Before Sunrise

Notice how precise details build a scene and reveal a character.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3d "Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four sensory details and circle three precise words or phrases that help you picture, hear, smell, or feel the bakery. Number one detail that suggests something about Mara without directly naming her feeling.

The Early Shift

1 At 4:37 a.m., Mara pushed open the door of the city bakery, and a bell gave one thin chime above her head. Outside, rain polished the pavement black. Inside, heat pressed against her wet coat. The air smelled of yeast, burnt sugar, and the sharp orange oil from a crate of clementines. Behind the counter, trays of croissants shone under yellow lamps, their ridged tops crackling as they cooled. Mara set her helmet on a stool and watched a ribbon of steam rise from the dishwasher, briefly clouding the clock on the wall beside the flour bins.

2 Her uncle did not look up from the mixing bowl. His forearms were dusted white to the elbows, and a blue vein pulsed at his wrist as he kneaded. "Apron," he said, pointing with his chin. Mara tied the stiff canvas strings behind her back. When he lifted the bowl, dough stretched between his hands like pale chewing gum, then slapped the steel table with a damp thud. He folded it once, twice, and nodded toward a smaller lump. Mara pressed her thumbs into it. The dough yielded slowly, cool and elastic, leaving a crescent of flour beneath each nail.

3 By six, the rain had thinned to a silver mist, and the first buses hissed along the avenue. Mara carried a tray to the front window. The loaves were dark at the edges and scored with deep, clean cuts; when she tapped one, its crust answered with a hollow knock. A man in a green parka stepped in, shaking droplets from his hood. He cupped both hands around a paper bag, then breathed in before taking a bite. Mara noticed a smear of flour across her sleeve and did not brush it away. For the first time that morning, the bakery smelled less like work than breakfast.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Copy two sensory details from the first paragraph. Label the sense each detail appeals to.

2. The passage says the first buses "hissed" along the avenue. What sound and weather condition does this precise verb help you imagine?

3. How do the comparison "like pale chewing gum" and the words "cool and elastic" help you understand the dough?

4. Which action near the end suggests that Mara's view of the bakery has changed? Explain what the action reveals.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 90 to 120 words about arriving at a place before sunrise. Use at least three precise nouns or verbs and at least four sensory details that appeal to at least three senses, including one detail that suggests how the narrator feels without naming the feeling.

ANSWER KEY

Before Sunrise

HIGH SCHOOL · W.11-12.3d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four sensory details and circle three precise words or phrases that help you picture, hear, smell, or feel the bakery. Number one detail that suggests something about Mara without directly naming her feeling. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Copy two sensory details from the first paragraph. Label the sense each detail appeals to.	**"heat pressed against her wet coat" appeals to touch, and "The air smelled of yeast, burnt sugar, and the sharp orange oil" appeals to smell.**
2	The passage says the first buses "hissed" along the avenue. What sound and weather condition does this precise verb help you imagine?	**It suggests a soft, sibilant bus sound on a wet avenue after the rain.**
3	How do the comparison "like pale chewing gum" and the words "cool and elastic" help you understand the dough?	**They make the dough seem pale, stretchy, soft, cool, and springy.**
4	Which action near the end suggests that Mara's view of the bakery has changed? Explain what the action reveals.	**Mara does not brush the flour from her sleeve. This suggests she has begun to accept or value her place in the bakery.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 5:18, I unlocked the pool gate, and the chain rasped across the wet concrete. Chlorine stung my nose before I reached the locker rooms. In the dark water, lane ropes bobbed softly, tapping the tiles with small plastic clicks. I dropped my towel on a bench, where the vinyl was cold enough to tighten my fingers. The first swimmer entered, carrying a thermos that smelled of coffee and cinnamon. As the overhead lights flickered awake, I skimmed a leaf from the pool with the long blue net, then checked the clock again while circles widened across the glassy surface.

Accept other accurately quoted sensory details and reasonable, text-supported explanations of word choice or characterization. For the paragraph, look for the required length, precise language, sensory details across at least three senses, and an implied rather than named feeling.