

Flood, Framed Differently

Compare how a poem and photograph shape one flood story.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7 “Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show what the poem emphasizes, circle details that show what the photograph emphasizes, and number one absence named for each work so you can compare their treatments of the flood.

Two Views of a Flood

- ① At a city museum, visitors encounter two artworks about the same 1936 flood in Riverton, an invented industrial town. The first is “After the Water,” a free verse poem displayed beside a map of the flooded streets. Its speaker is a teenage girl who returns home after the river drops. The second is a black and white photograph titled “Sandbags at Dawn.” It shows townspeople building a barrier before the river reaches its highest level. Although both works portray a community facing floodwater, they select different moments, voices, and details. Those choices shape what viewers understand about the disaster.
- ② In “After the Water,” the speaker notices small, personal losses: a school notebook swollen with mud, a kitchen clock stopped at 2:17, and her brother’s shoe caught in a fence. She does not describe the flood itself. Instead, her short lines and first-person voice slow the scene, especially when she says, “I lift the clock, and the house holds its breath.” The poem emphasizes uncertainty after the emergency. Its final image, neighbors silently carrying wet photographs into sunlight, suggests grief but also careful recovery. Officials, rescue crews, and the river’s force remain absent.
- ③ The photograph takes an earlier, more public view. At dawn, six adults lean shoulder to shoulder, passing filled sandbags along a line. A boy stands at the edge of the frame, holding a lantern toward them. The river appears only as a dark strip behind the workers, while a factory smokestack and the town hall rise clearly in the background. Because the camera freezes action from several feet away, the image emphasizes cooperation and physical effort. Unlike the poem, it includes no private thoughts or damaged household objects. It also omits the flood’s aftermath, leaving viewers with a tense moment of preparation rather than the poem’s quiet reckoning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which moment in the flood does each artwork represent? Explain how this difference affects the scene each work presents.

2 How do the poem's first-person voice and personal objects shape its representation of the flood?

3 Name one thing the poem leaves out and one thing the photograph leaves out. What does each omission help its work emphasize?

4 How does the photograph's distant framing contrast with the poem's close focus on one speaker?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school or community event. In exactly four sentences, describe a photograph and a poem that represent the event differently. Identify what each medium emphasizes, name one detail absent from each, and explain how those choices shape the audience's understanding.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show what the poem emphasizes, circle details that show what the photograph emphasizes, and number one absence named for each work so you can compare their treatments of the flood. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which moment in the flood does each artwork represent? Explain how this difference affects the scene each work presents.	The poem shows the aftermath, after the river drops, so it presents recovery and uncertainty. The photograph shows preparation before the river peaks, so it presents tense, shared effort.
2	How do the poem's first-person voice and personal objects shape its representation of the flood?	They make the flood feel private and personal, emphasizing the speaker's losses, grief, and uncertainty.
3	Name one thing the poem leaves out and one thing the photograph leaves out. What does each omission help its work emphasize?	The poem leaves out officials, rescue crews, or the river's force, keeping attention on personal aftermath. The photograph leaves out private thoughts, damaged household objects, or the aftermath, keeping attention on public preparation and cooperation.
4	How does the photograph's distant framing contrast with the poem's close focus on one speaker?	The photograph shows a group working in a public space, while the poem stays close to one girl's thoughts and belongings. The photograph emphasizes community action, and the poem emphasizes individual experience.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A photograph of the school robotics competition would show students huddled around a table as the robot crosses the finish line. It would emphasize teamwork and the excitement of the final seconds, but it would leave out the weeks of failed tests. A poem about the same event would focus on one student's shaking hands before the contest begins. It would emphasize private doubt and persistence, but it would omit the crowd's celebration, making readers see the victory as personal before they see it as public.

Accept equivalent comparisons that use accurate details from the passage and explain how emphasis or omission shapes meaning. For the open task, accept any event and two clearly different artistic treatments, as long as the response has exactly four sentences and addresses emphasis, absence, and audience understanding.