Exemplar Paragraphs

Exemplar 1

One theme that is present in *Return to Sender* is that working together makes it possible to get through hard times. Early in the story, Tyler's family struggles to keep the farm running after his father is injured, and there is too much work for everyone to handle on their own. Because of this, Tyler's family decides to hire migrant workers to help with the farm work. Mari's family works long hours milking cows and helping take care of the farm, which shows that many people are needed to keep it going. Tyler also notices that life on the farm changes once more people are working together. This evidence shows that cooperation is an important idea in the story and that the theme of working together continues to develop as the novel unfolds.

Exemplar 2

One theme that is present in *Return to Sender* is that working together makes it possible to get through hard times. This theme begins to develop when Tyler's father is badly injured, leaving the family unable to manage the farm on their own. With Tyler's brother leaving for college and Tyler in school, the Paquettes' farm, like many dairy farms, is struggling (7). Because of this, the Paquettes hire Mari's family, whose hard work allows the farm to keep running. For example, on Thanksgiving, "It's late by the time the meal is done and the Mexican workers head off to the evening milking." (112) On pages 250–251, the author describes how the Paquettes work tirelessly in the field, while Mari's father and Tío milk the cows and do the barn chores, crossing paths only briefly as each group finishes for the night. Even though the work is exhausting for both the Paquettes and the Cruzes, they are all committed to helping the farm survive. This evidence shows that cooperation is an important idea in the story and that the theme of working together continues to develop as the novel unfolds.

Except as otherwise noted, © 2026 Fishtank Learning, Inc.