Between Two Platforms

Track contrasts to infer a character's point of view.

ELA.11.R.1.3 "Analyze the author's choices in using juxtaposition to define character perspective."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline two details the author places close together to create a contrast. Circle Mara's reaction or choice near each contrast, then use the pairings to infer her perspective.

One-Way Fare

1 At 5:40, Mara stood beneath the station's new glass canopy, watching rain slide in straight silver lines. Inside, commuters tapped phones and complained about delays; outside, a man slept beneath a newspaper softened by water. Mara held the scholarship envelope so tightly its corner bent. Last spring, she had waited here with her father after his night shift, sharing a paper cup of coffee and planning her departure. Now the station screens flashed arrivals, but she studied the empty bench beside the vending machines for an answer.

2 When the eastbound train arrived, students in bright college sweatshirts spilled onto the platform, laughing as they dragged wheeled suitcases. Mara stepped aside to let them pass. Her own suitcase remained in the apartment she shared with her father, who had begun locking the bedroom door after losing his job. The acceptance letter promised seminars, a dormitory, and a city she had never seen; his last voicemail asked whether she could postpone everything until "things settle down." She read the message again while a porter swept crushed ticket stubs into a neat pile.

3 At the ticket window, Mara placed the bent envelope on the counter and asked for a one-way fare. Behind her, the station clock clicked toward six, the hour her father usually came home smelling of machine oil. She imagined his dark apartment and then the campus map printed in blue lines across the envelope. The agent slid a ticket through the slot. Mara did not call her father. Instead, she tucked the ticket beside his voicemail printout and walked toward the platform, carrying both papers as the rain began to lift.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, how does the contrast between Mara's scholarship envelope and the empty bench shape your understanding of her perspective on leaving?

2. How does the author juxtapose the arriving college students with Mara in paragraph 2? What does this contrast reveal about her perspective?

3. Explain how the acceptance letter and her father's voicemail create a juxtaposition in paragraph 2. What conflict does this define for Mara?

4. In paragraph 3, why does the author place the station clock and the campus map near each other? How does Mara's final action clarify her perspective?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 4 to 5 sentences about a character facing a decision. Use a deliberate juxtaposition between two concrete images or actions, and include one sentence explaining what the contrast reveals about the character's perspective.

ANSWER KEY

Between Two Platforms

GRADE 11 · ELA.11.R.1.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline two details the author places close together to create a contrast. Circle Mara's reaction or choice near each contrast, then use the pairings to infer her perspective. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, how does the contrast between Mara's scholarship envelope and the empty bench shape your understanding of her perspective on leaving?	**The envelope represents her future opportunity, while the empty bench recalls time with her father. Mara views leaving as meaningful but painful because it means separating from him.**
2	How does the author juxtapose the arriving college students with Mara in paragraph 2? What does this contrast reveal about her perspective?	**The students arrive laughing with suitcases, while Mara steps aside and has left her suitcase at home. The contrast shows that she feels burdened and separate from the excitement other students feel about college.**
3	Explain how the acceptance letter and her father's voicemail create a juxtaposition in paragraph 2. What conflict does this define for Mara?	**The letter offers independence and a new future, while the voicemail asks her to delay that future for her father. Mara feels divided between pursuing college and staying to support him.**
4	In paragraph 3, why does the author place the station clock and the campus map near each other? How does Mara's final action clarify her perspective?	**The clock reminds Mara of her father's routine, while the map represents college and a new life. By buying the ticket but carrying the voicemail printout, she chooses to leave without dismissing her concern for him.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jordan stood in the polished auditorium while graduates lifted their diplomas for photographs. Beyond the doors, his mother's dented truck idled beside the curb, waiting to take him to his evening shift. The contrast between the bright stage and the waiting truck reveals that Jordan sees his award as both an opportunity and a responsibility. He folded the certificate carefully before walking outside.

Accept interpretations that identify a valid contrast and explain Mara's perspective with accurate evidence from the passage. For Part 3, look for two clearly juxtaposed details and an explanation of how they reveal the character's viewpoint.