

Frost Before First Period

Notice how a model scene turns a setback into a vivid moment.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3d "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 five words or phrases that appeal to a sense, circle three precise verbs, and number one comparison that helps you picture the scene.

The School Garden

- ① At 6:15 a.m., Mara pushed through the gate of the school garden, and the latch clicked behind her. Last night's unexpected frost silvered the bean leaves and stiffened the marigolds along the path. Her breath rose in short clouds. Under her boots, the gravel snapped like dry cereal. She had planned to harvest basil for the cafeteria, but each plant bent beneath a thin, glassy coat. The air smelled of wet soil, crushed mint, and the faint smoke drifting from nearby chimneys beyond the football field.
- ② Mr. Alvarez was already at the tool shed, rubbing his hands over a paper cup of coffee. "The tomatoes may be fine," he said, though his voice stayed low. Mara lifted a leaf between two fingers. It cracked at the edge, leaving a cold bead of water on her thumb. For a moment, she pictured the kitchen staff waiting for green bundles that would not arrive. Then a sparrow dropped onto the fence, shook frost from its wings, and began to sing, thin but steady.
- ③ Mara did not reach for the shears. Instead, she carried a bucket to the spigot and filled it until the metal handle bit into her palm. Mr. Alvarez uncovered the row of spinach, and together they laid dark fabric over the basil beds before the sun cleared the gym roof. By first period, the frost had melted into bright drops. Mara's sleeves were damp, her fingers numb, but the garden no longer looked defeated. It looked as if it were holding its breath in the pale morning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two precise verbs describe what the frost did to the plants in the first paragraph?

2 What sound does the comparison “the gravel snapped like dry cereal” help you hear?

3 List the three smell details in the first paragraph.

4 How does the final comparison, “holding its breath,” show the garden’s condition after Mara and Mr. Alvarez work?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90-120 word first-person scene about waiting somewhere in unpleasant weather. Use at least three sensory details and three precise verbs to show the setting and your reaction.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline five words or phrases that appeal to a sense, circle three precise verbs, and number one comparison that helps you picture the scene. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two precise verbs describe what the frost did to the plants in the first paragraph?	"silvered" and "stiffened"
2	What sound does the comparison "the gravel snapped like dry cereal" help you hear?	It suggests a crisp, brittle crunch under Mara's boots.
3	List the three smell details in the first paragraph.	wet soil, crushed mint, and faint smoke from nearby chimneys
4	How does the final comparison, "holding its breath," show the garden's condition after Mara and Mr. Alvarez work?	It suggests the garden is fragile but hopeful, waiting to recover after being protected.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the bus stop, I tightened my hood as rain tapped the plastic shelter above me. Cars hissed through puddles, spraying the curb with brown fans of water. My notebook pressed cold and damp against my ribs. Across the street, the bakery opened its door, and warm cinnamon drifted into the gray air. I watched the traffic light blink red, then green, while my shoes slowly filled with water. When the bus finally groaned around the corner, I stepped forward before anyone else, gripping my ticket so hard its edges folded into my palm.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect quoted sensory language or precise diction to a clear image, sound, smell, or mood. For the writing task, accept varied settings if the response is 90-120 words and uses specific sensory details and precise verbs.