

# Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Theme & Summary

Read the short story and answer each question.



## The Last Decision

Zane stood in the council chamber, staring at the cold, unreadable face of Supreme Leader Vira.

"The rebellion must be stopped. You will eliminate them, Zane," she commanded, pointing to the holographic map of the rebel movements.

Zane clenched his fists. His training told him to obey without question, but something in his gut twisted. He had grown up with the belief that the government was just, but he had begun to see the cracks in that belief. The rebels were not criminals; they were people fighting for freedom.

"What happens to them if I succeed?" Zane asked quietly.

"They are traitors," Vira responded flatly. "No mercy."

Zane's mind raced. He remembered Leo, his childhood friend, now out there with the rebels. He didn't want to be part of a system that crushed people for wanting to live freely.

As he left the chamber, Zane made a choice. The order had been given, but he wouldn't follow it. He would find another way.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Letters We Kept

1. Why does Zane feel conflicted?

- A. He agrees with Vira
- B. He doesn't want to hurt the rebels
- C. He's afraid of failing
- D. He doesn't trust Leo

2. How does Zane react to Vira's command?

- A. He follows it without question
- B. He starts to question the system
- C. He talks back to her
- D. He accepts that it's the right decision

3. Fill in the blank:

Zane's decision not to follow the order shows his \_\_\_\_\_ to act according to his beliefs.

4. What does Zane's question about mercy reveal about his internal conflict? Use evidence from the text.

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5. How does Zane's decision demonstrate personal growth? What does it say about him?

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# Parent and Teacher Guide

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**Guide Reading Level:** V

**Lexile Level:** 950L-1100L

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade, End of the Year

**Genre:** Science Fiction (Dystopian)

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## Introducing the Text

“Today we will be reading a story about Zane, a young man who is faced with a difficult decision in a futuristic society. The central theme of this story is about **justice** and **making difficult choices**. As we read, pay attention to how Zane responds to the challenge presented to him and think about how his actions shape the overall message of the story. After reading, we will discuss the theme and summarize the main events of the story.”

**Vocabulary:** command, supreme, conflict, clenched, leader

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## Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think it means to make a difficult decision?
  2. Can you think of a time when you had to choose between what was easy and what was right?
  3. What challenges might someone face in a futuristic society?
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## During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does Zane feel about the command given to him by the Supreme Leader?
  2. What do Zane’s actions tell us about his character?
  3. Why do you think the author uses the futuristic setting to explore the theme of justice and leadership?
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## After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the theme of the story? How do Zane’s actions support this theme?
  2. How does the author show the internal conflict Zane faces?
  3. How would the story have been different if Zane had followed the command without question?
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## Activity Idea

Have students write a short letter from Zane’s perspective to a close friend, explaining his decision. In the letter, they should describe the internal struggle he faces, his thoughts on justice, and why he ultimately chooses to make his own decision. Encourage them to use quotes from the text to support his feelings and reasoning. This activity will help reinforce understanding of character development and theme.

