Shoreline Arguments

Track how experience shapes a disputed decision.

ELA.12.R.1.3 "Evaluate the development of character perspective, including conflicting perspectives."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or sentences that reveal Mara's perspective, circle those that reveal Vale's perspective, and number three moments when either character's view is challenged or changes.

The Harbor Vote

1 By the time the council meeting began, Mara had filled two notebook pages with measurements from the marsh. The proposed seawall, she believed, would protect the harbor briefly while crushing the reeds that slowed storm water and sheltered young fish. When Councilman Vale called the project "common sense," Mara gripped her pencil until it snapped. She saw the wall as another decision made from a downtown map, far from the mudflats where her brother had taught her to paddle. At seventeen, she had come prepared to accuse the council of trading a living shoreline for a photograph of safety.

2 Vale listened from behind the long oak desk, irritated by Mara's certainty. Two years earlier, a hurricane had shoved water through the bakery his mother owned, ruining ovens and closing the shop for months. To him, the wall was not a symbol of progress but a barrier against another unpaid repair bill. He had studied the engineers' estimate and knew the town could afford only one major project. When Mara described the marsh, he heard a student dismissing families who could not wait for an experimental solution. Still, her detailed tide charts made him pause before he answered.

3 During public comment, Mara noticed Vale's hand shake when he mentioned the bakery. Rather than repeat her accusation, she asked whether a smaller wall could protect the business district while leaving room for restored marsh. Vale did not endorse her plan, but he admitted the engineers' map showed property lines more clearly than currents. He proposed delaying the vote for thirty days to compare the wall with a hybrid design. Mara still feared that delay would become an excuse for damage, and Vale still doubted the town could fund restoration. Yet each now understood that the other's position grew from responsibility, not indifference.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Mara's initial perspective on the seawall differ from Vale's? Use one piece of evidence for each character.

2. Which past experience shapes Mara's perspective, and which past experience shapes Vale's perspective? Explain how each experience affects the character's view.

3. Identify two moments that show development in the characters' perspectives. Explain what changes or becomes more complicated for each character.

4. What disagreement remains at the end of the passage, and what shared realization do Mara and Vale reach?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 90 to 120 words of a missing exchange after the meeting between Mara and Vale. Give each character a distinct perspective, and show one character responding to a detail that complicates, but does not erase, that perspective.

ANSWER KEY

Shoreline Arguments

GRADE 12 · ELA.12.R.1.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or sentences that reveal Mara's perspective, circle those that reveal Vale's perspective, and number three moments when either character's view is challenged or changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Mara's initial perspective on the seawall differ from Vale's? Use one piece of evidence for each character.	**Mara sees the seawall as a threat to the marsh and a shallow appearance of safety. Vale sees it as necessary protection against flood damage, based on the hurricane's impact on his mother's bakery.**
2	Which past experience shapes Mara's perspective, and which past experience shapes Vale's perspective? Explain how each experience affects the character's view.	**Mara connects the marsh to paddling there with her brother, so she wants to protect it. Vale remembers hurricane water ruining the bakery, so he prioritizes a barrier against future floods.**
3	Identify two moments that show development in the characters' perspectives. Explain what changes or becomes more complicated for each character.	**Mara shifts from planning to accuse the council to asking about a smaller wall and restored marsh after noticing Vale's reaction. Vale begins to reconsider after seeing Mara's tide charts, then admits the map does not show currents clearly and delays the vote for comparison.**
4	What disagreement remains at the end of the passage, and what shared realization do Mara and Vale reach?	**Mara still worries that delay will allow damage, while Vale still doubts the town can pay for restoration. Both realize that the other person's position comes from responsibility rather than indifference.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Outside the chamber, Vale stopped beside Mara's bicycle. "My mother cannot endure another flood season," he said. Mara looked toward the dark channel. "And the marsh cannot endure being sealed off forever." Vale pointed to a waterline scratched high on the bakery wall across the street. Mara had seen it before, but she had not imagined his mother measuring bread dough in that soaked room. "What if the first phase protects that block?" she asked, "while we test reeds along the eastern bank?" Vale frowned. "Testing costs money." Still, he wrote the eastern bank on his agenda folder.

Accept paraphrases that accurately distinguish the characters' priorities, connect those priorities to their experiences, and explain how their views become more complex. For the open response, accept varied dialogue if both perspectives are clear and one character responds thoughtfully to a complicating detail.