Bridge Before Storm

Track how words and events shape a character's choices.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3 "Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two lines of dialogue that influence a character, and number three incidents that change what a character does. Beside each mark, write D, A, or C to show whether it provokes a decision, propels action, or reveals character.

The Open Shed

(1) By the time Lena reached the old footbridge, the creek had swallowed its lowest planks. On the far bank, the community garden's tool shed leaned open, its red door banging in the wind. Lena had promised Mr. Ortiz she would lock it before the storm. Her younger brother, Milo, gripped the railing behind her. "We can come back tomorrow," he said. Lena looked at the dark water pressing against the bridge posts. In her backpack, the shed key tapped against her flashlight.

(2) "That key does not make you waterproof," Milo said, pointing to her soaked sneakers. Lena almost laughed, but then a branch slammed into a bridge support. The railing jumped under her hand. Across the creek, a row of tomato cages tipped beside the shed. If the door stayed open, the garden's seed packets and hand tools would be ruined. Lena unzipped her backpack and gave Milo the flashlight. "Stand where I can see you," she said. Then she stepped onto the first wet plank.

(3) Halfway across, Lena heard a sharp crack. One board behind her split, leaving a jagged hole above the rushing creek. Milo called, "Lena, stop!" She froze, one hand on the railing, and noticed the red shed door swing wider. Mr. Ortiz's words from that morning returned to her: "The garden belongs to everyone who tends it." Lena stared at the key in her palm. Instead of crossing farther, she turned carefully toward Milo. "We need another way," she said. Together, they ran to the library, where Lena called Mr. Ortiz and reported the open shed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Milo's statement, "That key does not make you waterproof," reveal an aspect of his character?

2. How do the open shed and the tipped tomato cages propel Lena's next action?

3. How do Mr. Ortiz's words, "The garden belongs to everyone who tends it," help provoke Lena's decision?

4. How do the cracking board and Milo's call to stop change the action at the end of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-sentence mini-scene about a character trying to reach an important place. Include one line of dialogue and one incident that lead the character to make a decision, then use the last sentence to explain how the dialogue and incident shaped that decision.

ANSWER KEY

Bridge Before Storm

GRADE 8 · RL.8.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two lines of dialogue that influence a character, and number three incidents that change what a character does. Beside each mark, write D, A, or C to show whether it provokes a decision, propels action, or reveals character. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Milo's statement, "That key does not make you waterproof," reveal an aspect of his character?	**It reveals that Milo is worried and practical because he notices the danger Lena faces on the wet bridge.**
2	How do the open shed and the tipped tomato cages propel Lena's next action?	**They show that the garden supplies may be ruined, motivating Lena to give Milo the flashlight and step onto the bridge.**
3	How do Mr. Ortiz's words, "The garden belongs to everyone who tends it," help provoke Lena's decision?	**The words remind Lena of her responsibility to the community garden and lead her to find a safer way to protect it.**
4	How do the cracking board and Milo's call to stop change the action at the end of the passage?	**They stop Lena from crossing farther. She turns back with Milo, goes to the library, and calls Mr. Ortiz.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jamal hurried to return a borrowed trumpet before the concert began. "The elevator is stuck," Nia said, pointing to the dark display. A crash echoed from the stairwell, and Jamal saw that someone had dropped a box across the steps. He remembered the band waiting and searched for another route. Jamal decided to use the outdoor ramp and carry the trumpet case through the rain. Nia's warning and the blocked stairs made him choose a safer path that still got him to the concert.

Accept answers that connect a specific quoted line or incident to a character trait, action, or decision. Responses may use different valid details if the explanation accurately follows the passage.