When Water Rises

Trace how story details shape its message

8.CL.3 "Analyze how authors use key literary elements, including setting, plot, theme, characters, internal and external conflict, dialogue, and point of view, to contribute to the meaning and purpose of a text, using text evidence as support."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline two setting details that make the problem urgent, circle dialogue that changes what the characters do, and number the moment the narrator makes a choice. These marks will help you explain how the story's elements work together.

The Storybooks

1 Rain drummed on the library's metal roof as the book sale wound down. I was stacking paperbacks beside the side door when a thin stream crept across the tile. Outside, leaves had packed against the drain, and the puddle was rising. Ms. Ortiz, the librarian, called, "Just move the boxes away from the door." I reached for the nearest one, but water had already softened its cardboard bottom. Inside were handwritten storybooks made by students years ago, each with a name on its cover.

2 Two volunteers hurried past with dry boxes. I wanted to tell Ms. Ortiz about the blocked drain, but she had run this sale for twenty years, and I was only there to carry books. What if I was wrong? I lifted the damp box and felt it sag. Then a page slipped out, its bright blue ink spreading into a cloud. "The drain is packed with leaves," I said, too quietly for anyone to hear. The water reached the table leg, and I tried again, louder.

3 "The drain outside is blocked. Moving boxes won't stop the water!" Ms. Ortiz looked through the glass door, then nodded. "You're right. Stay inside and help me lift these books." She called the building caretaker, who cleared the drain from outside while we carried the books to a dry table. By the time the puddle stopped growing, several covers were stained, but most pages were safe. Ms. Ortiz handed me a dry towel. "I'm glad you spoke up," she said. I looked at the names on the covers and was glad, too.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the setting make the problem urgent? Use two details from the passage.

2. What conflict does the narrator face inside herself, and how does the water affect it? Support your answer with evidence.

3. How does the exchange between the narrator and Ms. Ortiz change what happens to the books? Use a detail from their dialogue.

4. How does telling the story from the narrator's point of view help develop its message? Use evidence from her thoughts and the ending.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence new ending starting when the water reaches the table leg, in which the narrator chooses not to speak up. Include a setting detail and one line of dialogue, then write a fifth sentence explaining how your ending changes the story's message.

ANSWER KEY

When Water Rises

GRADE 8 · 8.CL.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline two setting details that make the problem urgent, circle dialogue that changes what the characters do, and number the moment the narrator makes a choice. These marks will help you explain how the story's elements work together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the setting make the problem urgent? Use two details from the passage.	**Rain is falling, and leaves are blocking the drain outside the side door. Water is already crossing the library floor toward the books.**
2	What conflict does the narrator face inside herself, and how does the water affect it? Support your answer with evidence.	**She worries that Ms. Ortiz will think she is wrong because she is "only there to carry books." When the water reaches the table leg, she speaks louder despite that fear.**
3	How does the exchange between the narrator and Ms. Ortiz change what happens to the books? Use a detail from their dialogue.	**The narrator says that moving boxes will not stop the water because the drain is blocked. Ms. Ortiz agrees, asks her to help lift the books, and calls the caretaker to clear the drain.**
4	How does telling the story from the narrator's point of view help develop its message? Use evidence from her thoughts and the ending.	**Readers know the narrator fears being wrong, then see her relief after she speaks up and most pages are saved. Her thoughts and reaction show why speaking up matters even when it feels difficult.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Water climbed the table leg while rain tapped against the glass. I carried another box to the dry table and kept what I knew about the drain to myself. "Why is it still coming in?" Ms. Ortiz asked as ink spread across the storybooks. By the time the caretaker spotted the leaves outside, several books were ruined, and I wished I had spoken. This ending suggests that staying silent can turn a small problem into a lasting loss.

Accept other supported interpretations of the message. For the new ending, look for four story sentences with a setting detail and dialogue, followed by one sentence explaining the changed message.