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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 2 **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

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

Summary	Theme Tracker						Your Analysis
Offred describes a different bedroom, with traditional, safe décor. Its distinguishing characteristic is a plastered-over hole in the ceiling, formerly for a chandelier, that reminds her of an empty eye socket. Offred remembers Aunt Lydia telling her to think of her life as being in the army. Offred notes that flowers are permitted, but the print of irises in her room has no glass, to prevent her from harming herself. If she tried to run away, she wouldn't get far. But she appreciates the	1	2	3	4	5	6	Like the gym, Offred's room has a layer of strangeness over a structure of tradition and normalcy. Clearly someone has done their best to make sure that the room is rebel-proof, as safe as a prison but more attractive. But the authorities who planned it are invisible and mysterious, and Offred doesn't explain.

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sunlight and being alive.							
The bell rings to mark time, like in a nunnery, and Offred puts on her red uniform, including shoes, gloves, and a long modest dress. She wears white wings around her face “to keep us from seeing but also from being seen.”	1	2	3	4	5	6	The comparison to a nunnery is both fitting, since Offred must live a silent, spare lifestyle based on religious principles, and wrong, since she’s a sex worker.
Offred walks through the house, a stately, traditional home with many restrictions. She’s not allowed to sit in the sitting room, and she sneaks a peak in the round mirror in the hallway. Offred takes her red umbrella and enters the kitchen, where Rita , a Martha dressed in green, is kneading bread. Rita does not approve of Offred’s position or red clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	This scene highlights a major issue: the disunity and anger between different women. Rita and Offred are both victims of the same anti-women regime, but their internal divisions mean that they won’t band together and threaten Gilead.
Offred recalls a conversation she heard between Rita and Cora , when Rita said that she would have preferred to go to the Colonies and suffer than to have a position like Offred’s. Cora says she might have been a Handmaid, if she was younger and hadn’t had a sterilizing operation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Though the new government has done its best to religiously justify the adultery of the kind Handmaids perform, Rita won’t give up her strong attitudes from earlier days.
Despite Rita ’s unfriendliness, Offred wishes that she could stay, talk and gossip like in the old times. Sometimes the	1	2	3	4	5	6	The women’s gossiping is a form of rebellion, showing that the need to tell stories and connect socially is a strong human urge that not

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women tell rumors of violence in other households. Offred wishes she could touch the bread, which reminds her of a body. Offred remembers Luke teaching her the word “fraternize.”							even Gilead’s threats can subdue.
Rita gives Offred the tokens for food, with images of food on them. Rita tells Offred to tell the shops her Commander’s name to get fresh goods. Offred doesn’t smile at Rita, as she doesn’t see the point of trying to make friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Yet despite Offred’s interest in sociability and gossiping, she’s unwilling to be bold and change her situation, from fear or maybe from passivity and inertia.