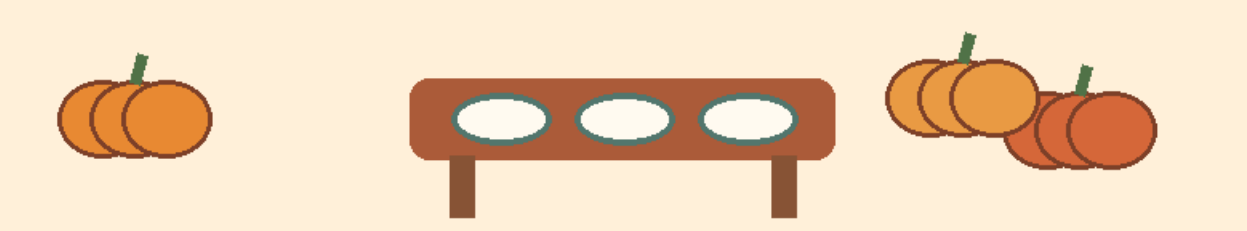
The Table That Grew

Name: _____ Date: _____



As you read, underline a problem and star a choice that helps solve it.

1 Maya had one job for her family’s Thanksgiving lunch: set the table. She lined up six paper name cards and folded each napkin into a fan. One leaned sideways. She fixed it. This year, she wanted everything to look just like the picture she had drawn.

2 Then a gust rattled the windows and the oven clock went dark. Across the hall, Mr. Chen knocked. His oven had stopped too, right before his rolls finished baking. “We have a warm pot of soup,” Maya’s aunt said. “Why don’t you and Leo join us?”

3 Maya glanced at her six cards. There were only six seats, and Leo was already walking in with a bag of apples. “I guess I can eat on the stairs,” she whispered. Then she remembered the little folding table where she did puzzles. What if she pushed it next to the big table?

4 The folding table was lower, so Maya couldn’t spread the tablecloth over both. Leo cut a paper grocery bag into a runner for the smaller table. Mr. Chen found two stools. Maya turned her drawing over and made two more name cards on the blank side.

5 The lights flickered back on, but nobody hurried home. Mr. Chen brought the rolls over when they were ready. Leo taught everyone an apple-peeling trick. Maya’s napkin fans had collapsed before lunch was over. When her aunt asked if she wanted to fix them for a photo, Maya shook her head. “Just make sure both tables fit in the picture.”

Read Like a Detective

Answer in complete sentences. Use paragraph numbers to help readers find your evidence.

1. What problem does Maya face after her aunt invites the neighbors?

_____

_____

2. What does the word collapsed mean in paragraph 5? Which clues help you?

_____

_____

3. How does Maya's idea of a successful lunch change? Use one detail from the beginning and one from the end.

_____

_____

_____

4. What lesson does the story suggest? Explain how a character's choice supports it.

_____

_____

_____

From Story to Summary

Jot notes on the lines. Keep only what a reader needs to understand the story.

Somebody

Who is the story mainly about? _____

Wanted

What did the character want? _____

But

What got in the way? _____

So

What did the character do? _____

Then

How did it end? _____

Write a 3–4 sentence summary in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Check: Did I include the problem, the response and the ending? Did I leave out small details and my opinion?

Teacher Answer Key

1. Problem

There are only six seats and two guests have been invited to join. Maya worries there won’t be room for everyone (paragraph 3).

2. Context clues

Collapsed means fell down or lost their shape. The napkins were folded into standing fans in paragraph 1. In paragraph 5, Maya’s aunt asks if she wants to fix them.

3. Character change

At first, Maya wants the table to match her drawing and even fixes a leaning napkin (paragraph 1). At the end, she leaves the fallen fans alone and wants both tables in the picture (paragraph 5). Including everyone matters more to her than getting the table just right.

4. Theme

One possible theme: Making others feel welcome matters more than making things look perfect. Maya uses the folding table and makes more name cards for her neighbors even though the new setup doesn’t match her plan (paragraphs 3–4). Accept other defensible themes supported by the text.

Sample summary

Maya wants her family’s Thanksgiving table to look like her drawing. When the power goes out and her aunt invites two neighbors to lunch, there aren’t enough seats. Maya adds a folding table, and everyone helps make room. At the end, she wants a photo of both tables even though the setup isn’t perfect.

Support and stretch

For support, reread paragraphs 1 and 5 aloud, then let students rehearse their answer to question 3 with a partner. For a challenge, ask students to explain how the title fits both the events and the theme.