Lights Before Celebration

Trace how each paragraph moves the plot and develops a theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5 "Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the paragraphs 1–3, then mark one sentence in each paragraph: write P beside a sentence that builds the problem, T beside a sentence that builds a turning point, and O beside a sentence that builds the outcome.

The Lantern at Low Tide

1 On the evening before the Harbor Day festival, Nia carried paper lanterns along the town pier. A thick fog rolled across the water, hiding the channel markers and the fishing boats that were due home before dark. At the end of the pier, she noticed the old warning lamp was unlit. The lamp had guided boats for years, but its glass was cloudy and its fuel can was empty. Nia knew the festival crowd would soon fill the pier, unaware that boats could not see the shore.

2 Instead of hanging her paper lanterns, Nia ran to her grandfather's bait shop beside the pier. He handed her a small bottle of fuel and a rag, then followed her into the fog. Together, they scrubbed salt from the lamp's glass and filled its fuel can. Nia struck a match, but the flame went out in the wet wind. She cupped her hands around a second match until the wick caught. A clear yellow beam spread over the water just as a boat horn sounded beyond the channel.

3 Minutes later, the fishing boat appeared between the marker poles and moved slowly toward the pier. Its captain raised one hand when he saw Nia and her grandfather beside the shining lamp. The festival crowd, now gathered at a safe distance, watched the boat tie up. Nia finally hung her paper lanterns along the railing, where they glowed below the warning light. The last scene returns to the festival, but the lanterns now seem more meaningful because Nia used light first to help others.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What role does paragraph 1 play in the plot? Use two details from the paragraph to explain your answer.

2. How does the sentence "Nia struck a match, but the flame went out in the wet wind" fit into paragraph 2? Why is it important to the plot?

3. Why does the author place the boat horn at the end of paragraph 2, before paragraph 3 shows the boat?

4. How does the final sentence change the meaning of the paper lanterns in the story?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences explaining why the festival setting introduced in paragraph 1 returns in paragraph 3. Explain how this structural return supports a theme, and include one detail from each paragraph.

ANSWER KEY

Lights Before Celebration

GRADE 6 · RL.6.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the paragraphs 1–3, then mark one sentence in each paragraph: write P beside a sentence that builds the problem, T beside a sentence that builds a turning point, and O beside a sentence that builds the outcome. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What role does paragraph 1 play in the plot? Use two details from the paragraph to explain your answer.	**Paragraph 1 introduces the setting and problem. Fog hides the channel markers, and the warning lamp is unlit, so returning boats may not be able to see the shore.**
2	How does the sentence “Nia struck a match, but the flame went out in the wet wind” fit into paragraph 2? Why is it important to the plot?	**It shows that Nia's first attempt fails, creating an obstacle. Her successful second match becomes a stronger turning point because she must persist.**
3	Why does the author place the boat horn at the end of paragraph 2, before paragraph 3 shows the boat?	**The horn signals that the repaired lamp has reached a boat and builds anticipation. It links Nia's action in paragraph 2 to the boat's safe arrival in paragraph 3.**
4	How does the final sentence change the meaning of the paper lanterns in the story?	**At first, the paper lanterns are decorations for a festival. By the end, they also represent how Nia chose to use light to help others before celebrating.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Paragraph 1 introduces the Harbor Day festival while the fog makes the pier unsafe. Paragraph 3 returns to the festival after the fishing boat reaches the pier safely. This return supports the theme that helping people matters more than finishing a celebration first.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations of the problem, turning point, outcome, and theme. For Part 3, accept responses that use a detail from both paragraph 1 and paragraph 3 and explain how the return to the festival supports a reasonable theme.