

LESSON

20

Theme

WORDS
TO KNOW

Theme the central idea of a piece of writing; the insight the author wants you to understand

Review It!

Read these sentences. Use the Hint to decide what the theme is.

Jeff studied every night after dinner for the science exam, despite the taunts of his older brother, who said studying was a waste of time. The exam was a snap for Jeff, who got an *A*.

Hint Jeff knows that he has to work to achieve his goal, no matter what other people say. Jeff's hard work pays off.

Try It!

Read this passage. As you read, underline information that gives you clues about the theme.

- 1 Elena pulled the photo album off of the shelf and brought it to her grandmother. "Please tell me about our family," she said. Her grandmother put down her crossword puzzle and pulled the book onto her lap.
- 2 "Here is my father when he was a boy," Grandmother said, pointing to a faded photograph. "He left his family in Italy and took a boat to America." Elena had heard this story often, but she always loved hearing it. It gave her a sense of family and belonging.
- 3 Elena wasn't the only one in the family who appreciated their heritage. Everyone took part in traditional customs and celebrations. Elena and her mother baked special breads and pastries for the holidays, and Dad and Elena's brother happily took part in the eating!

Now, use the passage to answer the questions on the following page.

1. What is the theme of the passage?
 - A. Listen to your grandparents.
 - B. Family history is important.
 - C. Speak respectfully to others.
 - D. Be careful with old photographs.

2. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the theme?
 - A. “Her grandmother put down her crossword puzzle and pulled the book onto her lap.”
 - B. “He left his family in Italy and took a boat to America.”
 - C. “‘Please tell me about our family,’ she said.”
 - D. “Elena had heard this story often, but she always loved hearing it.”

3. How do Elena’s actions reflect the theme?
 - A. She did not understand family traditions.
 - B. She took part in family customs.
 - C. She disliked helping with family celebrations.
 - D. She was not interested in the past.

4. How would the passage be different if the theme were “the past should be forgotten”?
 - A. Grandmother would love to tell about her father.
 - B. The family would follow additional customs.
 - C. The family would let go of traditions.
 - D. The family would visit Italy to find relatives.

In Your Own Words

5. How did you determine the theme of the passage? Give examples to support your answer.



2.

Which of these answer choices expresses an idea broad enough to support a theme?

3.

How do Elena’s feelings reveal the central idea the writer shares?

5.

Look back through the story. Which details help to support the central idea?