**Example Response**

**What is the theme? What is the author’s message about human nature?**

In “The Red and Blue Coat” the theme is that people fight when they don’t try to see someone else’s point of view. In the beginning of the story the two main characters don’t fight at all. They want to be close friends forever. However, the only reason they don’t fight is because they have the same point of view. They are both married, work on a farm and have houses facing one another. They even have the same goal! Since both characters are so alike, they see the world the same way and have no reason to fight. Unfortunately, one day a trickster forces them to have different points of view. The trickster puts on a coat that is red on one side and blue on the other. He walks between the characters’ houses so that each character can only see one side of the coat. From one character’s point of view the coat is red, and from the other character’s point of view the coat is blue. Immediately the characters begin to fight because they both insist the coat was a different color. Physically they are not able to see the other side of the coat, so neither one is able to see the coat from the other’s “point of view.” On the other hand, if both of the characters had stopped and talked about why they both saw different colors, they might have been able to figure out how they could both be right. In real life, too, people often don’t pause to consider other perspectives and so they wind up fighting.