Find a Theme: Teacher Key

Topic examples: Listening to feedback; making something useful to others; changing a plan.

Defensible theme: Seeing your work through someone else's eyes can help you improve it. When Mina checks from the sidewalk, she sees that the hours are hard to read even though the birds show. After she enlarges the hours, Jonah can read them from the path. The before-and-after details show that she changed the sign to serve people who would actually read it.

Another defensible theme: Revising a plan does not mean giving up everything you liked about it. Mina liked the birds and was reluctant to change the sign, but she kept two birds in the corners and made space for bigger hours. Accept a different claim when it fits both parts of the story and the student explains the evidence. “Always do what your friends say” does not fit: Mina checked the claim for herself and decided on her own design.

Plot detail: “Mina painted a sign with birds” tells what happened. It does not name a broad idea or say what the story suggests about that idea.

Choose a next move.

- A one-word answer? Ask “What does the story suggest *about* feedback?” and give the stem “Sometimes, ___ can ___.”
- A plot recap? Ask students to rewrite their answer without using the characters' names or the sign. Have them check the new sentence against the ending.
- A believable theme with weak evidence? Ask for one early detail and one later detail, then have the student finish “Together, these details show ___ because ___.”
- A defensible alternate theme? Ask the student to compare which details best support their reading. Do not use the key as a list of the only acceptable themes.

Using this resource: Model with The Loose Wheel, then take the classroom chart off display or cover its example if the goal is to check independent reasoning. Keep usual access supports. Do not reuse A Quiet Change as fresh evidence after discussing the key. One short response helps plan instruction; it does not establish a broad reading level. No claim of classroom testing.