Stroke by Stroke

Track the language that makes a fast-moving scene feel real.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3d "Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three precise action words or phrases, and circle three sensory details. These choices help a reader picture the action and experience it with Maya.

Morning Practice

1 At 6:10 a.m., Maya stepped from the bus into the harbor fog. The dock boards sweated beneath her sneakers, and the air carried a sharp mix of salt and diesel. Her team's narrow rowing shell rested on slings beside the water, its yellow hull beaded with drops. Coach Imani tapped the launch checklist against her clipboard. When Maya lifted her end, the boat flexed lightly, and cold water dripped from the riggers onto her wrist as they carried it down the ramp.

2 On the water, Maya slid her oar blade through the black surface and felt it catch. The shell surged forward, then shivered as a ferry wake rolled beneath it. "Ready," Coach Imani called from the launch boat. At the start signal, Maya drove her legs, swung her back, and pulled the handle to her ribs. Oarlocks clicked in a steady pattern. Spray snapped against her cheeks, while the rising sun broke the fog into pale ribbons behind the bridge.

3 Halfway through the practice, a gust shoved the shell toward a line of orange buoys. Maya heard the wind slap the flag above the boathouse and saw the nearest buoy bob closer. She feathered her oar, dipped one blade, and pressed gently until the bow turned away. Her breathing slowed as the boat straightened. "Nice correction," Coach Imani said. Maya tasted salt on her lip and tightened her grip for the final stretch, where each stroke sent a silver fan of water behind her.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Find a precise phrase in paragraph 2 that describes the shell moving forward. What does the phrase show about the movement?

2. Which two details in paragraph 1 reveal what Maya smells and feels?

3. List two precise verbs from paragraph 3 that show how Maya turns the boat away from the buoys. Write them in the order they happen.

4. What image describes the fog after the sun rises in paragraph 2? Explain why this image is more vivid than saying that the fog changed.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence scene in which you correct something that is moving off course, such as a bike, a ball, or a small boat. Use at least three precise action verbs and sensory details from at least two senses.

ANSWER KEY # Stroke by Stroke

GRADE 8 · W.8.3d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three precise action words or phrases, and circle three sensory details. These choices help a reader picture the action and experience it with Maya. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Find a precise phrase in paragraph 2 that describes the shell moving forward. What does the phrase show about the movement?	**"The shell surged forward." It shows the boat moved quickly and powerfully.**
2	Which two details in paragraph 1 reveal what Maya smells and feels?	**She smells "a sharp mix of salt and diesel" and feels "cold water dripped from the riggers onto her wrist."**
3	List two precise verbs from paragraph 3 that show how Maya turns the boat away from the buoys. Write them in the order they happen.	**Any two in order: feathered, dipped, pressed.**
4	What image describes the fog after the sun rises in paragraph 2? Explain why this image is more vivid than saying that the fog changed.	**"The rising sun broke the fog into pale ribbons." It gives the fog a clear shape, color, and movement.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As I coasted down the hill, my bike tire skidded across a patch of loose gravel. Pebbles pinged against the frame, and dust scratched my throat. I squeezed both brakes, shifted my weight backward, and steered toward the smooth edge of the road. The rubber grips warmed beneath my palms as the bike slowed beside the curb.

Accept other accurate quoted words or phrases from the passage when students explain their effects clearly. For the writing task, look for a complete action sequence, at least three specific verbs, and sensory details connected to two or more senses.