Determine the Theme

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Building Confidence

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

The Oak and the Bamboo

On a hillside above a river stood a tall oak tree. Its trunk was thick, and its branches spread wide. Beside it grew a slim stalk of bamboo that swayed whenever the wind blew.

The oak liked to talk about its strength. "Look at me," it said one morning. "No breeze can move me. You bend every time a sparrow lands on you. Don't you wish you were strong like me?"

The bamboo only rustled its narrow leaves. "I bend," it said, "but I do not break."

The oak laughed. "Bending is for the weak," it said.

That autumn, a great storm rolled in from the sea. Rain poured down, and the wind howled across the hillside for a whole night. The bamboo bowed low, almost touching the ground. It swayed back and forth with each gust, and the wind slid past it.

The oak refused to bend. It held its branches stiff and straight against the storm. The wind pushed harder and harder. Near dawn, there was a loud crack. One of the oak's biggest branches split and crashed to the ground.

When the sun rose, the hillside was quiet. The bamboo slowly lifted itself until it stood straight again. Not one of its leaves was torn.

The oak looked at its broken branch for a long time. "I thought standing stiff made me strong," it said quietly. "Now I see that you were strong in a different way."

The bamboo did not boast. "The storm was hard for both of us," it said kindly. "Next spring, your new leaves will grow."

From that day on, the oak never laughed at the bamboo again.

1. Which theme best fits this fable?

   Being willing to bend can be a kind of strength.

   Tall trees always grow better than small plants.

   It is best to stand firm and never change.

2. How did the oak respond to the storm?

It bowed low until it almost touched the ground.

It asked the bamboo to help it stay standing.

It held its branches stiff and refused to bend.

3. Which detail best supports the theme?

The bamboo bowed low, and the wind slid past it.

The oak's trunk was thick, and its branches spread wide.

The storm rolled in from the sea that autumn.

4. What did the oak believe at the beginning?

Bending is a sign of weakness.

Storms never reach the hillside.

The bamboo is the strongest plant.

5. How did the oak's thinking change by the end?

It saw that the bamboo was strong in its own way.

It decided storms were nothing to worry about.

It still believed bending was for the weak.

6. "The bamboo did not boast." What does boast mean?

brag about itself whisper a secret complain about a problem

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Building Confidence

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