Storm at the Terminal

Trace how a setting shapes a character's choices and the plot.

ELA.8.R.1.1 "Analyze the interaction between character development, setting, and plot in a literary text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline setting details, circle words or actions that show Mara changing, and number three major plot events in order to see how the storm and terminal shape her choices.

The Last Crossing

1 At dusk, Mara arrived at the shuttered ferry terminal with a cardboard box of soup containers balanced against her hip. Wind shoved rain across the harbor, blurring the lights on the opposite shore. Her uncle, the night caretaker, had twisted his ankle, so Mara had agreed to lock the building after the last canceled crossing. She disliked the terminal's echoing hall and its rusted benches. Still, she placed the soup in the office and checked the empty waiting room, pretending the storm could not bother her.

2 Near midnight, a weak knocking came from the side door. Mara froze, remembering how the wind had rattled every loose sign outside. Then she saw a small figure through the glass: Mr. Ortiz, a passenger who had missed the final bus before the storm closed the road. His phone battery had died, and his coat was soaked. Mara almost called the security office and stayed behind the locked door. Instead, she opened it, led him to the office heater, and gave him the soup meant for herself. The terminal felt like shelter.

3 While Mr. Ortiz warmed his hands, Mara found the emergency radio and reported that he was safe. The dispatcher said a road crew would reach the terminal within an hour. Waiting beside the heater, Mara admitted that she had been scared of being responsible for anyone during the storm. Mr. Ortiz told her that opening the door had changed his night. When the crew's headlights swept across the windows, Mara locked the terminal without rushing. The hall echoed, but she noticed its solid walls and exit signs. She left feeling steadier than when she arrived.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the storm and the empty terminal affect Mara at the beginning of the story?

2. Explain how Mr. Ortiz's arrival changes both Mara's choice and the plot.

3. How does the setting help create the story's main problem, and how is that problem resolved?

4. How has Mara's view of the terminal changed by the end? Use two details from the passage in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4 to 6 sentence scene about a new character in a specific setting. Include at least two setting details, show a choice the character makes, and explain how the setting affects the character's change and the plot.

ANSWER KEY

Storm at the Terminal

GRADE 8 · ELA.8.R.1.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline setting details, circle words or actions that show Mara changing, and number three major plot events in order to see how the storm and terminal shape her choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the storm and the empty terminal affect Mara at the beginning of the story?	**The storm and echoing, empty terminal make Mara uneasy. She checks the building but pretends the storm does not bother her.**
2	Explain how Mr. Ortiz's arrival changes both Mara's choice and the plot.	**His arrival gives Mara a person to help during the storm. Instead of staying behind the locked door, she lets him in, warms him, and gives him her soup.**
3	How does the setting help create the story's main problem, and how is that problem resolved?	**The storm closes the road, leaves Mr. Ortiz stranded, and makes the terminal feel frightening. Mara uses the terminal's heater and emergency radio until a road crew arrives.**
4	How has Mara's view of the terminal changed by the end? Use two details from the passage in your answer.	**At first, Mara notices the terminal's echoing hall and rusted benches, which make her uncomfortable. At the end, she notices its solid walls and exit signs, showing that she now sees it as safe and useful.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the silent school greenhouse, Jalen found a cracked window letting cold air onto the seedlings. Usually, he avoided extra work, but the drooping plants made him stay after the bell. He covered the opening with plastic and called the custodian, saving the class project. The dim, chilly room pushed Jalen to act, and his choice moved the plot from a problem to a solution.

Accept answers that connect specific setting details to Mara's feelings, choices, or the sequence of events. For Part 3, accept varied original scenes if the response clearly shows setting influencing character development and plot.