The Tipped Tray

Notice how words and actions reveal a story's meaning.

3.LF.22.b "Explain how the characters' actions and dialogue contribute to the meaning of the story."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action Mina takes before she accepts help and one action she takes after. Circle her words that show how her thinking changes.

A Place for Every Plant

1. On planting day, Mina carried a tray of tiny bean plants to the school garden. A gust of wind tipped the tray. Dirt spilled, and one plant slid toward a puddle. Mina grabbed the tray and said, "I can fix this myself." Her friend Theo held out his hands, but Mina turned away. She feared he might bend the thin stems.

2. Mina scooped soil with her fingers, but the wind blew it back into her face. The small plant lay near the puddle. "You hold the tray, and I'll get the plant," Theo said. Mina looked at his steady hands. She passed him the tray. Theo kept it level while Mina lifted the plant by its leaves, not its stem.

3. Together, they filled the pot and pressed the soil gently around the roots. Mina set the plant beside the others, where it could get light. "I thought help meant I had failed," she told Theo. "Now I think it means we can do more." Theo smiled and handed her the watering can. They watered each plant before the bell rang.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What do Mina's first words and her choice to turn away show about how she feels about help?

2. How does Mina's attempt to scoop the soil help show why she changes her mind?

3. How do Theo's words and his action with the tray help Mina trust him?

4. What do Mina's words near the end and the friends' final actions show about the story's meaning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

The next day, the class garden sign blows away. Write four sentences showing what Mina and Theo do next. Include something one of them says, then explain what their words and actions show about working together.

ANSWER KEY

The Tipped Tray

GRADE 3 · 3.LF.22.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action Mina takes before she accepts help and one action she takes after. Circle her words that show how her thinking changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What do Mina's first words and her choice to turn away show about how she feels about help?	**Mina thinks she must fix the problem herself and worries that Theo might hurt the plants.**
2	How does Mina's attempt to scoop the soil help show why she changes her mind?	**The wind blows the soil back into her face, showing that fixing the tray alone is difficult.**
3	How do Theo's words and his action with the tray help Mina trust him?	**Theo suggests a way to share the work, then holds the tray steady so Mina can save the plant.**
4	What do Mina's words near the end and the friends' final actions show about the story's meaning?	**Mina says help lets them do more, and the friends water every plant together. Their words and actions show that accepting help is useful, not a failure.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next day, the garden sign blew across the yard. Mina called, "Theo, can you hold the gate while I catch it?" Theo held the gate open, and Mina picked up the sign before it landed in a muddy puddle. By asking for help and acting together, they showed that teamwork can solve a problem.

For the marking job, accept actions that clearly contrast Mina working alone with Mina accepting help, along with her words about doing more together. For the open task, accept any new event in which dialogue and actions support the student's explanation of working together.