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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 7 **Sample Answers**

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Note: There is not always a definitive set of “correct” answers for which themes should appear in the Theme Tracker. Answers that differ from the ones we propose below should therefore not automatically be treated as incorrect, and in fact can serve as great discussion starters.

Themes Key

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| 1 | Gender Roles |
| 2 | Religion and Theocracy |
| 3 | Fertility |
| 4 | Rebellion |
| 5 | Love |
| 6 | Storytelling and Memory |

| Summary | Theme Tracker | | | | | | Your Analysis |
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| Offred lies in bed, thinking about the difference between the active word <i>lie</i> and the passive word <i>lay</i> , and the latter’s sexual connotations. She lies under the plastered-over eye in the ceiling, deciding on a memory to explore now that she has her private free time in the night. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | The distinction between active and passive is relevant both to Offred’s gender (she’s always supposed to be passive) and her memories (where she can make her own decisions). |
| She remembers Moir a in the time before Gilead, wearing overalls, an earring, one gold fingernail, and smoking. Moira wants to go get a beer, but Offred is | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Though Offred spent a lot of time around radical feminists before Gilead, here we learn that she never took their concerns too seriously. She was always a bit passive. |

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| working on a paper. Moira just wrote a paper on date rape, which Offred thinks sounds like a dessert. | | | | | | | |
| Offred switches to another memory, an older one. She remembers being in a cold park with her mother , going to feed the ducks. But instead of actually feeding the ducks, Offred is sulky to learn that they're there to burn books. Mostly women and some men burn books and magazines, and they hand one to Offred to burn. The cover shows that it's bondage porn, which Offred is too young to understand or object to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Here we see a possible root of Offred's suspicions about radical feminists: they advocated censorship and destruction of reading materials, which parallels Gilead's actions. The passage shows that even feminists aren't perfect or blameless. |
| Offred can't remember what happens next in her memories. She remembers a different time, when she must have been drugged to help her get over a confusing shock. She remembers waking up and trying to find out where her daughter has been taken. The authorities say she is with a better fitting family, and show Offred a picture of her angelic-looking daughter with another woman. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Though Offred had active control over her previous two memories, now a bad moment from her past rears up without her control. Gilead has even taken away her ability to remember what she wants. |
| Offred wishes that she could believe that "this is a story I'm telling," because then she would be able to pick the ending and go back to her previous life. She affirms that she's not | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | This passage powerfully illustrates Offred's mixed feelings about remembering and storytelling. She knows that these acts are basically useless, but she also knows |

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| making it up, but it is indeed a story, and she's not writing it but telling it to someone, even if she doesn't know whom. She imagines all the <i>yous</i> she could be talking to, and pretends someone can hear her. | | | | | | | they give her a bit of hope, comfort and freedom. |
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