When Water Rises

Trace how a memory changes a character's next move.

7.CL.7.a "Write narratives to convey a series of events incorporating key literary elements, establishing a clear purpose, using narrative techniques (dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection)..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the flashback, circle the words that return you to the courtyard, and number the narrator's present-day attempts to protect the seedlings in order.

Clear Its Path

1 The first drop hit my nose as our class carried seed trays into the courtyard. By the time I set down the last tray, rain rattled against the metal railing. A thin stream slipped under the garden gate and headed straight for the new seedlings. "We have ten minutes before the bus leaves," Mara said. I grabbed a broom and pushed water toward the drain, but leaves clogged its grate. The stream spread around my shoes. I could not stand there and watch a month of work wash away.

2 Last spring, a storm had flooded our apartment steps. I had kicked at a blocked drain until my shoe was soaked. Dad had handed me a fallen branch. "Don't fight the water," he'd said. "Clear its path." Together we lifted leaves from the grate with the branch, and the puddle had begun to shrink. I remembered the strange gulping sound it made. Back in the courtyard, I looked at the grate, then at the long handle of the broom. But the water was already touching the trays.

3 "Mara, lift the trays," I called. She and two classmates moved them onto a bench while I hooked leaves from the grate with the broom handle. For one breath, nothing changed. Then the drain gulped, and the stream curled away from the seedlings. The bus driver honked at the gate. We hurried out with muddy hands, leaving the seedlings upright on the bench. I had thought saving the seedlings meant working faster. On the ride home, I realized it meant noticing what stopped the water and letting my friends help.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the narrator want to protect, and what makes the problem urgent?

2. How does the flashback change what the narrator does when the story returns to the courtyard?

3. How do Mara's words and the bus driver's honk affect the pace of the scene?

4. What does the narrator's final reflection show about how their thinking has changed?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one scene of 80 to 110 words about a character facing a small, urgent problem. Start in the present, include a brief flashback that helps the character choose what to do, then return to the present for an action and a reflection. Use dialogue and one sensory detail.

When Water Rises

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the flashback, circle the words that return you to the courtyard, and number the narrator's present-day attempts to protect the seedlings in order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the narrator want to protect, and what makes the problem urgent?	**The narrator wants to protect the new seedlings from runoff. The water is spreading toward them, and the bus leaves in ten minutes.**
2	How does the flashback change what the narrator does when the story returns to the courtyard?	**Remembering how Dad cleared a blocked drain leads the narrator to hook leaves from the courtyard drain instead of pushing water with the broom.**
3	How do Mara's words and the bus driver's honk affect the pace of the scene?	**Mara's warning sets a time limit, and the honk signals that time is nearly up. Both make the action feel urgent.**
4	What does the narrator's final reflection show about how their thinking has changed?	**The narrator first thinks working faster will save the seedlings but learns to identify the cause of the problem and accept help.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The last bus hissed at the curb as Leo searched his backpack for his sister's lost sketchbook. "We're leaving," the driver called. Leo pictured yesterday's lunch: his sister had tucked the blue book beneath a bench when the wind scattered her drawings. He had promised to bring it home, then forgotten. Back at the curb, he spotted the bench across the yard. "Please wait one minute," he asked. His shoes slapped the wet pavement as he ran. The sketchbook was still there, its pages dry. On the bus, Leo decided that keeping a promise mattered more than hiding a mistake.

For the marking job, accept the paragraph beginning "Last spring" as the flashback and "Back in the courtyard" as the return signal. Present-day attempts include pushing water with the broom, moving the trays, and clearing leaves from the drain.