Theme is large message, or messages, about life that the author wants the reader to understand.

Think about characters to determine themes:

How are the characters feeling?

What have the characters learned?

How have the characters grown or changed?

**Tip #1: Use concrete ideas to build to abstract themes.**

Tyler is scared of strangers from other countries.

Tyler does not want to spend time with the girls.

Tyler is upset about all of new people on the farm.

**Theme: Change** is difficult.

**Tip #2: Use key questions to build to abstract.**

Why do you think Marí is in the barn?

What do you notice about Marí and Tyler after they spend time together in the barn?

What do Marí and Tyler have in common? What are their differences?

How has Tyler’s opinion of Marí changed?

**Theme: Friendship** can form when you don’t expect it.

**Acceptance** can create new friendships.

**Tip #3: Connect to student background knowledge.**

Have you ever done something you think is right, but you were afraid you might get in trouble?

What did that feel like?

What made you keep going even though you were scared?

**Theme:** **Courage** means taking a risk and often doing something that is terrifying.