show that honesty and responsibility help solve a problem.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Telling the truth and taking responsibility can help people fix mistakes.

DEFEND Setting or event, not theme. The broken jar is an event in the story. The lesson is about being honest and taking responsibility after a mistake.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Turning point: Amina tells the truth about breaking the jar. Theme: Honesty and responsibility can help people fix mistakes. Line: Being a good citizen means telling the truth, even when it feels hard.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Amina took a deep breath and raised her hand. ... Being a good citizen means telling the truth, even when it feels hard.”

Which statement best describes a theme that the turning point helps develop?

- A** Being honest and taking responsibility can help people make mistakes right.
- B** A glass jar can break during a classroom project.
- C** Students should work on plant projects.
- D** Accidents always cause problems for everyone.



THEME

The answer is A.

A **Being honest and taking responsibility can help people make mistakes right. Correct.**
Correct. Amina tells the truth, takes responsibility, and helps the class make things right.

B **A glass jar can break during a classroom project.**
Setting or event, not theme. This tells an event from the story, not a lesson.

C **Students should work on plant projects.**
Topic, not theme. The project is part of the setting, but it is not the message.

D **Accidents always cause problems for everyone.**
Opposite. The story shows that honesty and teamwork help after an accident.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches, in a full sentence.

A character's choice can show what the story wants readers to learn.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “Crash”

A **topic** is one or two words, like honesty or responsibility. A **theme** is a life lesson in a full sentence, like **admitting mistakes can help people make things right**. Look closely at the main character's choices. STAAR asks: **What theme do the choices of the main character express?** Trap this week: **Life lesson not supported by this text.**

This deck teaches **finding theme through a character's choice** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice the choice that expresses a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice Amina's choice.

Read the line. What does Amina choose to do, even though she feels nervous?

“She took a deep breath and raised her hand.”

I CAN | I can connect a main character's choice to a lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme expressed by a character's choices.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the lesson in Amina's choice.

STAAR asks: **What theme do the choices of the main character express?**

“But deep down, Amina knew that was not the right choice.”

A Honesty and responsibility matter when mistakes happen • **B** The class is studying how plants grow • **C** Telling the truth is always easy

I CAN | I can skip a topic detail and a life lesson the story does not support.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a character's choices support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show what Amina's choices express.

Explain how two of Amina's choices support the theme that honesty and responsibility matter when mistakes happen.

“She remembered a lesson her parents often talked about at home.”

I CAN | I can use more than one choice to explain a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a supported theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the character-choice theme.

Write a theme in your own words. Make sure Amina's choices and the whole story support it.

“However, telling the truth had helped solve the problem.”

I CAN | I can write a life lesson that the character's choices truly support.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme by checking its support in the text."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against an unsupported lesson.

A student wrote this theme: **Everyone should tell the truth every single time.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Sometimes doing the right thing is not easy."

I CAN | I can explain why a true-sounding lesson is not supported by this story.



Find the choice-based theme on your own.

Write the main character's important choices. Then write a supported theme and copy one line that proves it.

Go back to the reading.
Write Amina's important choices.
Write a supported theme. Then copy one proof line.

I CAN | I can use a character's choices to infer a supported theme.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Amina chooses to raise her hand and tell the truth. Her choice shows that honesty matters even when a person may get in trouble.

CHOOSE A. Honesty and responsibility matter when mistakes happen. B is Topic, not theme. C is Life lesson not supported by this text.

SHOW Amina decides not to stay silent, and she admits that she bumped the table. Then she helps make things right. These choices support the theme of honesty and responsibility.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Telling the truth about a mistake can help people solve problems and earn trust.

DEFEND Life lesson not supported by this text. The story supports telling the truth about mistakes, but it does not prove the claim about every single time.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Choices: Amina admits the mistake and helps make things right. Theme: Honesty and responsibility can help people solve problems. Line: Her honesty helped make things right.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“She took a deep breath and raised her hand. ... Sometimes it takes courage to admit a mistake.”

Which statement best describes a theme expressed by the main character's choices?

A People should never make mistakes.

B The classroom plant is part of a science project.

C Amina should tell the teacher immediately every time something happens.

D Admitting mistakes and taking responsibility can help people make things right.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A** **People should never make mistakes.**
Opposite. The story says accidents happen and shows what to do after a mistake.
- B** **The classroom plant is part of a science project.**
Topic, not theme. This is a story detail, not the lesson from Amina's choices.
- C** **Amina should tell the teacher immediately every time something happens.**
Too narrow. It gives a rule about Amina and one situation, not the whole lesson.
- D** **Admitting mistakes and taking responsibility can help people make things right. Correct.**
Correct. Amina admits the mistake, accepts responsibility, and helps solve the problem.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is a lesson that fits the whole story, not just any true advice.

A strong theme is specific enough to match the character's problem and change.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Good Citizen”

A **topic** is one or two words, like responsibility or animals. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole story, like **people earn trust by following through on responsibilities**. A statement can be true and still miss the story's message. STAAR asks: **Why is "Always be careful" not the best theme of the story?** Trap this week: **Generic moral that fits many stories.**

This deck teaches **telling a true theme from a generic moral** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a theme that fits this story's problem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the story's specific lesson.

Read the line. What responsibility does Elena understand she must follow through on?

“Being a good citizen meant more than simply helping when it was convenient.”

I CAN | I can notice why a specific lesson is stronger than general advice.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the specific theme instead of a generic moral.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the best theme.

STAAR asks: **Why is "Always be careful" not the best theme of the story?**

“It meant following through on responsibilities.”

A Dogs at a shelter need food and care • **B** People earn trust by following through on responsibilities • **C** Always be careful

I CAN | I can choose a lesson that fits Elena's problem and change.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show why a specific theme fits the whole story.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show why the theme fits the whole story.

Explain how Elena's mistake and her change support the theme that people earn trust by following through on responsibilities.

“The more she thought about it, the more worried she became.”

I CAN | I can connect the problem, response, and ending to the theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme that fits one story especially well.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the story's specific theme.

Write a theme for the whole story. Avoid a generic moral that could fit almost any story.

“What mattered was admitting mistakes and making them right.”

I CAN | I can write a specific lesson instead of a broad piece of advice.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a specific theme against a generic moral."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the generic-moral trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Always be careful.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Most importantly, good citizens can be trusted to do what they say they will do."

I CAN | I can explain why broad advice misses the story's main lesson.



Find the precise theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a specific theme and copy one line that supports it.

Go back to the reading.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write a specific theme. Then copy one supporting line.

I CAN | I can tell a generic moral from a specific theme and support my choice with a line.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Elena learns that responsibility means doing important jobs carefully, even when something more fun is waiting.

CHOOSE B. People earn trust by following through on responsibilities. A is Topic, not theme. C is the Generic moral that fits many stories.

SHOW Elena realizes she forgot Rusty's food, so she returns and fixes the mistake. Later, she uses a checklist and completes every task. These details show her learning to be dependable.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Responsible people admit mistakes, fix them, and learn to follow through.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. Always be careful does not explain Elena's forgotten responsibility, her repair, or her new checklist.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: responsibility. Theme: Responsible people admit mistakes, fix them, and learn to follow through. Line: Most importantly, good citizens can be trusted to do what they say they will do.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Being a good citizen meant more than simply helping when it was convenient. ... Most importantly, good citizens can be trusted to do what they say they will do.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

A Dogs at shelters need food, water, and attention.

B People can earn trust by taking responsibility and following through.

C Always be careful when you are doing a job.

D Elena should use a checklist every Saturday at the shelter.



THEME

The answer is B.

A

Dogs at shelters need food, water, and attention.

Topic, not theme. This is an important story detail, but it is not the full lesson.

B

People can earn trust by taking responsibility and following through. Correct.

Correct. Elena fixes her mistake, uses a checklist, and becomes someone Rusty can count on.

C

Always be careful when you are doing a job.

Generic moral that fits many stories. It does not explain Elena's responsibility and change.

D

Elena should use a checklist every Saturday at the shelter.

Too narrow. A checklist is one action Elena takes, not a life lesson for the whole story.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a story is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the story teaches, in a full sentence.

A strong theme is supported by details from the beginning, problem, and ending.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “The Good Citizen”

A **topic** is one or two words, like responsibility or volunteering. A **theme** is a message in a full sentence, like **responsibility means admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them**. To defend a theme, use details from the whole story. STAAR asks:

Short response: What is a theme of the story?

Defend it with two details. Trap this week: **Topic-adjacent statement as message.**

This deck teaches **defending a theme with evidence** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a theme that needs evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice a theme and its evidence.

Read the line. What message does Elena learn, and what part of the story could support it?

“Responsibility means admitting mistakes, correcting them, and learning from them.”

I CAN | I can notice how a character's lesson connects to details across a story.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme and prepare to defend it with evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the message, not a topic neighbor.

STAAR asks: **What is a theme of the story? Defend it with two details.**

“She wanted to be certain everything was complete.”

A The shelter is a place where dogs wait for homes • **B** Elena uses a checklist to finish her tasks • **C** Responsibility means fixing mistakes and learning from them

I CAN | I can skip a topic-adjacent statement and choose the full message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can defend a theme with two details.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show two details that defend the theme.

Defend the theme that responsibility means admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them. Name two details.

“After changing clothes and grabbing a snack, she headed to the park.”

I CAN | I can explain how two details from different parts of a story support one message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and defend it with evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the defended theme.

Write a theme for the story in a full sentence. Then name two details that defend it.

“The following Saturday, Elena arrived at the shelter carrying a small checklist she had created at home.”

I CAN | I can connect a full-sentence theme to two details from the whole story.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a topic-adjacent statement."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the topic-adjacent trap.

A student wrote this message: **Volunteering at an animal shelter is important.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"It was about understanding that other people (and sometimes animals) count on you to do your part."

I CAN | I can explain why mentioning the topic is not enough to state the message.



Find and defend the theme on your own.

Write a theme in a full sentence. Then copy two details and explain how each one supports the theme.

Go back to the reading.
Write a theme in a full sentence.
Copy two details and explain how each one supports it.

I CAN | I can distinguish a theme from a topic-adjacent statement and defend it with two details.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Elena learns that responsibility includes fixing mistakes and learning from them. Her missed chore, return to the shelter, and checklist can support this theme.

CHOOSE C. Responsibility means fixing mistakes and learning from them. A is Topic, not theme. B is Topic-adjacent statement as message.

SHOW First, Elena returns to feed Rusty after realizing she forgot. Later, she creates a checklist and completes every task. These details show her fixing the mistake and learning from it.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Responsible people fix mistakes and learn better ways to follow through. Details: Elena returns to feed Rusty; later she uses a checklist and completes every task.

DEFEND Topic-adjacent statement as message. Volunteering is part of the story's topic, but the deeper message is about admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Theme: Responsibility means admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them. Details: Elena returns to feed Rusty; the next Saturday she uses a checklist and completes every task.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“She had forgotten. ... The following Saturday, Elena arrived at the shelter carrying a small checklist she had created at home.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the story?

- A** A dog shelter is a place where animals wait for homes.
- B** Elena should always use a checklist when she volunteers.
- C** Volunteering at an animal shelter is important.
- D** Responsibility means admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A A dog shelter is a place where animals wait for homes.**
Topic, not theme. It tells what the setting is about, not the lesson Elena learns.
- B Elena should always use a checklist when she volunteers.**
Too narrow. The checklist is one way Elena changes, not the full life lesson.
- C Volunteering at an animal shelter is important.**
Topic-adjacent statement as message. It mentions the topic but misses the deeper lesson about responsibility.
- D Responsibility means admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them. Correct.**
Correct. Elena returns to fix the mistake and later learns a better way to complete her responsibilities.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

A strong theme fits the whole poem, not just a repeated word or image.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “A Dream Can Grow”

A **topic** is one or two words, like dreams or hope. A **theme** is a lesson in a full sentence, like **sharing hope can help good ideas grow**. STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet express in the poem?**
Trap this week: **Word association from the lines.**

This deck teaches **finding a theme in a longer poem** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a theme in a longer poem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the poem's bigger message.

Read the line. What topic words do you notice, and what bigger lesson might the whole poem teach?

“One hopeful word can travel through, Until another dreams it too.”

I CAN | I can look past repeated words to find the poem's larger lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose a theme that fits every stanza."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose the whole poem's theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme does the poet express in the poem?** Look for a lesson, not a repeated word.

"It moves through classrooms, homes, and towns, And lifts our hearts when we feel down."

A Sharing hope can inspire people to help good ideas grow • **B** Dreams and kindness • **C** A child should always have the same dream as a friend

I CAN | I can choose a life lesson instead of matching a word from the poem.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how two details support a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the poem grows its theme.

Explain how the poem shows that sharing hope can inspire people to help good ideas grow. Use two details.

“Together we can help it grow, By sharing kindness as we go.”

I CAN | I can connect images and actions across a poem to its message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the poem's theme.

Write a theme for the whole poem in a full sentence. Make it a lesson that could fit real life.

**“The future waits for what we do, For dreams need helping hands
there too.”**

I CAN | I can write a global lesson that fits the poem from start to finish.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend a theme against a word trap.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Defend against word association.

A student wrote this theme: **Dreams, hope, and kindness**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

“But many hearts can help it grow.”

I CAN

I can explain why repeated words are clues, not a complete message.



Find the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a full-sentence theme and copy two poem lines that support it.

Go back to the poem.

Write the **topic in one or two words.**

Write the **theme in a full sentence. Copy **two supporting lines**.**

I CAN | I can tell the topic from a theme and support my theme with two lines.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The words **hopeful** and **dreams** point to **hope spreading**. The larger lesson is that shared hope can inspire more people.

CHOOSE **A.** Sharing hope can inspire people to help good ideas grow. **B** is Word association from the lines. **C** is Too narrow and not supported.

SHOW The poem first shows a dream moving from **friend to friend**. Later, children share kindness to help it grow. Together, these details support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Shared hope and kind actions can help good ideas become real.

DEFEND **Word association from the lines.** The words name ideas in the poem, but they do not state the lesson that sharing hope and kindness helps dreams grow.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: hope and dreams. Theme: Sharing hope and kindness can help good ideas grow. Lines: One hopeful word can travel through, Until another dreams it too. Together we can help it grow, By sharing kindness as we go.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“One hopeful word can travel through, Until another dreams it too. ... Together we can help it grow, By sharing kindness as we go.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the poem?

- A** Sharing hope and kindness can help good ideas grow.
- B** Dreams, hope, and helping hands.
- C** The poem takes place in classrooms and towns.
- D** Every dream will come true if someone says it aloud.



THEME

The answer is A.

- A** **Sharing hope and kindness can help good ideas grow. Correct.**
Correct. The dream spreads through hopeful words, and people help it grow by sharing kindness.
- B** **Dreams, hope, and helping hands.**
Word association from the lines. These are poem words, not a lesson in a full sentence.
- C** **The poem takes place in classrooms and towns.**
Setting or event, not theme. Locations show where the dream travels, not the message.
- D** **Every dream will come true if someone says it aloud.**
Too broad. The poem says people help a dream grow, not that every dream must come true.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

Images can help readers feel and understand a theme, but an image is not the theme by itself.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “A Dream Can Grow”

A **topic** is one or two words, like dreams or hope. A **theme** is a message in a full sentence, like **shared hope can move people to care for one another**.

Images are details that help build the message.

STAAR asks: **How do the images in lines 3 and 4 support the theme?** Trap this week: **Topic word, not theme.**

This deck teaches **using imagery to support theme** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how an image supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice images that carry meaning.

Read the line. What image do you picture, and what lesson could that image help support?

“I looked at Mama's shining eyes, And saw the tears that made me wise.”

I CAN | I can connect a picture in a poem to the larger message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose an explanation of imagery and theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose what the images show.

STAAR asks: **How do the images in lines 3 and 4 support the theme?** Explain what the pictures help readers understand.

“A little spark, a little shine.”

A The poem is about dreams. • **B** The speaker sees a spark in a room. • **C** A spark image shows hope beginning and spreading.

I CAN | I can explain what an image means instead of naming only the topic.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how imagery supports a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how the images support the theme.

Explain how the images of shining eyes and a little spark support the theme that shared hope can move people to care.

“It traveled into hearts like mine, A little spark, a little shine.”

I CAN | I can explain how two images make a poem's message clearer.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and connect an image to it.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the message behind the images.

Write a full-sentence theme for the poem. Then name one image and explain how it supports your theme.

**“A dream grows stronger when we share, Through thoughtful words
and acts of care.”**

I CAN | I can state a life lesson and use imagery as evidence.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a topic word."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the topic trap.

A student wrote this theme: **Dreams**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"I carry it when I choose what's right, And help another heart feel light."

I CAN | I can explain why a topic word does not state the poem's message.



Find the theme and image evidence.

Write the topic in one or two words. Write a full-sentence theme, then copy one image and explain how it supports the theme.

Return to the poem.

Write the **topic in one or two words.**

Write the **theme and explain one **image** that supports it.**

I CAN | I can distinguish a topic word from a theme and use imagery as evidence.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The shining eyes and tears show that the hopeful words matter deeply. The image supports a theme about shared hope moving people to care.

CHOOSE C. A spark image shows hope beginning and spreading. A is a broad theme, but this question asks how the images support it. B is Topic word, not theme.

SHOW Mama's shining eyes show that the message touches her. The spark in the speaker's heart shows that hope passes to someone new. Together, the images support shared hope.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Shared hope and caring actions can inspire people to help one another. The image of a spark in a heart shows hope being passed to someone new.

DEFEND Topic word, not theme. Dreams name what the poem discusses, but the poem teaches that shared hope and caring actions can affect others.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: hope and service. Theme: Shared hope can inspire people to care for one another. Image: a little spark in the speaker's heart shows hope passing to a new person.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“I looked at Mama's shining eyes, And saw the tears that made me wise. ... It traveled into hearts like mine, A little spark, a little shine.”

How do the images in lines 3 and 4 support the theme that shared hope can move people to care?

- A** They show that the speaker is standing in a crowd.
- B** They prove that every dream will come true.
- C** They name the topic of the poem: dreams.
- D** They show that hopeful words can touch people and spread from heart to heart.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A They show that the speaker is standing in a crowd.**
Setting or event, not theme. The crowd is a detail, but it does not explain the images' meaning.
- B They prove that every dream will come true.**
Too broad. The images show hope spreading, not that every dream will come true.
- C They name the topic of the poem: dreams.**
Topic word, not theme. Dreams name the subject but do not explain what the images teach.
- D They show that hopeful words can touch people and spread from heart to heart. Correct.**
Correct. Shining eyes, tears, and a spark in a heart show hope affecting people and moving onward.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

A theme can build as a poem moves from an idea to actions and then to a personal choice.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “What Will You Give?”

A **topic** is one or two words, like service or helping. A **theme** is a lesson in a full sentence, like **people can make a difference by offering their time and skills**. To track a theme, notice how each stanza adds to the message. STAAR asks: **How does the theme build from stanza to stanza?** Trap this week: **Describes one stanza only**.

This deck teaches **tracking a theme across stanzas** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice how a poem begins a theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice a theme beginning to build.

Read the line. What invitation begins here, and how might later stanzas develop it?

“A voice sent out a simple word: To serve, and thousands stood and heard.”

I CAN | I can track an idea as it grows across several stanzas.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

"I can choose the idea that starts a developing theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Choose how the theme starts.

STAAR asks: **How does the theme build from stanza to stanza?** Choose the idea that begins the poem's message.

"Find how to serve somebody today."

A Grandpa hears a message in winter. • **B** An invitation to serve can lead to helpful action. • **C** The poem describes one crowd outside.

I CAN | I can identify the message instead of describing one stanza.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how a theme changes or grows across stanzas.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the theme's movement.

Explain how the theme builds from an invitation to serve, to people working together, to the speaker's own choice.

“The invitation asks of me: ‘What will your contribution be?’”

I CAN | I can connect the beginning, middle, and ending of a poem to one message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a theme and trace its growth.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the theme across the poem.

Write a theme for the whole poem. Then describe how the beginning, middle, and ending build that message.

“So when I wonder where to start, I'll look nearby and use my heart.”

I CAN | I can explain how multiple stanzas work together to teach one lesson.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a one-stanza answer."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against a one-stanza trap.

A student wrote this theme: **People volunteer in faraway places.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Sometimes it starts not far away, But three short desks from yours today."

I CAN | I can explain why one detail cannot replace the whole poem's message.



Track the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Write a theme in a full sentence. Then explain how one early and one late stanza support it.

Return to the poem.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write the theme and show how an early and late stanza support it.

I CAN | I can tell the topic from a theme and explain how the message builds across the poem.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The poem begins with an invitation to serve. Later stanzas can show people answering it with useful actions.

CHOOSE B. An invitation to serve can lead to helpful action. A is one event. C is Describes one stanza only.

SHOW The poem begins with a public invitation to serve. It then shows volunteers cooperating and finally asks the speaker what contribution to make. The theme moves from hearing an idea to acting on it personally.

OWN Answers vary. Example: People can serve others by noticing needs and offering what they can. The poem begins with an invitation, shows shared work, and ends with the speaker looking nearby for a way to help.

DEFEND Describes one stanza only. Faraway volunteers appear in one part, but the poem also shows local and personal ways to serve.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: service. Theme: People can make a difference by noticing needs and offering what they can. Early support: the call to serve. Late support: the speaker looks nearby for a contribution.



THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“To serve, and thousands stood and heard. ... The invitation asks of me: ‘What will your contribution be?’”

How does the theme build from stanza to stanza?

- A** The poem starts with Grandpa's memory and ends with the speaker choosing a way to help.
- B** The poem describes a crowd that hears a speech in winter.
- C** The poem moves from a call to serve, to shared work, to the speaker's own decision to contribute.
- D** The poem teaches that only people in faraway places can serve others.

THEME

The answer is C.

A **The poem starts with Grandpa's memory and ends with the speaker choosing a way to help.**
Too narrow. It names the frame and ending but leaves out the middle growth through shared work.

B **The poem describes a crowd that hears a speech in winter.**
Describes one stanza only. The crowd and winter are early details, not the full theme's movement.

C **The poem moves from a call to serve, to shared work, to the speaker's own decision to contribute. Correct.**
Correct. The poem develops from an invitation, through cooperation, to a personal choice to help.

D **The poem teaches that only people in faraway places can serve others.**
Opposite. Near the ending, the poem says service may start nearby, even at school desks.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

The strongest theme is supported by important details from the whole poem, not by an unrelated life lesson.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “What Will You Give?”

A **topic** is one or two words, like service or contribution. A **theme** is a lesson in a full sentence, like **ordinary people can help their communities through useful actions**. Defend the strongest theme with details from across the poem. STAAR asks: **Which theme is best supported by the whole poem, and why?** Trap this week: **Life lesson not supported by this text.**

This deck teaches **defending the strongest theme** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a theme that the whole poem supports."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice a theme worth defending.

Read the line. What does it teach about the power of ordinary actions?

"The world is often helped each day By ordinary hands that find a way."

I CAN | I can connect a broad message to details from many parts of a poem.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose the theme with the strongest evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the strongest supported theme.

STAAR asks: **Which theme is best supported by the whole poem, and why?** Choose the lesson that matches many details.

“They can collect what others need, And turn good thoughts into a deed.”

A People can help their communities through ordinary, useful actions. • **B** Service and helping hands • **C** The speaker should become famous for helping people

I CAN | I can choose a supported message and reject positive ideas the poem does not prove.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can defend a theme with evidence from across a poem.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show why the theme is supported.

Defend the theme that ordinary people can help communities through useful actions. Name two details from different parts of the poem.

“They can help younger readers grow, By sharing words that I now know.”

I CAN | I can explain how different actions support one message.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write and support the strongest theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the strongest theme.

Write a theme for the whole poem in a full sentence. Then give two details that prove it is supported.

“For service grows when we begin. We change the world by helping in.”

I CAN

I can state a life lesson and defend it with evidence from the whole poem.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can reject a life lesson that the poem does not support."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against an unsupported lesson.

A student wrote this theme: **People should always give away everything they own.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Give something useful you can share."

I CAN | I can explain why a positive-sounding idea still needs evidence from the text.



Defend the theme on your own.

Write the topic in one or two words. Write the strongest theme in a full sentence, then copy two details that support it.

Return to the poem.

Write the topic in one or two words.

Write the strongest theme and copy two supporting details.

I CAN | I can distinguish a supported theme from an unsupported life lesson.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE The line teaches that ordinary people can help through useful actions. The poem supports this through service, listening, and small acts of care.

CHOOSE A. People can help their communities through ordinary, useful actions. B is Topic word, not theme. C is Life lesson not supported by this text.

SHOW The poem lists small actions such as planting, cleaning, welcoming, and helping younger readers. It also explains that communities grow when many people choose one useful thing to do.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Ordinary people can strengthen their communities by beginning with useful acts of service. Details include helping younger readers and choosing one helpful thing to do.

DEFEND Life lesson not supported by this text. The poem encourages sharing time, effort, talent, and care, but it never says people should give away everything they own.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: service. Theme: Ordinary people can strengthen their communities through useful acts of service. Details: ordinary hands help each day; many people choose one helpful thing to do.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“The world is often helped each day By ordinary hands that find a way. ... Not through one giant act we show, But many people choosing to Find one worthwhile and helpful thing to do.”

Which statement best describes a theme of the poem?

- A** Ordinary people can help their communities through useful actions.
- B** People should always give away everything they own.
- C** The speaker has small hands and a notebook.
- D** A famous speech is the only way to change the world.



THEME

The answer is A.

- A Ordinary people can help their communities through useful actions. Correct.**
Correct. The poem names many ordinary acts and says communities grow when people choose helpful work.
- B People should always give away everything they own.**
Life lesson not supported by this text. The poem encourages useful sharing, not giving away everything.
- C The speaker has small hands and a notebook.**
Too narrow. These details belong to one moment and do not state the poem's message.
- D A famous speech is the only way to change the world.**
Opposite. The poem says many ordinary people can help through small, useful actions.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

The topic is what a poem is about, in a word or two.

The theme is the lesson or message the poem teaches, in a full sentence.

When two poems share a theme, the lesson must fit both poems, not just one.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “A Dream Can Grow and What Will You Give?”

A **topic** is one or two words, like dreams or service. A **theme** is a lesson that fits the whole poem, like **people can help a better future grow through caring actions**. STAAR asks: **What theme do both poems share?** Traps this week: **One poem only**, too narrow, **Topic**, **not theme**, and **Too broad**.

This deck teaches **finding a shared theme across poems** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a topic and a hint of a theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice a shared lesson.

Read the line from A Dream Can Grow. Is **dream** the topic or the theme? Notice what the poem says about carrying a dream.

"The dream traveled. The dream grew."

I CAN | I can notice words that point to a lesson in a poem.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme shared by two poems.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the shared theme.

STAAR asks: **What theme do both poems share?** Check that your answer fits both poems.

“They travel through the things we do, From one old dream to something new.”

A Dreams and service • **B** A famous speech can change history • **C** People can help good hopes grow through caring actions

I CAN | I can compare two poems and choose a lesson that fits both.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how details from two poems support one theme.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show both poems support the theme.

Explain how both poems support the theme that people can help good hopes grow through caring actions.

“One thoughtful word, one caring deed, Can sometimes be a tiny seed.”

I CAN | I can connect evidence from both poems to a shared lesson.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a shared theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the shared theme.

Write one theme shared by both poems in a full sentence. Make sure it fits each poem.

“For service grows when we begin. We change the world by helping in.”

I CAN | I can write a theme that fits two whole poems.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

“I can defend a shared theme and name a trap.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this shared theme: **A famous speaker inspires one child to remember a speech.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

“It entered classrooms, homes, and streets, And lived wherever kindness meets.”

I CAN | I can explain why a theme fits both poems or fails to do so.



Find the shared theme on your own.

Reread both poems. Write the topic in one or two words. Then write a shared theme in a full sentence and copy one line from each poem that supports it.

Reread both poems.
Write the topic in one or two words.
Write a shared theme in a full sentence.
Copy one supporting line from each poem.

I CAN | I can compare two poems, state a shared theme, and support it with evidence from both.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Dream is a topic.** Traveled and grew hint that a hope can continue when people carry it forward.

CHOOSE **C.** People can help good hopes grow through caring actions. A is Topic, not theme. B is One poem only, too narrow.

SHOW **In A Dream Can Grow, a caring deed is like a seed that can grow.** In What Will You Give?, ordinary hands help communities grow. Both poems show that caring actions can carry hope forward.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: Small caring actions can help hopeful ideas reach more people and create change.

DEFEND **One poem only, too narrow.** The answer focuses on the speaker and one child in A Dream Can Grow. It does not fit What Will You Give?, which shows ordinary people serving others.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: service or hope. Theme: Caring actions can help hopeful ideas grow and reach others. Lines: One thoughtful word, one caring deed, Can sometimes be a tiny seed. / The world is often helped each day By ordinary hands that find a way.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“One thoughtful word, one caring deed, Can sometimes be a tiny seed. ... The world is often helped each day By ordinary hands that find a way.”

What theme do both poems share?

- A** Dreams are important to children.
- B** People should remember famous speeches.
- C** Service is something adults do in communities.
- D** Small caring actions can help hopeful ideas grow and reach others.



THEME

The answer is D.

- A Dreams are important to children.**
One poem only, too narrow. The answer focuses on children and does not fit the service poem.
- B People should remember famous speeches.**
One poem only, too narrow. The second poem focuses on serving, not remembering a speech.
- C Service is something adults do in communities.**
Topic-adjacent statement as message. Service appears in the poems, but this does not state the shared lesson and is too limited to adults.
- D Small caring actions can help hopeful ideas grow and reach others. Correct.**
Correct. Both poems show hope traveling through the caring actions of ordinary people.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

A theme is a life lesson from a story or poem.

A message is the main lesson an informational text teaches.

A strong connection explains what both texts say about the same big idea.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “What Will You Give? and People Make the Difference: How Ideas and Actions Change Communities”

A **theme** is a lesson in a poem, and a **message** is a lesson in an informational text. Both texts teach that **people can improve communities through useful actions**. STAAR asks: **How does a theme from a poem connect to the message of the research text?** Trap this week: **Topic-adjacent statement as message.**

This deck teaches **connecting a poem theme to an informational message** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice the lesson a poem teaches."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice a message, not just a topic.

Read the line from What Will You Give?. Is **hands** the message, or does the line teach something about hands?

"The world is often helped each day By ordinary hands that find a way."

I CAN | I can tell a message from a topic word.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can connect a poem theme to an informational message.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the connection.

STAAR asks: How does a theme from the poem connect to the message of the research text?

**“Perhaps that's how communities grow, Not through one giant act we show,
But many people choosing to Find one worthwhile and helpful thing to do.”**

- A** Both texts are about communities. • **B** People can improve communities through useful actions. • **C** Research texts give facts about famous people.

I CAN | I can choose a big idea that both texts support.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can show how two texts support one big lesson.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show the connection with evidence.

Explain how the poem and the research text both support the lesson that people can improve communities through useful actions.

“Someone noticed something. Someone asked a question. Someone made a choice. Then an idea or action created change.”

I CAN

I can use evidence from a poem and an informational text to explain a connection.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a connection between a theme and a message.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the connection.

Write a full sentence explaining how the poem's theme connects to the research text's message.

“Today I have a voice and hands, A little time and simple plans.”

I CAN | I can explain a shared lesson in my own words.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a message and explain a topic trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this message for the research text: **Communities have roads, buildings, stores, schools, parks, and homes.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"But those things alone do not make a community strong."

I CAN | I can explain why a topic-adjacent statement is not the text's message.



Connect the two texts on your own.

Reread both texts. Write the topic in one or two words. Then state the poem's theme, the research text's message, and one connection sentence.

Reread both texts.

Write the topic.

State the poem's theme and the research text's message.

Write one sentence explaining the connection.

I CAN | I can connect a poem theme and an informational message with evidence.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Hands is a topic word.** The line teaches that ordinary people can help the world through their actions.

CHOOSE **B.** People can improve communities through useful actions. A is Topic-adjacent statement as message. C is Too narrow and not the shared message.

SHOW **The poem says many people can choose one helpful thing to do.** The research text explains that a person's idea or action can create change in a community. Together, they show that useful actions can improve communities.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example: The poem encourages people to offer their time and help, while the research text shows how people's ideas and actions make communities stronger.

DEFEND **Topic-adjacent statement as message.** The statement lists things in a community, but the research text teaches that people and their actions make communities strong.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Topic: community action. Theme: People can help others by using their time and abilities. Message: Ideas and actions can create change in communities. Connection: Both texts teach that people strengthen communities by choosing useful actions.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Perhaps that's how communities grow, Not through one giant act we show, But many people choosing to Find one worthwhile and helpful thing to do. ... Then an idea or action created change.”

How does the theme of What Will You Give? connect to the message of People Make the Difference?

- A** Both texts list the parts of a community.
- B** The poem is about helping, but the research text is only about inventions.
- C** Both texts show that people's useful ideas and actions can strengthen communities.
- D** People should wait for leaders to solve community problems.



THEME

The answer is C.

Both texts list the parts of a community.

- A** Topic-adjacent statement as message. The texts mention communities, but their shared lesson is about what people do.

The poem is about helping, but the research text is only about inventions.

- B** Not in the text. The research text includes inventions, laws, service, and other actions that change communities.

Both texts show that people's useful ideas and actions can strengthen communities. Correct.

- C** Correct. The poem shows people helping through ordinary actions, and the research text shows ideas and actions creating change.

People should wait for leaders to solve community problems.

- D** Opposite. Both texts show that ordinary people can choose actions that help communities.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

A theme is a lesson that reaches beyond one story.

When two stories share a theme, each story must support it.

Evidence explains how characters' choices and results teach the lesson.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Theme

from “Crash and The Recess Question”

A **theme** is a life lesson, not a summary or a topic word. Crash and The Recess Question both show that **honesty, responsibility, and thoughtful choices help a community solve problems.**

STAAR asks: **Which theme connects two stories from this year, and what evidence proves it?** Trap this week: **Generic moral that fits many stories.**

This deck teaches **finding a theme across two stories** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

“I can notice a character's important choice.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Notice the lesson in a choice.

Read the line from Crash. What choice points toward a bigger lesson?

“What mattered now was how she responded.”

I CAN | I can notice a choice that hints at a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme shared by two stories.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose the connecting theme.

STAAR asks: **Which theme connects the two stories?** Choose a lesson both stories support.

“Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

A Honesty and thoughtful choices help groups solve problems. • **B** Accidents happen in science classrooms. • **C** Everyone should always agree with a teacher.

I CAN | I can reject a generic moral and choose a lesson supported by both stories.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can prove a shared theme with evidence from two stories.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show how both stories support the theme.

Explain how Amina's honesty and Beth's class discussion support the theme that thoughtful choices help people solve problems together.

“Instead of blaming her, her classmates understood that it was an accident.”

I CAN | I can connect choices and results in two stories to one theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

“I can write a shared theme in my own words.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Own the shared theme.

Write a theme that fits both stories in a full sentence. Include the kind of choice the stories value.

“Recess had started as something simple.”

I CAN | I can write a theme that fits the whole of two stories.



THEME

TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a generic moral."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme: **People should always do the right thing.** Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"Sometimes doing the right thing feels difficult."

I CAN | I can explain why a moral needs support from these stories.



Find the two-story theme on your own.

Reread both stories. Write the topic in one or two words. State a shared theme in a full sentence and give one piece of evidence from each story.

Reread both stories.

Write the topic.

State a shared theme in a full sentence.

Give one detail from each story as evidence.

I CAN | I can state and defend a shared theme with evidence from two stories.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE Amina must decide how to respond after the accident. This hints that a person's response to a mistake matters.

CHOOSE A. Honesty and thoughtful choices help groups solve problems. B is Too narrow and one event. C is Generic moral that fits many stories and is not supported.

SHOW In Crash, Amina tells the truth and classmates help. In The Recess Question, students listen and consider solutions. Both show thoughtful choices helping groups solve problems.

OWN Answers vary. Example: Honest and thoughtful choices help groups solve problems and become stronger.

DEFEND Generic moral that fits many stories. The sentence sounds positive, but it could fit almost any story. A stronger theme names the honest and thoughtful choices that help these groups solve problems.

YOUR TURN Answers vary. Topic: community choices. Theme: Honest and thoughtful choices help groups solve problems. Evidence: Amina tells the truth and the class works together; Beth's class listens to different views and considers solutions.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“What mattered now was how she responded. ... Good citizens listen to one another, consider the reasons, and make decisions respectfully.”

Which theme connects Crash and The Recess Question?

- A** Honesty and thoughtful choices can help groups solve problems together.
- B** Students should always avoid making mistakes.
- C** People should never disagree with one another.
- D** Plants and recess are important parts of school.



THEME

The answer is A.

- A** **Honesty and thoughtful choices can help groups solve problems together. Correct.**
Correct. Amina tells the truth and gets help, while Beth's class listens and considers solutions together.
- B** **Students should always avoid making mistakes.**
Opposite. Crash explains that everyone makes mistakes sometimes and should learn how to respond.
- C** **People should never disagree with one another.**
Opposite. The Recess Question says people may disagree but should listen respectfully.
- D** **Plants and recess are important parts of school.**
Generic moral that fits many stories. These are topics and settings, not the shared lesson.



THEME

EXACT TEKS WORDING (FROM TEA)

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

A topic is one or two words about a text.

A theme is a full-sentence life lesson supported by the whole text.

To defend a theme, name evidence and explain how it proves the lesson.

THIS WEEK’S FOCUS

Theme

from “**Student choice: The Good Citizen or Why We Need Laws**”

For the capstone, choose a text and state its **theme**, not its topic. A theme is a life lesson such as **honest responsibility helps people repair mistakes and earn trust**. STAAR asks: **State a theme from a text read this year and defend it with evidence**. Trap this week: **Topic word, not theme**.

This deck teaches **state and defend a theme in writing** across the five RPLD thinking levels:

NOTICE → CHOOSE → SHOW → OWN → DEFEND.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

NOTICE

"I can notice a full-sentence theme."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Notice theme words.

Read the line from The Good Citizen. Which words point to a life lesson instead of just naming the story's topic?

"Responsibility means admitting mistakes, correcting them, and learning from them."

I CAN | I can notice words that state a lesson about responsibility.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

CHOOSE

“I can choose a theme instead of a topic.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Choose a defensible theme.

STAAR asks: **Which statement best describes a theme of The Good Citizen?** Choose a full life lesson.

“Every dog had food and water.”

A Dogs, food, and checklists at a shelter. • **B** Honest responsibility helps people fix mistakes and earn trust. • **C** Elena rides her bike to the shelter every Saturday.

I CAN | I can choose a theme that the whole story supports.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

SHOW

“I can defend a theme with evidence.”

EXACT TEKS WORDING

“infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic”

Show evidence for the theme.

Explain how Elena's mistake, her honest response, and her later checklist support the theme that honest responsibility helps people fix mistakes and earn trust.

“And Elena knew she had become a better volunteer, and a better citizen, because of the lesson she had learned.”

I CAN | I can explain how several details support a theme.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

OWN

"I can write a theme in my own words."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Own the theme in writing.

Write a theme for The Good Citizen or Why We Need Laws. Make it a full sentence that fits the whole text.

"When citizens work together and obey, Communities become stronger every day."

I CAN | I can write a theme that fits the whole text, not one detail.



TODAY'S THINKING JOB

DEFEND

"I can defend a theme against a topic trap."

EXACT TEKS WORDING

"infer the theme of a work, distinguishing theme from topic"

Defend against the trap.

A student wrote this theme for Why We Need Laws: **Laws and rules**. Explain why it is a trap and name the trap.

"The rules helped neighbors settle what was fair, And gave each person rights that all could share."

I CAN | I can explain why a topic word is not a theme.



Complete the capstone response.

Choose one text. Write the topic in one or two words. State a theme in a full sentence. Then copy two lines that support it and explain the evidence.

Choose one text.

Write the topic.

State a theme in a full sentence.

Copy two supporting lines and explain how they prove it.

I CAN | I can state and defend a theme with evidence from a text.

THEME

Answers, across the five thinking levels.

NOTICE **Responsibility is the topic.** Admitting, correcting, and learning from mistakes point to the theme that responsible people face mistakes and learn from them.

CHOOSE **B.** Honest responsibility helps people fix mistakes and earn trust. A is Topic word, not theme. C is Too narrow and describes one event.

SHOW **Elena admits that she forgot Rusty's food, returns to fix the problem, and later uses a checklist so she can be dependable.** The manager thanks her for being honest, and Rusty can count on her. These details support the theme.

OWN **Answers vary.** Example for The Good Citizen: People show responsibility by admitting mistakes, fixing them, and learning from them. Example for Why We Need Laws: Fair rules help communities protect people and solve problems together.

DEFEND **Topic word, not theme.** Laws and rules names what the poem is about, but it does not state the lesson. A stronger theme is that fair rules help communities protect rights and solve disagreements.

YOUR TURN **Answers vary.** Example from The Good Citizen: Topic: responsibility. Theme: Responsible people admit mistakes, fix them, and learn from them. Evidence: Responsibility means admitting mistakes, correcting them, and learning from them. / Rusty could count on her. Explanation: Elena tells the truth, corrects her mistake, and becomes dependable.

THEME

READ THIS PASSAGE EXCERPT.

“Responsibility means admitting mistakes, correcting them, and learning from them. ... To write fair rules that everyone would obey.”

Which statement best describes a theme supported by the texts in this week's reading?

- A** Dogs and laws are important topics in the readings.
- B** People can strengthen communities by acting responsibly and following fair rules.
- C** Elena should use a checklist at the shelter every Saturday.
- D** Every problem can be solved quickly if people work hard.



THEME

The answer is B.

- A** **Dogs and laws are important topics in the readings.**
Topic, not theme. Dogs and laws name subjects, but this choice does not state a life lesson.
- B** **People can strengthen communities by acting responsibly and following fair rules. Correct.**
Correct. Elena learns responsibility, and the poem explains how fair laws help communities grow stronger.
- C** **Elena should use a checklist at the shelter every Saturday.**
Too narrow. The checklist is one detail from one story, not a lesson supported by the whole reading.
- D** **Every problem can be solved quickly if people work hard.**
Too broad and Not in the text. The texts do not promise that every problem is solved quickly.

